

Week of fun with National Cherry Festival and Fourth of July

BY GINA GOODMAN
Record-Eagle staff writer

With jets that break the sound barrier, canoe races, tons of food, large entertainment venues and Fourth of July fireworks topping it all off, opening weekend of this year's National Cherry Festival promises to be the most eventful one to date.

"It's gonna be big," said Cherry Festival President George Wertman. "Especially if we have great weather. The three day weekend is going to assure huge opening weekend crowds."

Every few years the National Cherry Festival and July 4th overlap, creating double the fun. "Representatives of the Festival and the Fourth of

July committee are working together to ensure that both events run smoothly," said the Festival's executive director Tom Kern.

"We assist the Fourth of July committee any way we can," he said. "Because of the excellent coordination between the Fourth of July committee and the Festival, I think the two events compliment each other well."

The National Cherry Festival kicks off on Saturday, July 3, with several new events, such as the Midtown Classic Real Estate Canoe Race and Dock Dogs jumping competition, sponsored by Just Labs Magazine, which are both expected to attract large crowds.

And of course a huge lure are the Festival Air Shows over West Grand Traverse



Bay, featuring the U.S. Navy Blue Angels.

"The Blue Angels are the biggest by far," Wertman said. "This year we have the largest air show ever, and the Blue Angels are a fantastic draw."

Opening Saturday night will conclude with an energetic swing music performance by Big Bad Voo Doo

Daddy at the Bay Side Entertainment Stage.

On Sunday, the eventful weekend continues with volleyball tournaments, a repeat of the airshow, Taste of Cherries food fair, presented by Bank One and wine tasting. The day will also be spent celebrating America's independence.

"We're trying to keep the Fourth of July a hometown kind of thing," said Jack O'Malley, director for the Fourth of July committee.

At 6:30 p.m. there will be a parade down Front Street, and a patriotic concert from the Encore Voices and Winds Society will take place all night at the Bay Side Entertainment Stage. The event is free to the public. During the fireworks, the Encore Society will play the

1812 Overture, and will be simulcast on WTCM 103.5/93.5.

"Last year it was great," O'Malley said. "People can hear it up and down the shoreline."

The fireworks always promise to be a fun experience.

"There's nothing better than bringing your family down to the beach, on a nice 75 degree evening, and watching the fireworks," Wertman said.

With so many events packed in to one weekend, it's a challenge to take it all in.

"It's going to be busy and wonderful," Wertman said. "It's hard to believe, you put a year's worth of work into it, and it's there and gone so fast!"

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