



Parish of Ascension

OFFICE of COMMUNICATIONS

KENNY MATASSA
Parish President

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MEDIA CONTACT:

Contact: Martin McConnell

Email: MMcConnell@apgov.us

Phone: (225) 450-1138

Ascension Hot Air Balloon Festival Taking Shape

The 2018 edition of the Ascension Hot Air Balloon Festival is all set to take flight on Friday and Saturday, September 21 and 22 at the Lamar-Dixon Expo Center.

Festival goers can expect many improvements over previous festivals, all designed to make the experience much more enjoyable.

Festival hours are Friday, September 21 from 4 pm until 11 pm, and Saturday, September 22 from 11 am until 11 pm.

Traffic can enter the festival three ways: St. Landry Road, Edenbourne Extension, and Ashland Road; and a crew of 40 people will be on site to assist in getting everyone in and parked quickly. In addition, arrangements have been made with River Parishes Community College and Cabela's to allow parking in their lots, with a free shuttle service to the festival grounds.

Tickets for the festival are \$6 and can be purchased online ahead of time to avoid any lines. Tickets are also available at the gate, and all major credit cards are accepted.

There will be 15 regular shape balloons, 5 special shape balloons, and 3 balloons for tethered rides. Weather permitting, the tethered rides will begin at 4:30 pm both days, and continue until the 7 pm. The balloon glows begin at dusk each day, and will last for an hour and a half. The balloon glows will be followed by a spectacular fireworks show each night.

The number of carnival rides has doubled; there will be at least 23 different rides for people of all ages to enjoy. Photos of the rides are on the web site. The Children's Village has been expanded and moved inside the Trade Mart building. Face painting, crafts, petting zoo, and

P. O. Box 1659, 615 E. Worthey Rd., Gonzales, Louisiana 70707

Telephone (225) 450-1130 – Fax (225) 450-1145 – www.ascensionparish.net – facebook.com/ascensiongov

magician all return, and will be joined by a mini Ferris wheel inside, and a miniature train going around the building. A special feature this year that is sure to be a hit with the kids will be meet-and-greets with P.J. Masks.

The number of food vendors also has doubled. 13 different food outlets will be at the festival, and some will have more than one location. Each vendor will be selling their own drinks, as another way to shorten lines and lessen wait times.

The barbecue competition returns, as well as a steak competition. Both are sanctioned events.

Finally, there will be continuous live music on the stage, performing until closing time both nights. Bands include Don Berry and Rock N Horse, Something Blue, Jordan Babin, Laine Hardy, Sarah Collins, and Parish County Line.

For safety reasons, no balloons will fly into or out of Lamar-Dixon.

For a complete schedule and map of events, and to purchase tickets online, go to the Festival website: www.ascensionballooning.com.

The Festival is put on each year by Ascension Festivals and Cultural Council, Inc., a 501-C-3 nonprofit organization, and staffed by volunteers.

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Photo: Ascension Hot Air Balloon Festival Committee, Seated, Left to Right – Sherry Denig, Tiffany St. Pierre, Robert Ambeau, Celeste Harris, Ken Firmin, Shari Deslatte, and Bethany Robinson. Standing, Left to Right – Audrey Boudreaux, Mark LaCour, Jazz Traylor, Bobby Capewell, Randy Clouatre, Don Hysell, Jill Gautreau, Laurin Sharon, Joel Stein, and Dustin Montelius. Not pictured are Charles Brown, Lee Anderson, Cody Melancon, Homer Martin, and Glenn Gonzales.