

Joara hosts annual pottery festival

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MORGANTON, NC - The Exploring Joara Foundation is holding its fourth annual Joara Pottery Festival, beginning with a preview party from 6 to 8 p.m. May 17 at the Old Armory Building, 306 W. McDowell St., Morganton. At that event, patrons will meet the 30 potters exhibiting in the festival, and may purchase pottery in the juried show.

A catered dinner of beef tenderloin, yeast rolls, roasted asparagus, shrimp kabobs, twice baked potatoes and dessert will be served. Iced tea, coffee and two complimentary glasses of either wine or beer accompany the meal.

Entertainment will be provided by well-known dulcimer maker and musician Allen Daveaux and band.

Tickets are \$40 and must be purchased by May 10. Call the Exploring Joara office to reserve tickets at 828-439-2463 or purchase online at the festival website, www.joarapotteryfestival.org.

The main event will be 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. May 18 at the Old Armory. Admission to the festival is \$4, children 12 and under free. Attendees of the Friday evening preview party also have complimentary admission on Saturday. All entrance fees go directly to the Exploring Joara Foundation, a 501(c) 3 non-profit organization that promotes public outreach and education in archaeology through educational programming, archaeological surveys and excavations of Native American and European settlements.

The foundation takes its name from Joara, the major Native American town in the upper Catawba Valley visited by 16th-century Spanish expeditions led by Hernando de Soto and Juan Pardo. Pardo built Fort San Juan near the town in 1567, creating the oldest European settlement in the interior of the United States. Evidence of Joara and Fort San Juan has been unearthed at the Berry archaeological site in northern Burke County.

Numerous sherds of Native American and European pottery have been uncovered at Joara, known locally as the “Berry site.” These sherds include blue Spanish majolica, which provides key evidence of Spanish presence and critical dating. Evidence from the Berry site has rewritten the pre-Colonial history of North America, and has been covered in the National Geographic, Smithsonian and Archaeology Magazine, as well as the UNC-TV documentary “The First Lost Colony.” Visit www.exploringjoara.org .