

The Bandera PROPHEET

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Serving up fun and spice for 42 years at Medina Lake Cajun Festival

By Ron Clarke

The Bandera Prophet

Texas Cajun festivals seem to come and go, but the Medina Lake Cajun Festival just keeps on rolling out the good times year after year. Texas' largest and oldest continually operating Cajun Festival is coming again to the Lakehills Community Center Grounds on the 4th Saturday of September.

The attraction of the festival is another reason to visit beloved Medina Lake, which was originally built in 1912. Even though the water level has been a challenge, the Cajun Festival continues to draw crowds from all over Texas, Louisiana and beyond.

This year, the 42nd annual Medina Lake Cajun Festival will be held on Saturday, Sept. 23, and volunteers will once again create the magic that transforms the grounds of the Lakehills Community Center into a little slice of Cajun Country. The festival brings the music, food, and culture of Louisiana to the Texas Hill Country for fun the whole family can enjoy.

The key elements of this successful festival are three: topnotch Louisiana Cajun and Zydeco music on two stages, the best homemade Cajun food this side of Louisiana, and the Great Gumbo Cook-off.

Visitors can savor all original and handmade Cajun food such as crawfish pies, crawfish etouffee, jambalaya, boudin, fried catfish and shrimp, red beans and rice, and bread pudding with whiskey sauce, all carefully made by volunteer cooks.

The gumbo cook-off has long been the heartbeat of the festival. Forty two years ago, the Cajun Festival began as a simple gumbo cookoff to raise money for a faltering Community Center. Today, its long successful history and traditions are the biggest annual fundraiser for the Lakehills Community Center.

Guests can sample gumbos from the amateur, professional, and culinary student divisions. An Arts and Crafts Fair and games for the kids provide further entertainment, which adds to the family-friendly atmosphere of the Festival.

All day long two stages rock with Cajun and Zydeco music with a little Country and Western mixed in to add to the Cajun flavor. Festival organizers are adamant about bringing in authentic Cajun and Zydeco musicians from Louisiana, just as they have since the Festival's origin. This desire to maintain the originality is what makes this Festival the best in Texas.

There are two dance floors, and watching the dancers is part of the fun. If you stand in exactly the right place on the grounds you can listen as the two stages music meld together into Cajun audible heaven.

This year, the festival is Saturday, Sept. 23, from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Admission is \$15, and children 10 and under enter free. As always, there is free parking and shuttle service, and the event is held at the Festival Grounds located at the Lakehills Community Center in Lakehills, 30 miles northwest of San Antonio. Profits from the Cajun Festival benefit the Lakehills Community Center, which has an ever-widening program reach for Lakehills, Bandera County, and the Texas Hill Country. For more information visit www.cajunfestivalmedinalake.com or call 830-460-0600 or 210-885-6435 or e-mail bengel@lhctx.org

Our Entertainment Schedule for Cajun Festival 2023:

Fais Do Do Pavilion

11 a.m. to 12:50 p.m.: Ca Va Bien

1-3 p.m.: Don Fontenot and Les Amis Louisiane

3:10-5:15 p.m.: T Broussard and the Zydeco Steppers

5:15-5:45 p.m.: Great Gumbo Cook-off Awards

5:50-7:50 p.m.: Don Fontenot and Les Amis Louisiane

8-10 p.m.: T Broussard and the Zydeco Steppers

Gazebo Stage

11 a.m. to 3 p.m.: T Rouge

3-5 p.m.: Ca Va Bien

5 - 9 p.m.: Rick Rice Band (Country Western)