



NEWS RELEASE

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Kidding around at the Texas Blueberry Festival

NACOGDOCHES - Blueberries will spark the child's imagination at the 18th annual

Texas Blueberry Festival held downtown on Saturday, June 9.

"I'm so glad to announce that Elsie's Little Red Express Train will be running again this year," Kids and Pets volunteer Joe Scifo said. "What else can capture fantasy and fun like a train ride?"

The train will be running on the brick streets between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m., and anyone can ride for \$1 or purchase a multi-ride stamp for \$5.

Scifo said, "Everyone should take time to visit Festival Plaza this year to see all the cool kid's stuff we'll have. From 9 in the morning through 4 in the afternoon, children will be having a ton of fun with the blues." Festival Plaza is the grassy and tree-shaded park just south of downtown, between Pecan and Fredonia streets.

All junior Picassos may express their creativity as they paint the Big Blue Murals. Several murals will be available this year, waiting for little hands to wield the brushes that will transform them in to true works of art. At the point of painted perfection, a mural will be mounted for display and another mural will be ready for painting. "It's like pages from a giant coloring book," Scifo said. The activity is open to all children and is free of charge. This attraction is sponsored by Sam's Club and Consolidated Communications.

Youngsters with lots of energy can bounce their way through the Spiderman and Finding Nemo bounce houses, slide down the inflated Surf's Up slide and work through the inflated Extreme Challenge Obstacle Course. The Equalizer and the Pedestal Joust are new interactive games that will give older children the chance to challenge friends to fun competitions. The Rock Climbing Wall is back for thrill seekers ready to scale to new heights. All Bounce Park activities require tickets or armbands. Tickets are \$2 each or play all day with an armband available for \$10.

Also in the Bounce Park, Nacogdoches Medical Center will set up a free "cool zone" with water misters in a shady spot.

Free make-and-take craft activities will have creative juices flowing. Children can spend time working their hands and their minds as they make truly unique items ready to give to someone special or keep as reminders of a grand day.

The True Blue Petting Zoo gives every child a chance to get close to four-legged, furry and fuzzy friends that will include ponies, mini-horses, goats, llamas, dogs and baby ducks and chicks. Plus, the Nacogdoches Animal Shelter will have adoptable animals at the festival ready for a new family and a new home. Entrance in to the petting zoo is free of charge. Photos with animals and pony rides are available for a nominal fee. The Petting Zoo is organized by the East Texas Horse Rescue and Sanctuary, assisted by the Nacogdoches County Expo Center crew.

A well-known favorite event of the festival, the Blue Threads Costume Contest, will begin with registration at 9:45 a.m. in the Commercial Bank lobby. Children will parade in their costumes beginning at 10:15, and ribbons will be awarded to the winners in front of the Convention and Visitors Bureau at 10:30.

The Texas Blueberry Festival is produced by the Nacogdoches County Chamber of Commerce. Blue Sapphire Sponsors included H-E-B and Brookshire Brothers. Blue Ribbon sponsors include Kroger, Regions Bank, Texas Blueberry Marketing Association,

Texas Farm Products and Wal-Mart. Many other local businesses support the festival, which attracted 13,000 attendees to Nacogdoches last year. For more event information, please visit www.texasblueberryfestival.com.

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