

# The McHenry Highland Festival

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**June 3, 2006**  
**Deep Creek Lake**

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**[www.highlandfest.info](http://www.highlandfest.info)**

**S**trong men in kilts will toss cabers that look like telephone poles or throw Celtic hammers in the athletic games at the McHenry Highland Festival June 3. Sheepdogs go through their paces and re-enactors offer glimpses of Scottish early military life. The mountains ring with music as area residents celebrate their Celtic heritage.

Several years ago the festival became a weekend event with activities Friday, Saturday and Sunday. In 2005, The Garrett County Commissioners proclaimed the week surrounding the festival as Garrett County Celtic Heritage Week.

For 19 years, the Garrett College Pipes and Drums, formed in 1979 by Judge Fred Thayer and Chip Evans, has been hosting the festival. Thayer, who was the band's Pipe Major for many years, is a member of the Highland Festival Board of Directors.

Twelve people gathered for an evening session of classes at Garrett Community College. Originally called the Garrett Highlanders, the band's name was changed in 1989 when the college took over sponsorship.

Besides leading the college commencement processional, the band hosted numerous events throughout the years. With help from the Promotion Council the festival was started in 1987 to attract visitors. It became a day for residents to welcome spring with fun and music.

The day includes six bagpipe bands, several entertainers including world-renowned fiddler Bonnie Rideout, piping and dancing competitions, Celtic animals, clan booths, food, vendors and many other activities. A golf tournament and Celtic concert on Friday kick-off the weekend activities, which end with a church service and Sunday brunch.

