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Seafood for thought

New location, same expectations as festival kicks off its 32nd year

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[Matt Algarin, Florida Freedom Newspapers](#)

While much has been made about the 32nd Annual Destin Seafood Festival's move in dates and location, Shane Moody said he is expecting his usual turnout.

"We are expecting about 27,000 to 30,000 people," said the Chamber of Commerce President and CEO. "That is our goal, and based on the number of phone calls we have received it's realistic."

And with a change in festival sites, Moody said this year's seafood festival had some challenges when it came to the setup and design. The Seafood Festival will set up shop on the Destin harbor at the Destin Fishing Fleet Marina, city of Destin Royal Melvin Heritage Park and Fisherman's Wharf Sept. 17-19.

"Of course you are going to run into a few challenges when you are in a new location," he said. "But when you are working with people who want the festival there, it makes things a lot easier."

To see the layout for the festival, see this story at thedestinlog.com.

Entertainment

Moody said throughout the weekend, festival-goers will "enjoy great entertainment" from both Starship featuring Mickey Thomas and LOVERBOY. He jokingly said "that was my high school and college years."

The festival began Friday with Starship performing their multi-platinum hits of Jefferson Airplane, Jefferson Starship, and Starship. Billboard Top 40 hits include "We Built this City," "Nothing's Gonna Stop Us Now," "Sara," and "It's Not Over Till It's Over."



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LOVERBOY, who plays Saturday at 8 p.m., has released four multiplatinum albums and many international gold albums. Hits include "Working for the Weekend," "Tum Me Loose," "The Kid is Hot Tonight," "Lucky Ones," and "Hot Girls in Love."

Other entertainment includes Black Eyed Blonde, Donnie Sundal, The Blackbirds, The Forrest Williams Band, The Sal Salaz Project, and Jones and Company.

"We have room for 8,000 to 10,000 people for the concerts," Moody said.

With the stage located down by the docks facing east, Moody said it would "butt up" to Dewey Destin's property on the harbor.

"It was so large that we could only put it in a few places," He said of the logistical challenge of setting the site up.

The festival will also feature about 40 arts and crafts vendors, prizes from the Florida Lottery and a kids' area, with a rock climb, inflatables and more.

Food

In addition to a variety of musical styles and offerings, both seafood festival newcomers and regulars will be treated to a variety of both local and exotic foods, with 20 food vendors on site.

Moody told The Log that unlike in the past, this year's Seafood Festival would have more local restaurants, mixed with some of the traditional "carnival-type" foods like pretzels and funnel cakes. Local eateries include: Louisiana Lagniappe, Fisherman's Wharf, The Back Porch, Caribbean Café, McGuire's, San Gelato and Papa John's Pizza.

Parking

Chamber of Commerce Director of Events Risa Gamer said while no parking will be available on site, "a shuttle service will be running throughout the city." Pickup locations include The Morgan's Sports Center parking lot, The Track Recreation Center's west lot and at the Downtown Destin Shopping Center (Old Time Pottery). Shuttles will run from the free parking spots 30 minutes prior to the festival opening and then 30 minutes after the festival closes.

The Destin History and Fishing Museum will provide parking for Destin Seafood Festival visitors for a donation of \$5 per car. Parking will be provided at the two parking lots adjacent to the Museum's 108 Stahlman Ave. location behind What-A-Burger on U.S. 98. Alan Laird of AJ's Seafood and Oyster Bar is donating the use of his lot in support of the Museum. Parking spaces will be available from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Sept. 18 and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sept. 19. Each car parked will receive a coupon for one free admission to the Museum and a \$5 coupon redeemable at AJ's Seafood and Oyster Bar.

Parking will also be available at St. Andrews By-the-Sea Episcopal Church, 307 Harbor Blvd., in the front lot for a \$10 donation and in the back lot on Mountain Drive for \$5. Lots will be open from 9:30 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. Sept. 18, and 12:30 to 3:30 p.m. Sept. 19. Bottled water will be available for \$1. Proceeds will help fund the church's outreach ministries in support of the homeless.

Tickets

Admission is \$5 on Friday and Sunday, \$10 on Saturday, and \$15 for weekend passes. Children under 12 are free. Admission bands are on sale and may be purchased at the Destin Area Chamber of Commerce, 4484 Legendary Drive, or from any festival admission gate. A portion of the proceeds will benefit the Destin Fishermen's Fund.

With the festival just two days away, Moody said he and his staff have been spending almost seven days a week on site, preparing for the weekend festivities. The chamber staff will also utilize "somewhere in the range"

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of 300 volunteers this year.

"We try to use as many non-profit organizations to volunteer as possible," Moody told The Log. "It helps to keep the money in the community."