

HAPPY 150TH B-DAY
PLEASANT GREEN
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The Clinton Courier

June 16, 2020 ■ Volume 11, Number 12 ■ Clinton, Mississippi

Two popular outdoor festivals cancelled for 2020

By Susan O'Bryan

Two summertime favorites in Clinton have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Both the 31st Annual Family Fireworks Extravaganza on July 4 and the Red Brick Roads Music and Arts Festival in August have been canceled for 2020.

Each event routinely draws very large crowds, and the uncertainty surrounding the novel coronavirus and necessary social distancing and health precautions forced the cancellations, according to organizers. Guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and the State of Mississippi include limiting the number of attendees, requiring social distancing and wearing facial masks. The recommendations frequently change, making it difficult to plan events in advance.

The City of Clinton's Family Fireworks Extravaganza is held outdoors at the Traceway Park soccer fields. Live music, a kids' play area and a variety of food vendors keep families entertained during the evening until the large fireworks display with patriotic music lights the night sky. About 5,000 attended last year's event.

"Public safety is our main concern; and, while this was a tough decision, we felt that this was the most responsible decision when it comes to protecting our community and our staff,"



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Mayor Phil Fisher said.

Headliners for this year's event were Clinton natives and blues singers Eddie Cotton Jr. and Jarekus Singleton. Both artists and Vault Entertainment, a Clinton- and Oxford-based production company, are under contract with the City, so a show may be planned in the fall or once the COVID-19 concerns have resolved.

This would have been the sixth annual Red Brick Roads led jointly by Main Street Clinton and the Clinton Chamber of Commerce. The two-day August event normally draws

about 4,000 to 5,000 attendees for live music and more in the city's historic Olde Towne brick streets area.

"Just like Coachella and South by Southwest, Red Brick Roads is another festival casualty of COVID-19," said T.J. McSparrin, executive director of the Clinton Chamber of Commerce. "We put our heart and soul, not to mention many hours, into this event over the last years and are heartbroken it will not take place in 2020."

"We certainly were looking forward to this year's event," said Tara Lytal, Main Street Clinton director. "It was not an easy decision for the Red Brick



Roads steering committee to make, but we felt there were just too many unknowns at this point."

Main Street Clinton also hosts other outdoor events, including the Fresh at Five farmers market on Tuesday evenings through August 18, and the Olde Towne Market four times a year for arts, crafts and homemade goods.

Several years ago, the two non-profit organizations combined their own separate events – Firefly Market and Moonvine Music Festival – into Red Brick Roads, which now draws local and regional musicians, singers and songwriters. Its popularity and reputation among fans and entertainers alike have grown from a few hundred in the beginning to about 5,000 last year.

"I'm sorry to hear this," said Mandy Culpepper of Clinton. "We carried our lawn chairs and just sat out under the stars enjoying good music. It was a great way to be introduced to different styles of music. I'll miss it, but I'm excited that it will be back."

"Mark your calendars for August 2021," McSparrin said, "because we have a year to make Red Brick Roads even bigger and better!"

For more information about the City of Clinton, visit www.clintonms.org. Chamber information is available at clintonchamber.org, and learn more about Main Street at mainstreetclintonms.com.

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Kids' Towne Park reopens with ribbon cutting



Carrie Chennault

Kids' Towne Park was reopened with a ribbon cutting on Tuesday, June 2. The park was closed on November 6, 2019, due to structural and safety issues. The original playground was built over twenty years ago, and the new structure was chosen to resemble the design of the previous beloved playground. The park is located on Old Vicksburg Road. See page 12 for more photos.

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