

Artpark, festival organizers planning as state allows

Continued from Page 1
game. (And) last Saturday, also held a basketball game using those guidelines that we got from the Buffalo Bills. So, following from that for event spaces that are less than 10,000 – those can begin reopening at 33% capacity with up to 100 people indoors and again 200 people outdoors. Again, there still will be guidance for social distancing and masks. If we want to go above those limits, you can go up to 150 people indoor with testing requirements for, going from 100 to 150, and then for outdoor events, up to 500 people outdoors with testing. And again, social distancing and face covering will be required by all the attendees.”

The Empire Pass program has been tested to see if it provides a practical way for people to return to events without spreading the coronavirus.

Mujica said, “On the Empire Pass program, we have an app

that we have been working with IBM on that app, when you get tested – with your consent – the results of that test can be reported automatically to the app and you can then show proof of a negative test upon entrance to any of these events that require testing.

“That app has been tested right now, both at Barclays and Madison Square Garden, and those tests have been successful. So, once we get the approvals, the app will be available for download on both platforms, on Google, on Apple platforms; people download to their smartphones. And that will allow someone to show the result of their test, whether it be a PCR test, which (will be) valid for up to 72 hours, or rapid test, which will be valid for six hours. In addition, though, if you don’t want to use an app, you will be able to download a paper result of your test that you can then print out and use that to demonstrate your negative test.

“So again, this is all ... started with the Bills games; it has been tested at two events recently, the most recent one as early as last night. And that will be available and we’ll start rolling that out, again, beginning within a week. And you can use that to go to some of these events when we want to get to the larger numbers, like I said, to go to 250 for indoor events, or up to 500 people for outdoor events.”

The governor also announced domestic travelers to New York state who have been vaccinated no longer have to quarantine or test out within 90 days of their full vaccination.



In lieu of concerts and large-scale events, Artpark & Company reimagined its 2020 season and offered socially distanced programming such as the Alarm Will Sound performance of “Ten Thousand Birds” by John Luther Adams.

Local Impact

With regard to local events, Artpark & Company Vice President of Concerts & Marketing Dave Wedekindt said, “Artpark is intending to present events this summer, and we continue to monitor the situation and work closely with New York state officials in our planning. As our season traditionally begins in late May or early June, we anticipate guidelines and protocols will continue to evolve.”

Niagara River Region Chamber of Commerce President Jennifer Pauly said, “It is refreshing to finally receive some sort of guidance to plan for the 2021 season. Event organizers have been in limbo – trying to plan, but for many different scenarios that take time and resources. This

new guidance will work for some but, for others who plan large events, continue to put a limit on what can be done from an operational and financial standpoint.

“I’m happy that some of our members are going to be able to continue to plan for small concerts, programs and events. Large events that rely on 10,000-plus, however, are still put in a position where hard decisions have to be made. Many people do not realize the financial, logistical and operational planning that goes into large events. Even if an event is months away, those aspects are put into place a year in advance.

“The chamber is going ahead with planning some of our events that are later in the year, but we have already had to make a tough decision on many of them.

At the end of the day, decisions are made in order to be financially responsible as well as upholding a high standard of safety and integrity that our region is known for.”

The Lewiston Smelt Festival and Taste of Lewiston – both May events – have already been canceled for 2021. Other events, including the Garden-Fest (June 19-20) and Lewiston Art Festival (Aug. 14-15), are still slated to take place – pending approval from state and local health officials. The Northwest Jazz Festival (Aug. 27-28) isn’t as certain.

Lewiston Jazz Festival Inc. Music Director Tony Zambito said, “Any news on guidelines is certainly welcomed. Our hope all along has been to be able to produce the Northwest Jazz Festival in 2021. Knowing full well our hope is predicated on the guidelines. Given these latest from New York state, it is clear now we will need to act on the information at hand.

“Preparing for the Jazz Festival takes many months in advance planning. Thus, we must deal with the reality that clear guidelines may not come until summer or early fall for a festival of our size. Which will make putting on the festival at the level of quality that draws 30,000 plus people infeasible. Both operationally and financially. Although difficult, we will have to explore alternatives and make some hard decisions for 2021.”

GM/Managing Editor Joshua Maloni contributed to this report.

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IN THE NEWS

SNGC shows postponed

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, performances, shows featuring The Temptations and The Four Tops (Aug. 13), and Ced-

ric The Entertainer (Sept. 17) at Seneca Niagara Resort & Casino have been postponed. New show dates will be announced once confirmed.

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