

PRESS RELEASE
For Immediate Release



CONTACT:
Kamili Anderson,
Publicity/Promotions Manager,
North Carolina Rice Festival, Inc.,
northcarolinaricefestival@gmail.com

The 2025 North Carolina Rice Festival: Five Events, Four Days— Returning to Brunswick Town, Co-Hosting Reaves Chapel Grand Opening

LELAND, NC – The North Carolina Rice Festival, Inc. (www.northcarolinaricefestival.org), launched in Leland in 2019, is pleased to announce that its daylong, signature event will be held for the third year in a row at the Brunswick Town/Fort Anderson State Historical Site in Winnabow, North Carolina, on **March 8, 2025**.

The 2025 North Carolina Rice Festival will mark the fifth year NCRFI has hosted major events in northern Brunswick County, historically one of the state’s most productive rice-growing regions from the colonial period to the early 1900s. Each of the planned 2025 events will continue to celebrate the diverse cultural and agricultural history of southeastern North Carolina, with a focus on its distinctive and still-vibrant Gullah Geechee heritage—a vestige of the enslaved “Rice Coast” West Africans’ contributions to the region’s wealth.

The 2025 Festival activities lineup will be *expanded from four to five events over four days*, including a cohosted program marking the dedication of the fully restored, Navassa (NC)-based Reaves Chapel on March 7, 2025. The Chapel is an important Brunswick County site and an historic African American religious, social, and cultural hub with Gullah Geechee roots dating from the post-slavery experience.

The 2025 Rice Festival Lineup: March 5-8, 2025

Back by popular demand, Wednesday, March 5th—The return of the Festival’s **Introducing...The North Carolina Rice Festival!** event—an evening of films and discussion designed to inform the “new and few” unfamiliar with the Festival about Brunswick County’s rich rice heritage and the state’s distinctive Gullah Geechee culture. **6:00 pm, WWAY3-TV Headquarters, 1224 Magnolia Village Way, Leland.**

On *Thursday, March 6th*, the Festival’s **African Ancestry Reveal** program returns, co-hosted again by African Ancestry, Inc., and led by its CEO, Dr. Gina Paige. This event explores the genetic connections between present-day African American county residents and the enslaved Africans brought here centuries ago to enrich the nearly 60 plantations that once flourished in our region. **6:00pm, Navassa Community Center, 338 Main Street, Navassa.**

Friday, March 7th brings two events: First, the **Dedication of The Reaves Chapel (BY INVITATION ONLY: RSVP REQUIRED)**, co-hosted by NCRFI, North Carolina Coastal Land Trust, and Cedar Hill/West Bank Heritage Foundation. State and local dignitaries, organizational representatives, and community partners will be in attendance. **1:00pm, 2024 Cedar Hill Road NE, Navassa.**

Later, on March 7th, NCRFI hosts its **North Carolina Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Dinner Gala (A TICKETED EVENT)**, its premiere fundraiser and another Brunswick County must-attend event. The 2025 Gala will feature live Gullah Geechee-themed “edutainment,” a silent auction, and savory cuisine prepared by our award-winning Culinarian, Catch Restaurant’s Chef Keith Rhodes. Get *your* tickets early—this event sells out quickly every year! **5:00pm, Leland Cultural Arts Center, 1212 Magnolia Village Way, Leland.** (Tickets, \$130/person; available online on *EventBrite.com*.)

Saturday, March 8th is the **North Carolina Rice Festival** day—featuring outdoor and indoor festivities, speakers, music, food, crafts, and more for young and old. Once again, the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (DNCR) will host the Festival’s “Come Hear NC Stage”; other stages will be hosted by the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor and the Brunswick and NC Arts Councils. (Performers and vendors interested in participating, contact NCRFI for more info.) **10:00am - 5:30pm, 8884 St. Philip's Road SE, Winnabow.**

— ### —