

Kiwanis Club adjusting festival events to suit COVID guidelines



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Continued from Page 1 us, we're (still) determining that," he said. "Right now, from the phone calls and the materials that we've had so far, it looks like everybody wants to be back. We can't determine that until the contracts are signed and sent back in. But we anticipate that that would happen.

"As Dean just told you, we do have more space this year, but we need to adjust to fill our needs, and the rides' needs, and what the needs are for COVID-19. So, all that planning will take place between now and the actual festival as to how we do the field."

"We have some great people who help us through that. Severson's, through Gary Rose and Frank Fracassi, both help us with allocating

the space for everything," Wolfgang continued. "We've been in the process of developing that now for six months, once we found out that the grandstand was coming down, and the stage was being moved."

Kiwanis President Lee Allan stressed volunteer support from the community will be critical this year. In times past, the 120-member club has been able to rely on a number of outside sources for additional manpower at the festival. Included were Niagara County Jail inmates who worked on the actual construction of the field, plus community service youth from the courts, local youth organizations and scores of local volunteers who worked the many facets of the festival. Much of that has changed for 2021, due to COVID-19.

Other event favorites are expected back.

"We plan on doing the usual," Wolfgang said. "The dance companies on Sunday, the cheerleading on Friday night. We still are going to be working with the schools and the youth groups that put on the cheerleading."

"We also plan on having the parade as usual," Wolfgang said. "Dean was very anxious to make sure that we were going to do that. We get permission through the village to use (Center Street). We also get permission from the Department of Transportation, because we are blocking that street from people using it. Granted that those permissions are OK'd, we plan on having the regular parade starting at 11 o'clock Saturday morning, and we plan on having the usual number of floats. I've already had bands contact me, and I haven't even sent a letter out yet."

matter to us - that we can hold the full festival, which is our plan and our goal for this year."

For the Community

Wolfgang said that, despite the challenges of COVID-19, presenting the Peach Festival - a Lewiston staple since 1958 - has been first and foremost in the eyes of Kiwanians.

"First of all, we've been talking about the Peach Festival and planning it, for now this is the second year. We didn't hold it last year, but we did plan to hold it last year until we found out we couldn't," he said. "So we've tried to make the clarifications as to what the regulations or rules are going to be. We decided early ... we're going to hold the festival, even if this year we're just doing the peach shortcakes.

"We need volunteers! In the community, if anybody's (interested) in helping out, go to our Facebook page and message us," Allan said. "We're going to need as many volunteers (from) throughout the community (as we can)."

At the Peach Festival

"Let's talk about peaches," Wolfgang said. "First, our contract with Bittner-Singer Orchards is definite. We've talked with them; we're set for our supply. We'll have shortcake. Di-Camillo's will be providing us again with the cakes. So those things are happening; they're in order. And we've ordered all the tents, the apparatus that we need to operate.

Reviewing the festival's four-night schedule, Beltrano said, "Thursday night, we'll turn the stage over to the Peach Queen contest, where they'll be able to get onto whatever our platform is this year, what stage we have set up, and be able to run through their routines and walk the stage and get a feel for it.

"Friday night, we generally bring in a local band to come up on stage. We're hoping to have Rusty Nickel back this year, as long as the band is still together. We'll get them up Friday night.

"Saturday night we are going for Elvis. Terry Buchwald has done a fantastic job for us; he puts on a great show. Over the last few years, the show was expanded and he just continues to do great things for us up there on the stage.

"And Sunday night is the Peach Queen contest, so we'll have them up there."

Beltrano said space considerations also have gone into parade planning.

"For us, as far as the parade goes, we can't control who comes to watch it or how many," he said. "What our concern would be is how do we have to space out floats? Each unit in the parade, you may have to stand a certain distance apart. For us, that's what we would be looking at, for what the parade would be.

"I don't know if the state would mandate barricades along the side of the street, something like that. Our main concern, right now, is if we can have the parade, and how we position our units."

Beltrano said discussions with the Village of Lewiston are underway.

"Right now, we are in the process of submitting our forms to get permissions for all these things," he said. "Our plan for everything right now is full steam ahead. We're planning it as if COVID isn't even around this year.

"We will adjust, if we need to, based on what the regulations are at the time. But as we see, even just moving from January to now, a lot of the restrictions are coming off. So, we're hoping by the time that September rolls around - and one of the best things for us, is that our festival happens so late in the year - that there might not be any restrictions at that time; or if there are, that there's so few that it's not going to


"Second, we then came across with a number of festivals that we're only renting space to vendors and having it as food festival with no rides. That was our second area that we knew we could run this year. So, in putting all those steps together, we were getting ready to hold something this year.

"In contacting the public, with a club of 120 members, we had pretty good vibes into the community - that the community was telling us we want the Peach Festival. We wanted to hold this.


"One of the things that's hurt us this year, is by not moving the Peach Festival, we did not have the money that we normally get from holding the Peach Festival and helping the community. We did not have that type of dollars. And in one way it hurt us, because we like helping the community. And we feel this year this would be an important event in thanking the community for supporting the Peach Festival.

"But more so, you're helping our whole community in Western New York. Our one item we like to emphasize is we try to help the children. Kiwanis has been dedicated in helping the children and want to continue that. And of the people who are tired of being locked in to their houses, for the past year-and-a-half, they are now looking forward to getting out. This is a good community effort that they can participate in that (will) help our community."

For more information on the festival or to volunteer, visit Lewiston Kiwanis Club on Facebook or online at www.lewistonkiwanis.org.




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Crowds on the midway at the Peach Festival. (File photo by Wayne Peters)