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conference.
 “We want to be committed to making sure that we are growing this state to where everyone gets to experience what economic prosperity is about,” said Cagle. “Where no one is left behind. Where it’s not just simply about Atlanta, but it’s about every single community.”

“What excites me about what’s going on within your industry as well, we’re no longer bound by bricks and mortar. The ability for farm to table is alive and well.”

“You can have small ranches, you can have big ranches, and you can create a value-added product that will enable you to continue in your success on the farm. And we’ve got to be more committed to that, building out the infrastructure of tomorrow.”

The lieutenant governor also pledged to keep taxes low in Georgia to encourage the growth of agribusinesses, citing the Georgia Agriculture Tax Exemption program, which offers sales tax exemptions on ag equipment and production inputs.

“I think all of you in ag understand what the GATE card means, and the advantage that you have from a taxation standpoint to be competitive,” said Cagle. “I was glad to be a part of that.”

“And I am committed, as we go forward, to ensuring that that GATE card and the taxation system is low on farmers all across the state, as it affords you the ability to be profitable and obviously be competitive in the marketplace as well.”

Cagle touched briefly on his promise to implement a \$100 million tax cut for all Georgia families during his first 100 days in office if he’s elected governor.

“A family of four, their first \$12,000 of income will be tax exempt,” said Cagle. “And that’s going to benefit everyone across the state. It’s something that we can do and we should do.”

When asked how he would pay for the tax cut, Cagle responded that Georgia



Georgia Lt. Gov. Casey Cagle, center, with Georgia Cattlemen's Association President Lee Brown, left, and GCA Vice President Will Bentley. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

is growing by about \$1 billion in excess revenue each year, which would make giving the \$100 million tax cut a simple matter “to give back to the hardworking Georgians.”

He further committed to creating 500,000 jobs in four years, keeping manufacturing and existing businesses as high priorities, while also focusing on growing new industry in the tech sector and training the workforce of tomorrow.

Other topics broached by Cagle that Friday included maintaining riparian rights, shaping growth with an eye to the future, an emphasis on education in Georgia by challenging what he calls the “one-size-fits-all” education model, and expanding the College and Career Academy Network.

Another key infrastructure component Cagle said he’d zero in on as governor is high-speed internet, as rural broadband is a challenge in the North Georgia mountains.

“Our first year is going to be getting all the players together and focusing our efforts on how we make sure that every single city in the state has a certain base level of broadband,” said Cagle.

He also noted that he’ll be considering newer

technologies that don’t require as much physical infrastructure, which could play a key role in solving the so-called “last mile” problem of installing cost-prohibitive lines and poles between the network and more out-of-the-way rural homes and businesses.

After speaking with the crowd, the lieutenant governor – who said he hopes to drop the “lieutenant” part of his title next year – shook hands and took pictures, then departed for a prescheduled TV interview in Atlanta.

“As the Georgia Cattlemen’s Association, our focus is on promoting the economic, social and political goals of the cattle industry,” said GCA Executive Vice President Will Bentley. “With that, whoever the next governor is plays a large role and impact in the cattle industry and the agriculture industry on the whole.”

“So, anybody that is running for public office on the state level that has shown the capability to support the cattle industry, we like to have them come and have an opportunity to speak to our groups.”

“We’ll do that across the board with candidates, too, that show an interest in agriculture. We’re welcome to hearing what all of them say because they impact our industry so much.”

Festival...continued from Page 1A

competition that started bright and early that morning.

“The canning contest is designed to encourage people to do it the right way,” said Market Manager Mickey Cummings. “Those that are going to participate turn in their product in the morning. They have to tell me the ingredients of the product and how it was processed.”

“Then we have an expert come in and make sure that what they’re doing is correct. That’s how we determine the winners of the contest.”

Along with the canning contest, patrons were treated to demonstrations of rail splitting and log sawing and could even try their hand at tossing a frying pan or two around.

For the frying pan toss, participants were divided into categories to compete: ladies, 15-years-old and up and 15-years-old and younger.

Contestants wheeled their arms back and threw with all their might, sending the cast iron skillet flying through the air and out in the grass to be measured for distance. The participant with the furthest throw was claimed the winner for their category and rewarded with a cast iron skillet, along with bragging rights for the best throwing arm around.

This year’s winner for the ladies was Connie Miller. Jordan Pandol won best toss for the 15-years-old and up category and Josh Hutson took the crown for the 15-years-old and younger division.

Throughout the morning, Cummings handed out various door prizes donated by vendors to patrons as a way to give back to those who make the market so successful, as well as give a little extra advertisement to some of the regular vendors.

Just before noon, the infamous green bean toting, kazoo playing entertainers, The Washboard Band, delighted patrons with family-friendly tunes before heading up the annual kazoo parade at the Market, complete with green kazoos for anyone who wanted to join in.

As soon as the parade had made its way through all three buildings at the Market,



Paul Reeves log sawing with kids at the Farmers Market. Photo/Lily Avery

patrons made their way to the pavilion to witness – and partake – of the annual green bean pizza-eating contest. Unlike the canning contest and the frying pan toss that both required patience and specific technique, the pizza eating contest held only one objective: eat as much pizza as possible.

Louis Maresca did just that, taking the title as first place winner for the adult division of the contest. Hobie Hennessee and Alyssan Perez tied for first place in the kids division, proving that pizza really is their favorite food.

And while the Green Bean Festival has always been known for bringing in a crowd, this year not only did it fill the Farmers Market, but many of the vendors felt a good boost of business from the large influx of visitors.

“We’ve had tons of people out here today,” said Cummings. “We’ve had people parked way out across the creek, which seems to be a typical thing this year. I’d say it’s been a good day for everyone.”

For Hidden Creek Farms, it proved to be an excellent day to debut their product for the first time at the market. For the last several weeks, owner and operator of Hidden Creek Farms Pamela Barry has been bringing samples of her honey and goat cheese for patrons to

try, all the while gearing up for her grand opening at the Market.

“I’ve been doing this about four years,” said Barry. “It all started about then. We had a whole bunch of property and my dad was ill and we were trying to figure out a way to monetize. So, we tried to think about what we could do to try and live here and sustain ourselves from the land. It started out with the bees and just grew from there.”

“Today has been amazing. People are excited about what we’re selling and I’m excited about what we’re selling.”

Along with her fresh goat cheese and honey, Barry also sells homemade soaps, chapstick and bath products, as well as eggs from her chickens.

To check out all her

homemade, homegrown products visit Hidden Creek Farms at the Market in stall 85.

This week at the Union

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