

Zachary Chamber planning new, improved ZFest in March

When the Zachary Chamber of Commerce hosts "ZFest" in March, the sixth annual event will undergo a major facelift including a name change to the Zachary Arts & Music Festival, which will run March 15-18 in Zachary.

According to a news release, the Board of Directors has made substantive changes in hopes of improving the festival for 2012, although it will still "promote and enhance the economic, business and community development of Zachary."

According to the release, the board hopes the changes will cater to a broader range of Zachary residents, families and businesses and create a regional attraction.

The new and improved festival will:

- Enhance cultural elements of Zfest by focusing on regional artisans, culinary flavor and music;
- Utilize all grounds available, including both the Zachary Youth Park and the adjacent BREC Community Park;
- Partner with BREC to have a children's village designed to entertain and instruct even the youngest with various inflatables, kayak lessons, a petting zoo and much more;
- On-site parking will now be available to all festival participants;
- Reduce the duration of the event;
- With a sensitive and controlled approach, sell beverages containing alcohol;

• Recruit entertainment that will attract regional interests;

The popular festival remains free of charge. It will begin with opening ceremonies at 5 p.m. on Thursday, March 15 and will remain open to 9 p.m. The festival runs from 5 p.m. to 11 p.m. on Friday, 10 a.m. to 11 p.m. on Saturday and noon to 5 p.m. on Sunday, March 18.

Chip Mills, Executive Director of Economic Development for the Chamber, said "We are very excited about the improvements to the festival this year. We hired a professional event coordinator, Megan Andrews, to schedule and direct the festival and BREC and the City of Zachary have been wonderful partners. The last five years have been great but this is going to be a significantly different and much improved ZFest."

Mills said plans are to include as many as 100 regionally and locally renowned artists selling their works. In addition, entertainment such as Chee Weez on March 16 and Rockin' Dopsie Jr. & the Zydeco Twisters on March 17 along with other musical performances throughout the festival.

"We look forward to a fun, family-oriented event during the St. Patrick's Day weekend," said Andrews. "The new festival is designed to have families affordably and comfortably stay all weekend to enjoy a true community atmosphere."

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