

Azalea Festival coming in April

By Van Mitchell
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Rick Ewing

Muskogee Parks and Recreation

The 57th Annual Muskogee Azalea Festival will be held April 1 through 30 in Honor Heights Park.

The Azalea Festival not only highlights the beauty of nature in spring, but also plays host to a parade, a variety of food vendors, carriage rides through the blooms and more, said Rick Ewing with the Muskogee Parks and Recreation Department.

"The festival started out as a week-long event, but has evolved into a month-long celebration that attracts people from across the state and region," Ewing said.

Held since 1968, Muskogee's Honor Heights Park boasts 40 acres of manicured gardens with over 30,000 azaleas in 625 varieties. The annual festival celebrates the blooming of azaleas, tulips, dogwoods and wisteria as these

buds begin to unfurl during the warmer temperatures of spring to the delight of visitors.

Often considered one of the top spring events in the nation, Muskogee's Azalea Festival attracts visitors from around the world.

The festival kicks off April 3 with the Papillion Tulip Garden Shop opening

Ewing said this year's Azalea Festival Parade is Saturday, April 8 at 11 a.m., and the Azalea 5K and 15K Run starts at 8 a.m. that day in Honor Heights Park.

"The annual Azalea Festival parade features everything from floats, antique cars, clowns and pageant queens, to horseback riders and cyclists," he said.

Ewing said there will also be the Flower Power Bike Ride on Saturday, April 29 in Three Forks Harbor, as well as the Touch-A-Truck from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Hatbox Field at 4000 Border Avenue. The event is raising money for the Muskogee Public Library Youth Services.

The festival's Party in the Park, hosted by the Muskogee Rotary Club, will be held at Honor Heights Park on April 29.

For more information visit www.muskogee.org.

Strawberry lovers to swarm Stillwell, May 13

By Ryan Horton
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For over 75 years people have had something sweet to celebrate in Stillwell.

The Strawberry Festival attracts thousands to Stillwell each year.

Sponsored by the Stillwell Kiwanis Club, the festival celebrates the strawberry harvest with family fun.

Each year, thousands of visitors come to take part in the many festivities that make the Stillwell Strawberry Festival such a success.

Officials say over 30,000 visitors make the journey to the "Straw-

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The 2023 Strawberry Festival parade starts at 10 a.m. on Saturday, May 13.

PHOTO PROVIDED

Calderón Dance Festival returns to Plaza District for second year

The Plaza District Association is excited to announce the second annual Calderón Dance Festival on Sunday, May 7, from noon – 8 p.m. Everyone is invited to the family-friendly event to celebrate dance and community.

The festival is the vision of the late Shannon Calderón-Primeau, former owner of Everything Goes Dance Studio located in the heart of 16th Street Plaza District in Oklahoma City. Juliana Lopez, Festival Director for Calderón Dance Festival, says Calderón-Primeau's impact on the Plaza District and dance community is still felt today, adding, "We honor the life of Shannon Calderón-Primeau by removing the barriers to dance and providing a fun and safe place for all to enjoy learning and moving. With the help of her family members and

beloved friends, we are so excited to bring you the 2nd Annual Calderón Dance Festival."

Family members of all ages can take dance classes in various styles from more than 20 teaching artists, and they can take in performances from more than two dozen genres on several stages throughout the day. The full lineup will be announced later but is jam-packed with world-class dancers and musicians from across the country, building on last year's success when dancers learned choreography from Michael Jackson and Madonna's choreographer, Vincent Paterson. "I continue to be overwhelmed by the outpouring of love and support for this event from people I've never met who were impacted by Shannon," says Rachael Leonhart, Plaza District Association Executive Director.

