

Port Harbor Family Fest to debut this weekend

Written by KRISTYN HALBIG ZIEHM
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Live music, children's activities, food, prizes and more await visitors to city's newest downtown celebration

Port Washington's newest festival — Port Harbor Family Fest — will kick off the summer season this weekend.

There will be something for everyone, including children's activities, a pizza-eating contest, a variety of music and even an adult scavenger hunt in the city's taverns.

The city's farmers market will complement the festival on Saturday morning, and an arts show will be held at Blue Heron Artisans Gallery on Saturday.

The Port Washington marina will also be open for touring Saturday as part of National Marina Day.

"We tried to make sure a family could come down and not be bored after 20 minutes," organizer Kris Raymond said. "There's plenty of stuff to do. We want to provide a high-quality, free event that will bring people downtown."

While weather will play a role in the weekend's events, the show will go on even if it rains, she added.

"We all know this hinges on the weather, but we have a tent for the entertainment just in case," Raymond said.

The festival will run from 5 to 10 p.m. Friday, June 7, and noon to 10 p.m. Saturday, June 8, in Rotary Park and the parking lot behind Duluth Trading Co.

Although sponsored by the Grafton Blues Association, the festival is not intended to be a blues event, Raymond said.

"We do more than blues," she said.

At 7:30 p.m. Friday, the headline act will be Eliminator, a Chicago-based band that plays the music of ZZ Top.

"They're a lot of fun, and they usually bring a lot of cheap sunglasses to hand out to the crowd," Raymond said.

On Saturday, the headline act is Tim Castle and Young Southern, a country band that's won a number of WAMI awards.

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“He puts on a really good show and brings in a good crowd,” Raymond said.

“But we have something for everyone — a jug band, hard-rock band, blues band. We have a band that covers music of the '90s and newer.”

Inflatable rides will be found in Rotary Park for children to play in throughout the festival.

The adult scavenger hunt will begin at 9:30 p.m. Friday, and participants will have until 4 p.m. Saturday to get their cards stamped at the 12 participating taverns in the city. No purchase is required to get the cards stamped, Raymond noted.

The cards will then be used in a prize drawing for everything from gift certificates at downtown businesses to passes at the outdoor pool.

People must get their cards stamped at two secret bars — their identity is known only to Raymond and her husband — to qualify for a drawing for a charter fishing trip.

On Saturday, there will be karaoke in the Rotary Park gazebo from 2 to 6 p.m., and BMX team shows at 1, 2:30 and 3:30 p.m.

Friendly Fire will perform fire tricks, juggle, tell stories and hold sword fights at 2, 4 and 6 p.m. Saturday.

The pizza-eating contest will be held at 2:15 p.m. Saturday.

If weather permits, a sand pit will be installed on the grounds. Sidewalk chalk drawing will also be done.

The Ozaukee YMCA will hold activities for people of all ages, and the Ozaukee Humane Society will bring adoptable pets for visits.

AT&T will set up a WiFi hot zone in downtown, providing free service to people during the festival.

Vendors will also be on hand, selling merchandise, food and beverages.

The food will include a fish fry on Friday night.

Holding a festival in Port Washington was a natural for the Blues Association, Raymond said.

The group is best known for the successful Paramount Blues Festival in Grafton, which began in 2006 as a way to pay tribute to the artists who recorded in the 1920s and '30s for the Paramount label in Grafton, a division of the former Wisconsin Chair Co. in Port Washington. It is that connection that makes Port Washington the ideal site for the association to hold its next

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event, Raymond said.



“It just makes sense for us to expand into Port,” she said.

Raymond noted that organizers had only about two months to put the festival together, but said they are already looking forward to next year.

“We have a completely different scope for next year,” she said. “We’re already working on it.”