

Black History Quiz Bowl is a backdrop for growth

By Sean Neal

Staff writer

Children and teens can put their knowledge of black history to the test, and families and community members alike have an opportunity to express a "reason to ride" while learning about the military.

Today, the organization known as GOTDAD hosts its 11th annual Black History Quiz Bowl, and the third "Ride 2 Freedom" community convoy. Both are at New Life Family Life Center, 1420 Hoke Loop Road.

GOTDAD, or Getting Opportunities Through Dedication and Devotion, is a group of military and civilian fathers, according to the group's website. Joe McGee, the director, said the members advocate family and community safety.

McGee said the phrase "for when you truly own your past, you own your future," is a driving theme of the event, which begins at 9 a.m.

The questions are geared toward youth ages 10 to 18. And while Black History Month serves as the event's backdrop, not all questions are related to black history.

"We want to also incorporate business and eco-



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nomics," he said. "If you hear the word NASDAQ, you should know what that means."

The judges include retired Air Force veteran and former City Councilwoman Val Applewhite, and Lacy Moore, a local business owner.

The event has been a constant for McGee, who hopes the participants have fun while learning more about their heritage.

"The most memorable moment is when a kid said to me, 'Hey, remember me? I was in the Black History Quiz Bowl,'" he said. "And they're about to go off to college, and they're telling me they still remember black history facts. That's the goal."

In recent years, a "Ride 2 Freedom" community convoy has been added that takes cars and motorcycles from the venue to Airborne & Special Operations Museum and N.C. Veterans Park for a free tour.

On Saturday, following an awards presentation, riders will start lining up at 11:30 a.m. to embark on the ride.

The first Ride 2 Freedom event in 2011 recognized blacks in the military. In 2012, GOTDAD recognized Iraq War veterans. Now it stands for any reason to ride.

"Being a military town, the foundation of our community is the veterans," said McGee.

The Ride 2 Freedom community convoy was recognized in 2012 on MSNBC's "The Rachel Maddow Show" as the nation's second civilian-organized event for Iraq veterans.

Last year, the Ride 2 Freedom convoy was rained out, but with today's forecast predicting partly cloudy skies, McGee said he expects more participation.

McGee said he wants the event to be inclusive for residents of all races.

"What the ride for freedom has morphed into, everyone has a reason to ride," McGee said. "They may have just lost a loved one. They're riding for that individual."

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