Le Grande Boucherie set for this weekend

ST. MARTINVILLE — Forty to fifty-thousand people are expected to attend the 12th annual “La Grande Boucherie des Cajuns,” set for Sunday, Feb 9.

Sales booths, a fais-do-do, cracklin’ makin’, rooster fights and the butchering of the hog are all part of this traditional event.

A 10-K run will be held in conjunction with the Boucherie Sunday at 8 a.m.

Registration for the run starts at 7 a.m. the day of the race at the St. Martinville Primary School, North Main Street near the stadium.

The festival will be held at the St. Martin Parish Industrial Park on La 31, north of St. Martinville and adjacent to the Martin Mills complex.

Festivities are scheduled to start at 9 a.m. and last until 5:30 p.m. or so.

The schedule looks like this: 9 a.m. — opening ceremonies; 9 a.m.-5:30 p.m. — fais-do-do; 11:30 a.m. — boucherie (butchering of hog); 11:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. — demonstrations; and 5:30 p.m. — festival closes.

Local bands will be providing the music for the fais-do-do.

Acadiana Breakdown cranks up at 9 a.m., followed by Rockin’ Doopsie at noon. Atchafalaya will play from 3-5 p.m.

Demonstrations include the 11:30 a.m. hog butchering, the cracklin’ making at noon, and the rooster fights at 1 p.m.

Plenty of food will be on hand at the sales booths — “Cajun Power” pork jambalaya, ham sandwiches, boudin, sausage, pork chops, hogshead cheese, soft drinks, mixed drinks, wine and beer.

Teddy Eastin is chairman of the festival. He is assisted by a 13-member committee in the St. Martin Jaycees-sponsored event.

The boucherie has a colorful history, one that is uniquely Cajun.

Mac Greig started it in 1968 as an effort to preserve French and Cajun Louisiana customs and language.

Families, sometimes entire communities, gathered for these feasts in the days before the luxuries of ice and refrigeration.

Each family attending would bring a dish — fricassee ranchee, boudin, andouillette, fromage, gratons, salt pork, and of course, the pig.

The participants took turns bringing the hog.

The St. Martinville Jaycees sponsored the first “La Grande Boucherie des Cajuns” in 1975, with the help of Greig.

Money raised by the function goes toward a variety of community causes.

The Jaycees have donated funds to the St. Martin Parish Sheriff’s Department, Thanksgiving meals for the needy, as well as various donations to public and private schools, among other charitable contributions.

Limited on-site parking will be available this year at $2 per car and $5 per recreational vehicle.

For more information, call Eastin at (318) 394-6242 or Tommy McMath at 394-9721.

For information on the 10-K run, call Eastin or Jim Bienvenu at 394-5320.