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**North Carolina Potato Festival Soars to New Heights
May 15 in Elizabeth City, N.C.
*Aviation is the theme of this year's popular event***

([Elizabeth City, N.C.](#), April 26, 2010) – With a nod to North Carolina's distinction as the "first in flight," and its burgeoning aeronautics industry, aviation is the theme of the [North Carolina Potato Festival](#), ready for take-off May 15 along the downtown waterfront in Elizabeth City.

"Aviation has played such a large role in Elizabeth City's history," explained Tim Williams, chairman of both the North Carolina Potato Festival and Elizabeth City Downtown Inc., the festival's sponsoring organization. "From the deployment of blimps that combated enemy submarines during World War II to the aerostat test flights underway today, Elizabeth City has launched many aviation-related events."

Elizabeth City is also home to the nation's largest U.S. Coast Guard base, Air Station Elizabeth City, which will be part of the festival. Aviation-themed highlights will include a U.S. Coast Guard flyover, search-and-rescue demonstrations on the Pasquotank River and special presentations throughout the day by Donner Grigsby, assistant chief engineer with NASA Langley Research Center and a popular speaker. There will also be exhibits hosted by the U.S. Coast Guard, Elizabeth City State University's School of Aviation and TCOM, L.P., a global company with a facility in Elizabeth City devoted to aerostat and airship manufacturing.

And don't forget the spuds! The farm lands along the Albemarle Sound are among the state's major potato-growing areas, and the festival celebrates one of Northeast North Carolina's largest crops.

"The support of the local business and agricultural community continues to grow annually, which has allowed us to expand in making this unique, fun-filled [family event](#) a success," said Williams. "Last year, more than 12,000 people enjoyed the festival, and we are expecting more with this year's great line up of activities."

In addition to nibbling on home-cooked fries, festival-goers will be able to:

- Watch the National Potato Peeling Contest competitors peel through bushels of spuds
- Sample the results of the "Anything But Fries" restaurant cook-off
- Cheer on the "Little Miss Tater Tot Pageant" contestants
- Watch the N.C. Governor's Cup Moth [Boat races](#) on the Pasquotank River
- Compete in potato sack races and a corn hole tournament
- [Shop and dine](#) among nearly 75 food and arts and craft vendors
- Mingle with members of Blackbeard's Crew and visit a special Pirate Encampment (May 15-16) at the Museum of the Albemarle

This festival will also feature an auto show, monster trucks, amusement rides and games for children, bounce houses, the Hopeline rubber duck derby, live musical entertainment and the popular "street dance" to wrap up the day's festivities.

Preceding Saturday's events is a kick-off party on Friday, May 14 from 6:30 to 11:30 p.m. at Grouper's Restaurant. Held in appreciation of the festival's sponsors and volunteers, the party is open to the public for a \$5 admission fee. For festival information, call (252) 338-4104 or visit www.ncpotatofestival.com.

"This is a family festival that has something for everyone," said Charlotte Underwood, director of the Elizabeth City Area Convention & Visitors Bureau. "We invite people to come for the day and spend the night!"

Elizabeth City

[Elizabeth City](#) is located in Northeastern North Carolina on the Intracoastal Waterway, halfway between [Virginia Beach](#) and [the Outer Banks](#). Known as the “Harbor of Hospitality®,” the city has six National Register Historic Districts and is home to the [Museum of the Albemarle](#), [The Center at Arts of the Albemarle](#), [Elizabeth City State University Planetarium](#), [Port Discover Hands-on Science Center](#) and the nation’s largest [U.S. Coast Guard base](#). Nature-based travelers are drawn to the area’s proximity to [Dismal Swamp](#) and the abundance of outdoor recreational offerings. For additional information, call Elizabeth City Area Convention & Visitors Bureau at 1-866-ECity-4U (1-866-324-8948) or (252) 335-5330 or visit www.DiscoverElizabethCity.com



Sidebar: Potatoes Are Good For You!

A local legend credits Sir Walter Raleigh with the potato’s popularity overseas when English colonists found it among their explorations of the N.C. sounds area and shipped some back to England. These days, the potato is universally grown more than any other food crop. According to the N.C. Potato Association, headquartered in Elizabeth City, approximately 17,500 acres of potatoes are planted each year in the state, with the areas surrounding the Albemarle and Pamlico sounds being the major potato-producing counties. The N.C. Potato Association also notes ...

- *The average American eats 142 pounds of potatoes a year, or almost 365 potatoes per person. That’s an average of a potato a day!*
- *Contrary to the common misconception, potatoes are not high in calories. One medium sized potato contains 110 calories, while a one-cup serving of rice has 225 calories and a cup of pasta has 155.*
- *Potatoes should be eaten with their peels on! A wealth of vitamins, minerals and fiber are found in the peel. The peel also contains the flavonoid, quercetin, and chlorogenic acid – antioxidants that may protect the body against certain types of cancers and heart disease.*
- *One medium potato with skin contains three grams, or twelve percent of the recommended daily intake of fiber.*

For additional information, visit www.ncpotatoes.org