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Workers construct the main stage for FloydFest on Thursday afternoon in Floyd County. The main stage is being constructed in a centuries-old style that does not use nails. The stage is scheduled to be completed this weekend.

Shooting Star reincarnated as FloydFest stage

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FLOYD — New to the FloydFest stages this August will be an old favorite: the Shooting Star roller coaster.

Scrap wood from the coaster, a relic of Salem's Lakeside Park, will be reincarnated into three separate stages at the annual festival combining world and Appalachian music.

The remnants of the coaster will be hardly recognizable to visitors at the Aug. 13-15 event. The old tracks will be repainted and used as lumber in the

beer garden stage, the Hill Holler stage and the dance tent stage.

"We're calling it the next 'stage' of entertainment for the Shooting Star roller coaster," said Bob Forman, the festival's construction manager.

The permanent stages also represent a turning point for FloydFest, which, in its third year, is starting to establish itself on the international music scene.

This year, its headliners will include Dar Williams, Eek-a-Mouse, the African Showboyz and many others.

Organizers say the



Bob Forman shows off the wood from the Shooting Star roller coaster, which was popular at Salem's old Lakeside Amusement Park. The wood is being used to build three stages, though not the main stage, for FloydFest.

See STAGE, 3



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Andrew Skidmore (from left), Clayton Warstler and Scott Belcher work on the main stage construction for FloydFest Thursday afternoon. Thanks to a \$75,000 sponsorship, Dreaming Creek Timber Frame Homes, a Powhatan-based company, is raising the stage frame with a centuries-old craft that uses wooden pegs instead of nails.

STAGE: Organizers save coaster from trash

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coaster-stage transformation is special because a lot of people have fond memories of the thrill ride. Lakeside Park entertained its last visitor in 1986, but nothing was ever done with the scraps of wood from the dismantled coaster.

Builder Kevin Poff bought the former amusement park property a year and a half ago. He was ready to send the Shooting Star scraps to a junkyard, but first placed a newspaper ad asking if anyone had a use for the wood. The ad caught a festival organizer's eye, and the loose pieces were soon on the backs of two big trucks

headed to Floyd.

"I was really glad that somebody could use it," said Poff, who is preparing to open the Lakeside Golf Center on the site. "I just hated to throw it away."

But because FloydFest builders could only take about a third of the wood, Poff threw some, but not all of it, out. He said he would be willing to give the rest away to anyone who is interested.

The old coaster cost \$225,000 to construct. At 84 feet tall, it spanned four-fifths of a mile and zipped its trains through the course in two minutes.

Although the main stage will not be built with roller coaster wood, its

construction is also unique. Thanks to a \$75,000 sponsorship, Dreaming Creek Timber Frame Homes, a Powhatan-based company, is raising the stage frame with a centuries-old craft that uses wooden pegs instead of nails. That stage is scheduled to be completed this weekend.

Construction is just beginning on the other stages. Eighteen-foot-long pieces of track, covered in white and red chipping paint with their metal guides still attached, are scattered in piles on one portion of the FloydFest site, which is about 50 acres. Forman said he thinks some people may attend the festival just to see what the builders do with the old coaster.

Floydfest

When: August 13-15

Where: Floyd County

Performers include:

Dar Williams, Donna The Buffalo, Enter The Haggis, Sam Bush, Del McCoury Band, Acoustic Syndicate, plus many others.

Tickets: \$40-\$50 for individual days, \$115 for weekend pass.

For more information:
(540) 745-3378 or
floydfest.com

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"There's something alive about it," he said. "It holds a lot of dear memories to a lot of people."