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Branson's 22nd Annual Fiddle Festival Kicks Off Friday

BRANSON, MO. – The 22nd Annual Fiddle Festival kicks off Friday (Aug. 27) in Branson at two adjoining locations, Branson Landing on the Lake Taneycomo lakefront and in the Downtown Historic District.

This free festival brings thousands of music-loving visitors to Branson, and attracts the greatest fiddling talent of all ages from all over the country, said festival producer Bill Lennon. To help visitors make the most of the festival, there will be free trolley service between the two locations.

The weekend kicks off at 8 p.m. Friday night with Big Smith in concert at Branson Landing. The preliminary fiddle rounds will take place from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturday at Branson Landing.

Also on Saturday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. there will be numerous activities in the historic district including street entertainers, food, arts and craft, children's activities, pony rides, cultural displays and vendors. Sidewalk sales with a "Show Me Your Fiddle" promotion offering special discounts to fiddle players of all ages.

From 7 to 10 p.m. in the historic district there will be a square dance.

At both locations throughout the festival there will be special appearances by several of Branson's outstanding professional entertainers, many of whom competed as youngsters in earlier Branson fiddle contests, Lennon said.

On Sunday at 10 a.m. there's a gospel jamboree at Branson Landing featuring emcee Pastor Bob Hubbard. Hubbard was the original lead singer for the Jordanaires Quartet, which appeared for several years on the Grand Ole Opry.

Events continue from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Sunday in the historic district.

The Fiddle Festival finals are from noon to 5 p.m. Sunday at Branson Landing.

One of the main sponsors is Illa Kamp, owner of Branson Scenic Railway, which also supported the event last year. One of the highlights of the festival is when the Branson Scenic Railway's engineer blows the train's whistle on cue when they announce the grand prize winner.

“I think the festival is great for the downtown, and we’re just happy to be the grand prize sponsor,” Kamp said. Kamp said they’re also looking forward to operating the “Polar Express” train again this year beginning Nov. 11.

The event also provides many first-time visitors an introduction to Branson. Last year, there were about 70 contestants, ranging in age from five to 86. They came from about 10 states including Idaho, and one family came from New Zealand after reading about the contest online, Lennon said.

Visit DowntownBranson.org. Click on Upcoming Events. 417-334-1548.

2010 Branson Fiddle Fest Schedule:

FRIDAY 8/27:

8 p.m. “Big Smith” - Branson Landing

SATURDAY 8/28:

9 a.m. to 6 p.m. - Historic Downtown: Vendors, entertainment, food, children’s area, seminars, demonstrations

10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Preliminary competition. Branson Landing

7 p.m. to 10 p.m. Street Dance. Historic Downtown

SUNDAY 8/29:

9 a.m. – 4 p.m. – Historic Downtown

10 a.m. Gospel Celebration – Branson Landing

Noon - 5 p.m. – Final competitions - Branson Landing

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