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Highway 64 Opens, Signals Beginning of Ocoee Adventure Center 2010 Rafting Season

COPPERHILL, TN -- April 16 marks the re-opening of Highway 64 through some of the most scenic areas of Tennessee. And the next day, Saturday, April 17, is the beginning of the 2010 Rafting Season for Ocoee Adventure Center, one of the most unique rafting experiences on the Ocoee.

"We are thrilled that the road is finally re-opened, but that's not the only reason we're predicting a better-than-ever season," said Larry Mashburn, president of Ocoee Adventure Center. "After a long and cold winter, many people are excited to get outside and experience the outdoors with their friends and families. The Ocoee is a dam-controlled river with a consistent water flow so our guests are always guaranteed great water levels. And each trip is a unique adventure experiencing Class III and IV whitewater on the Ocoee."

Ocoee Adventure Center offers guided raft trips along the upper and middle sections of the Ocoee River. Each is about five miles long and takes approximately three-and-a-half to four hours.

"We believe in having fun on the water and taking our time with guests who raft with us," Mashburn said. "The majority of our guides have been with us for several years and know every rapid, eddy and wave in the river, so the trips are exhilarating adventures."

Highway 64 was closed last November following a massive rockslide. As a result eastbound traffic from Cleveland and Chattanooga was diverted north through Tellico and around the gorge to Ducktown.

"The Tennessee Department of Transportation has taken the opportunity to widen the road at 15-mile-per-hour curve midway between the put-in and the take-out so that the bus and vehicle passage there is now extremely safe," Mashburn said.

The roadway repairs delayed the opening of the rafting season by nearly six weeks. Fortunately, the rockslide did not damage any of the dams or the river's infrastructure. The

rockslide came just feet of hitting the Ocoee #2 dam which is the “middle” put-in where rafters put in to begin their adventure.

The Ocoee River is located in Southeast Tennessee and was the site for the whitewater slalom events in the 1996 Centennial Olympics. It is the only Olympic River in America that people can experience the exact same conditions, rapids, and water levels that the Olympic competitors experienced. The Ocoee is a Class III and IV river and is characterized by large rapids with names such as Humongous, Godzilla, Table Saw, and Grumpys.

Ocoee Adventure Center is locally owned and operated and has been operating on the Ocoee since 1997. Rafting trips run on both the Upper Olympic section and the Middle section. Ocoee Adventure Center is a one-stop-shop not only offering whitewater rafting adventures but also offers guided mountain biking, whitewater kayak instruction, and flat water kayaking trips in the Cherokee National Forest as well.

Ocoee River Rafting is open for rafting on the weekends only in the months of April and May. Beginning May 27, rafting is open five days a week (Thursday through Monday) through Labor Day and then weekends only until the end of October.

Please call the reservation office at 1-888-732-8622 for trip times and availability or book online at www.ocoeeadventurecenter.com.

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