

Kim Stefansson  
Escambia County School District  
Public Relations Coordinator  
[kstefansson@escambia.k12.fl.us](mailto:kstefansson@escambia.k12.fl.us)  
850 469-6219 (Office)  
850-393-0539 (Cell)

NEWS RELEASE  
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### **Annual Fishing Rodeo Raises Funds for Friday Snack Packs *ECSD Maintenance Department's Event Set for Labor Day Weekend***

Pensacola, FL: Calling all anglers who like to fish for a good cause! The Escambia County School District's Maintenance Department's Annual Family Fishing Rodeo is set to begin Friday evening with a Captain's Meeting at the Grand Lagoon Yacht Club at 6:30 p.m.

Funds raised through tickets purchased by competitors and through sponsorships and donations will help the maintenance department help local students.

Chuck Peterson, ECSD Maintenance Department Director explains that support for this event helps them purchase food to be sent home in students' backpacks on Fridays.

"Approximately 60% of Escambia County's students are eligible for free or reduced priced meals at school. Our personnel noticed a few years ago that there were students coming in Monday morning who teachers could tell had not had enough to eat over the weekend," explained Peterson. His staff realized that this was something they could help address. The first year they pooled resources and helped around 25 students by sending snacks home with them on Fridays. But they wanted to do more, so the Family Fishing Rodeo was started.

"We try to find food items that kids like, are nutritional, and are easy to open," said Scott Stillman, a member of the Maintenance Department's backpack team. "We spend about \$2.25 weekly, \$9.00 a month or \$90.00 a year, on each student and work hard to find items they do not need to use a stove to prepare."

They also recruited help from students in the Pensacola High School, International Baccalaureate program. The original group graduated this summer after creating a website – [backpackprojectusa.com](http://backpackprojectusa.com) – designing a logo and planning multiple events and recruiting business partners. Together, the IB Team of high school students and the maintenance department brought the number of students served last year up to 355! The goal this year is to raise enough funds to match or exceed that number.

Along the way, they also gained a partnership with all three Escambia County Sonny's BBQ restaurant locations. The restaurants supported last year's events by sponsoring the dinner at the Captain's meeting and donating drinks and sides for the Sunday Fish Fry. Most recently, they encouraged their customers to donate food items or money by offering them Sonny's Bonus Cards. In addition, the Escambia County Council of PTAs has helped by raising donations during their annual leadership training and this year the Workforce Education instructors took up over \$750 in donations at their inservice held a few days before school started.

"We can't thank everyone enough for all of the support, we try to acknowledge them at the awards ceremony on Sunday, but nothing we can say is adequate," added Stillman.

Details about the Fishing Rodeo are as follows:

ECSD's Maintenance Dept's Family Fishing Rodeo

Sept 2 - 4, 2016

Location for everything listed: Grand Lagoon Yacht Club, 10653 Gulf Beach Hwy  
Captain's Meeting will be Friday, Sept. 2, 6:30 p.m., Food and refreshments provided.  
Tickets to compete are available at the Captains Meeting and Gray's Tackle, Gulf Breeze Bait & Tackle, and Outcast Bait & Tackle. Open division tickets are \$15.00 (ages 10 and up). Tickets for Junior Division are \$1.00.

The Open Division includes 17 categories. First place in each category will win \$150.00, 2nd place wins \$100.00 and 3rd place wins \$50.00

The Junior Division includes 19 categories. Prizes are trophies for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place. All 1st place winners will have their names entered into a drawing for a Grand Prize Bicycle!

Fishing begins after midnight.

Weigh-ins on Saturday - 2:00 - 5:00 p.m.

Weigh-ins on Sunday - 2:00 - 4:00

Fish Fry, Silent Auction and Opportunity Drawings on Sunday - 3:30 - 5:00 p.m.

Awards announced at 5:00 p.m.

Each competitive angler's ticket includes one meal at Sunday's Fish Fry. Additional Fish Fry tickets will be available for \$5.00 for adults and \$1.00 for children under 10 years old. Opportunity Drawing tickets will be available for \$1.00 or one or 7 for \$5.00.

Like them on Facebook on their page, ECSD Family Fishing Rodeo.

Media queries about Escambia County School District topics should be directed to Kim Stefansson, at 850-469-6219. Go to Escambia Schools Public Relations on [www.facebook.com/ecsd.public](http://www.facebook.com/ecsd.public) to see pictures of recent events.

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