



Macon, Georgia's
International

Cherry Blossom FESTIVAL



35 YEARS

**MOST CREATIVE / EFFECTIVE
NEWS STUNT**





OVERVIEW INFORMATION

Introduction & background of main event

Macon, Georgia's International Cherry Blossom Festival is a special, storied 10-day celebration in one of the liveliest cities in the south. Macon is keyed in the record books of soul and southern rock by the likes of Otis Redding, Little Richard, and the Allman Brothers Band. For a festival founded upon "love, beauty, and international friendship," our hearts sing most, every March, when we revel in the blooming of 350,000 Yoshino Cherry trees. People from all around the world visit the town referred to by the Congressional Records as the Cherry Blossom Capital of the World. The 2017 festival dates were March 24th-April 2nd, where eager attendees could visit various new exciting events as well as the comfort of their legendary festival favorites. This year, we reached our momentous 35th year as the Pinkest Party on Earth! Every year, tens of thousands attend the Festival at Central City Park, Cherry Blossom's premier legacy event. We welcome those from all over the area, the state, the country, and the world, to embark on a 10-day adventure and celebration of the Yoshino Cherry Trees. The Festival at Central City Park is the premier destination for making memories with your friends, family, and loved ones. From the top-tier amusement rides to the decadent, hearty food vendors, and beyond, attendees flock to this age old festival favorite, and this year was no exception... It helped, however, to have 13WMAZ Chief Meteorologist Ben Jones apart of the fun.

A detailed description of the news stunt

Ben Jones to 13WMAZ is like the Cherry Blossom Festival to Macon, both coincide seamlessly. Ben decided to have his live shot featuring him on a ride which oscillated horizontally, called the "X-Factory." What an adventure that ensued. The ride began slowly, at first; he thought so, at least. He vividly explained, while rather terrified, the magnitude of the ride and the speed upon which it reached. He joked that he had just eaten a cheeseburger and 4 corndogs. Because he is such a professional, he even did his weathercast while on the ride and at one point yelled, "Where is Carolyn Crayton when you need her?!" Carolyn Crayton is the festival founder and is one of the most loving, caring, and gracious people in the world. He also mentioned the return of the Cherry Blossom street party, which was a memorable, newsworthy event itself.

How did the news stunt fit in to the overall media campaign for your overall event?

During the 5PM and 6PM Newscasts, local stations are encouraged to have a live shot from Central City Park. This year, Ben Jones and 13WMAZ went above and beyond to promote the rides and also gave people a good laugh.

Sponsor involvement

13WMAZ has always been an outstanding media partner and sponsor. We ran three commercials promoting the Festival at Central City Park, the return of the Street Party, and the celebratory Grand Finale. In total there was a field production time of 2 hours, post production time of 8 hours, and total production cost of \$1,300. The commercial featuring Central City Park, and specifically our efforts to show appreciation to those who have served and are currently serving in the military, for Military Day, aired 62 times at a value of \$6,415.00. Their total broadcast plus production time was \$18,275.00. They provided banners at their three sponsored events mentioned above. Specifically at the Festival at Central City Park, where the news stunt occurred, they sponsored the "Kids Zone" which was full of rides and fun, fun, fun!

Was there an increase in media coverage for your event as a result of the stunt?

13WMAZ has a huge presence in central Georgia and Chief Meteorologist Ben Jones has a huge following and is favored among viewers in the area. When they posted the video to social media, it had 40 shares, 17,400 views, and 261 likes. They have the largest television viewership in the area. We heard from those who watched that evening that although it made them want to eat all of the delicious food at the park **after** they ride the rides, they were still going to make it to the park for all the fun. Other networks also broadcasted live at Central City Park, but just did so with food and learned from Ben to do their live shots in front of the rides, instead of on them.



SUPPORTING QUESTION

**What did you do to update/change this promotion from the year before?
Were your updates/changes successful?**

We implanted an increased push for media presence at the Festival at Central City Park, and especially at peak news times, for promotional purposes. By building and maintaining positive connections and rapport with 13WMAZ, we were thrilled at their continuous coverage throughout the festival.

SUPPORTING MATERIALS



13WMAZ Chief Meteorologist Ben Jones reporting live from the Festival at Central City Park during the 6PM primetime newscast on the "X-Factory."



Ben yelled, "Where is Carolyn Crayton when you need her?!" Carolyn Crayton is the festival founder and one of the most influential, kind people in the world.