



NEWS RELEASE

CONTACT:

Clyde R. Beaver III
VLA Designs/Public Relations
404-502-8219
crbeaver3@gmail.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

First Fridays Introduces New Summer Hours, New Sponsor

Florence – What is making First Fridays so interesting these days? Perhaps it's the effort of Downtown Florence Unlimited (DFU) to reorganize and reinvigorate the monthly event. Maybe it's the area's wish to have a place to congregate and enjoy the benefits of the downtown experience. Either way, people are coming. The event has averaged about 2,000 attendees over the last two months, and the organizers of the event are noticing. So are local businesses that are interested in sponsorship of the event.



“We recognized the demand and decided to extend the hours of the event,” said Teryl Shields, chairman of the event. “To accommodate the large number of attendees, we thought it proper to extend the event an extra hour to 5-9 p.m. We thought it especially important for the summer months when the heat of the day is so extreme.” Shields went on to explain that the extended hours are an advantage to the exhibitors. “The exhibitors are thrilled with the new hours. They are deeply committed to their arts and crafts and appreciate the additional exposure.”

The music venue has drawn attention as well. Emerging musical acts are a growing attraction and are a focal point of the event. “We want to give musicians an unmatched venue for exposure,” said Ashley Winkle, head of the music selection committee. “We try to focus on extremely talented musical guests that would not have received similar exposure in the area outside of the event.”

According to Van Morgan, president of DFU, potential sponsors are recognizing the power of the musical element of the event. “We’ve just signed an agreement with Bentley Chevrolet Cadillac of Florence to be the exclusive music stage sponsor through the end of the year.”

Joel Stephenson, general manager of Bentley Chevrolet Cadillac is pleased with the new partnership. “We’ve been watching First Fridays’ growth for a while now. It’s an outstanding local event and something that Bentley Chevrolet is proud to be associated with.”

Morgan also acknowledged the social media component of the event. “With our new website, a Facebook fan page and the heroic dedication of over 1,600 loyalists to the event, we’re able to not only communicate more efficiently, but evolve the event in the ways that the fans demand.”

Wherever the current committee takes the event, it seems strategic and well planned, and is expected to provide ample entertainment while preserving the vitality of Historic Downtown Florence.

Hours for the event are 5-9 p.m. from June through August and admission and parking are free. The musical acts for the June 4th event are Jenny Ray and Malcolm Singleton. For more information on First Fridays Florence, visit www.FirstFridaysFlorence.com, call toll-free 877-290-8880, or contact the Florence/Lauderdale Tourism Office at (256) 740-4141.

First Fridays Florence is a festive arts and entertainment event sponsored by Downtown Florence Unlimited (DFU) and is organized by volunteers representing the area’s professional retail and service industries, educational institutions and non-profit organizations. The event is held on the first Friday of each month from March through December and is free to the public.

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