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Third annual Port downtown celebration will add portion of Grand Avenue to Franklin Street activities

Port Washington residents and visitors will flock to downtown Sunday, May 30, for the third annual Community Street Festival.

This year, the festival will expand from Franklin Street onto Grand Avenue as new activities are added to the lineup.

“We’re very excited,” said Cathy Wilger, chairman of the festival’s organizing committee. “There are things people will recognize again and new activities, too. There’s a mix of activities for families to relax and have fun with.”

This year’s festival falls during Memorial Day weekend, a fact that organizers hope will draw more people to the event.

“Not everyone goes away for Memorial Day,” said Sara Grover, executive director of the Port Washington Main Street Program, which sponsors the festival. “We’re hoping that the people who stay in town will come on down and enjoy the many activities and see what our downtown shops and restaurants have to offer.”

The festival will also serve as a kickoff to events commemorating the City of Port Washington's founding 175 years ago. Birthday balloons will festoon the streets, and birthday cake will be served.

The street festival will run from noon to 5 p.m., an hour longer than in past years, and encompass Franklin Street between Jackson Street and Grand Avenue as well as Grand Avenue from Wisconsin Street east to the lakefront.

While Franklin Street and East Grand Avenue will be closed throughout the festival, one lane will be open on Grand Avenue to accommodate people staying at the Holiday Inn Harborview.

People are asked not to park on Franklin Street Sunday morning to accommodate the festival.

Among the returning attractions will be a cakewalk, children's games, bouncy room, face painting, chalk drawings, dance and fitness exhibitions at the Performing Arts Stage and musical performances.

This year's event will feature the band Otto Day and the Nites at 1 p.m., as well as music by Matt Tyner and Mike Brumm.

A variety of construction equipment will be on hand for children to explore. Photographs of the children will be taken on the vehicles.

Four charter boats will be giving free tours throughout the afternoon.

New this year will be a hole-in-one contest, with participants teeing off from Rotary Park to a hole across the west slip on the coal dock. The hole is 160 yards from the tee.

The prize is $1,000 cash. If two people make holes-in-one, a shootoff will be held for a second prize, a stay at the Fox Hills Resort.

The hole-in-one contest will cost $5 for three balls or $10 for eight.

Downtown businesses will offer a wide range of shopping opportunities, and 23 eateries will provide a variety of outdoor drinking and dining choices.

The Main Street Program will begin collecting photographs of the city for its first photo calendar at the festival.

"We're looking for photos of Port Washington, the people of Port Washington. We're looking for life in Port Washington," Grover said.

Photographs will be collected through July 1. Selected photos will be used by the Main Street Program for everything from the organization's Web site to brochures and the calendar, which

will first be available in August during Maritime Festival, Grover said.

The Port Washington Street Festival has quickly become a tradition for many city residents, Wilger said.

“What we’ve been told is a lot of Port Washington people come to this, they see people they haven’t seen for a while and end up staying the afternoon,” she said.

“They feel it’s a nice little community festival. It showcases the businesses we have here in town and lets people experience them. It offers something for everyone in the family.”

READY TO CELEBRATE this weekend at Port Washington’s third annual Community Street Festival on Franklin Street and East Grand Avenue and representing a few of the activities to be found there are (sitting) Angel Tello of Tello’s Grille and Cafe, (standing, from left) festival chairman Cathy Wilger, Mark “Chico” Poull of Schooner Pub, City Administrator Mark Grams, who is organizing a hole-in-one contest, and drummer Gary Klever and guitarist Jim Bathke, both of the band Otto Day and The Nites. Photo by Sam Arendt