

It's All About The Community

For 72 years Mixon Fruit Farms has been growing some of the best citrus in the State of Florida. In 2006, Janet and Dean Mixon took the farm in another direction. "We still have a tremendous emphasis on fruit," says Dean Mixon, but we knew that we had to diversify. Part of the changes meant getting more involved in the community. "We are an orange grove and a business, almost in the middle of town," says Janet Mixon. We wanted to offer things here that could help other businesses and provide a wonderful atmosphere for families.

A tram tour through the grove also makes a stop at the Wildlife Rescue Inc.'s educational facility. People can learn about the citrus industry and get up close to local wildlife. Concerts in the grove were added where you can come and enjoy the fresh scent of orange blossoms, enjoy music, dance or take a walk through the gardens.

Two years ago, Mixon started having large festivals twice a year. One festival is to celebrate the harvest of the oranges. This festival is the weekend before Thanksgiving. Another festival celebrates the orange blossoms in March. There will be rides, crafters, entertainment and lots

of food. The Gulf Coast Adventures group will also be bringing a bear show, big cats and more. Southeast and Manatee High Schools' culinary arts programs have a cooking competition and there will be a Fashion Show and Wine tasting Luncheon on November 16. On November 11, there will be a Health and Business Fair.



"The fair in March had over 1000 people attending, and over 75 vendors," says Janet Mixon. The custom-

ers were offered free health screenings and give-a-ways. Door prizes were given away all day. "Events like this help businesses promote themselves in a very inexpensive way," says Dean, "and free health screenings help everyone." The Mixons post all their events on their website: mixon.com. They are located at 2525 27th St. E., Bradenton. (941) 748-5829.