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NEW BLUE WATER FEST PREPARES TO MAKE WAVES IN DOWNTOWN PORT HURON, JULY 15-17

Long after the boats leave, the festivities continue

PORT HURON, Mich., April 19, 2010 — Formerly known as Boat Week in Port Huron and now taking on a new persona and life this year as the Blue Water Fest, the inaugural event will attract visitors to the river area for three days, **July 15 – 17, 2010**. The highly anticipated summer festival in Port Huron is enhancing its magnificent display of boats with a fabulous festival of music, food and fun on the river.

Port Huron Mayor Pauline Repp says, “ We are thrilled to be building on the tradition of the Bayview Mackinac Race, which has been a Michigan rite of summer since 1925 and features a spectacular array of sailboats lining the Black and St. Clair rivers in Port Huron. Each year, thousands of spectators - sailors and those who wish they were - come here to view the yachts. To bring more people to the area and to entice them to enjoy all the city has to offer, the City of Port Huron is putting on a festival with much wider appeal and excitement. The benefit to our city and this region will be tremendous.”

The Bayview Mackinac Race was founded by Bavyiew Yacht Club of Detroit in 1925. The race has been run for 85 years - with 2010 marking the 86th sailing of the regatta.

FAMILY FRIENDLY EVENTS FOR ALL DAYS

The 2010 Blue Water Fest hopes to make a splash with ongoing fun for the whole family, a variety of entertainment, the Blue Water Art Fair and the Taste of Port Huron.

Traditionally, a local non-profit group, Operation Transformation, has hosted an area of positive family entertainment and activities on Family Night of Mackinac Weekend. This year, the group is partnering with Blue Water Fest organizers to run the Physicians Health Care Kids' Zone area daily from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. with lots of activities to appeal to children. McDonagh's Carnival will return, along with face painting, pony rides, moonwalks and inflatable games and more than 25 kid's entertainment. The kids' area is sponsored by Physicians Health Care of Port Huron. Best Buy is providing a tent filled with multiple electronic games for children and the staff to assist them. A special family event is planned on Thursday from performances throughout the festival 4:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

Tom Seppo, executive director of Operation Transformation comments, “ Our organization is delighted that the Blue Water Fest will expand the family night theme into each day of the festival. Putting together fun and worthwhile positive activities for kids is what we are all about. We are pleased to be participating again in this high-profile event.”

EXPANDED FESTIVAL FOOTPRINT

To further economic impact on the region, the new festival footprint will extend across Huron Street and help introduce visitors to downtown Port Huron businesses.

“It’s the perfect time to take this event to a whole new level and attract more visitors than ever before. The impact on local businesses and the hospitality area is incredibly important,” explains Jon Witz, producer of Blue Water Fest and the annual Arts, Beats & Eats summer fair in Royal Oak. “We plan on offering an incredible selection of tastes, sounds and activities, as well as the opportunity to view the sailboats and the start of the race. We also are adding family friendly activities to appeal to everyone throughout the whole festival, from art, music, food and shopping, to arts and crafts and lots of different entertainment.”

FUN EXPANDED THROUGH SATURDAY

This year, the festival will include major activities through Saturday. On Saturday, after the sailboats leave the Black River to get in position for the race, powerboats will arrive prepared for a party called Margaritaville. After the sailboats take off, complimentary boat space will be available to power boats and other craft, and will join a Parade of Lights, jet skis, the Blue Water Art Fair and Margaritaville will help round out the evening’s happenings.

The Parade of Lights will take place on Saturday evening, July 17, led by the Port Huron Power Squadron. The Squadron’s Cdr Dennis M. Raetzel, AP, explains, “It will be great to close the festival in spectacular fashion, with a bright display of lighted boats on the Black River. It’s a wonderful sight and we are excited to be leading this part of the Blue Water Fest and know the 2010 Parade will be something to remember for all who attend or participate.

ENTERTAINMENT FOR EVERYONE

The Blue Water Fest is free of charge with more than 100,000 spectators expected and will feature non-stop entertainment, activities and special events. Included will be a wide variety of national and local music talent on four stages; a juried fine art fair; a kids’ stage, carnival and arts and crafts; an outstanding display of sailboats; as well as delectable culinary offerings from some of the region’s most renowned restaurants and caterers.

With support from Best Buy, The Port Huron Initiative will also be at the Blue Water Fest and provide spectacular images from under our blue waters. Schools of fish, shipwrecks, and underwater art events will be displayed live and recorded along our boardwalks and throughout merchants stores to show the rest of Michigan and the world what is truly unique to our community.

Other activities on the river include an historic Tall Ship on display throughout the festival and jet ski demonstrations.

PICTURE PERFECT ARTS

The juried Blue Water Art Fair is being held July 16- 17 in conjunction with the Blue Water Fest and is sponsored by the City of Port Huron. The work of 65 artists and crafters will be on display and for sale with works in a variety of media, as well exhibits by Port Huron cultural organizations and art advocates like Studio 1219, Lexington Arts, Bluewater Arts Council, Port Huron Museum, St. Clair Community College and St. Clair Arts.

FESTIVAL ON FILM

On Friday and Saturday, the organizers of the Blue Water Film Festival, which takes place in October, are sponsoring the Blue Water Film Festival Film Tent and showing classic and amateur short films.

BEST BUY BRINGS ITS 'A' GAME

In addition to the children's tent and electronic games, Best Buy is providing a Rock Band Contest on one of the entertainment stages; sponsoring the underwater viewing of Great Lakes fish and related activities; and a Wi-Fi hot spot and tent for internet browsing with Geek Squad agents on hand to answer festival visitors' questions.

AND A LITTLE SOMETHING YUMMY

Visitors are invited to stop by The Taste of Port Huron area and partake of great cuisine from its restaurant and food booths. Festival attendees can enjoy Merchant Row with its myriad of shops selling Michigan "homegrown" crafts and creations. More than 50 bands representing various musical genres and national and local talent will perform on stage.

"The Blue Water Festival epitomizes two of our core values," says Janice C. Rose, president and CEO of E & A Credit Union. " Especially, 'Work is important, but life is too short not to have fun' and 'number two: We have the passion and determination to overcome any challenge. As optimists, we see the glass as half full.' This festival helps drive the economy of Port Huron and touches the lives of many of our members in the community. It is a lot of work, but we're already having so much fun. Volunteers and business owners came out in droves to support the expanded event and because of this, the festival will succeed."

Sponsors of the Blue Water Fest include: E & A Credit Union; Earl Smith Distributing; Budweiser; Comcast; Acheson Ventures; The Community Foundation; Michigan Physicians Health Care; Michigan Lottery; MetroPCS; Pepsi; Best Buy; Port Huron DDA; Brown Foreman; and The Detroit Pistons.

And a special thanks to the Bayview Yacht Club, Port Huron Yacht Club, Port Huron YMCA, Area Council on Aging and participating restaurant, including Quay Street Brewery, Just in Time Concessions, Powers Diner and The Atrium Café & Ice Cream Parlor

More information is available at www.TheBlueWaterFest.com.

Held July 15-17, 2010, Blue Water Fest is downtown Port Huron's preview celebration of the Bayview Mackinac Race. The three-day festival will be open from 11 a.m. – Midnight on

Thursday, Friday and Saturday. For additional public information, visit www.TheBlueWaterFest.com, or call 248.334.4600.

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