

Chamber Connection

915 N. Suncoast Blvd., Crystal River, FL 34429 · 352-795-3149 · 106 W. Main St., Inverness, FL 34450 · 352-726-2801

Florida Manatee Festival coming soon

Best of the Best winner returns Jan. 14, 15 to downtown Crystal River for 30th anniversary

The Florida Manatee Festival returns to downtown Crystal River on Saturday and Sunday, Jan. 14 and 15, to celebrate its 30th anniversary of providing quality entertainment and manatee encounter opportunities for residents and visitors to our community.

Co-produced by the Citrus County Chamber of Commerce and Rotary of Crystal River, the festival encompasses both sides of Citrus Avenue from the Waterfront at Third Street across U.S. 19 to Crystal Street and surrounding areas.

Festival attendees will once again have the chance to board free bus tours to Three Sisters Springs. The tours will run continuously during the festival and are conducted in cooperation with the City of Crystal River with support from the Friends of the Crystal River National Wildlife Refuge.

For a closer look at the manatees in their natural settings, Manatee Boat Tours will be available from the City Pier at the end of Third Street for a nominal charge that will take you out



into King's Bay and other favorite hangouts of the manatees.

Musical entertainment will ROCK the Waterfront Stage as the festival welcomes exciting new singer/songwriters who are gathering accolades worldwide as up-and-coming stars in the indie music scene. Steve Everett, Mike Mentz, Amy Gerhartz and the group Melodime will entertain both Saturday and Sunday. These artists, whose styles range from rock, pop, folk, blues and country, have toured and shared the stage with

groups such as Sister Hazel, Johnny Lang, Zac Brown and Better Than Ezra. Everett has been nominated for Country Album of the Year, and Mentz is up for Adult Contemporary Album of the Year by the Independent Music Association.

Local favorites Jo Jo Jones with The Mel and Jo Jo Show will open the Waterfront Stage on Saturday morning prior to the headliner event, and DJ Diorio will start the action on Sunday morning.

An updated festival layout will make moving around the event easier and will bring a second Beer and Wine Garden to the gazebo area by City Hall along with an expanded entertainment schedule. Mellower than the Waterfront stage, the music will feature hometown favorites Sophie Noelle and Jeff Jarrett.

Last year's phenom street performer, David Ferman from "America's Got Talent," will return to the streets of North Citrus Avenue on both Saturday and Sunday with his bigger and better act, including a "death-defying escape"!

Children's activities will move to the grounds around Heritage Village with

great games and activities including a rock climbing wall, bounce house, pony rides and much more.

And, of course, completing the festival is a fabulous roster of fine arts and craft artists, two food courts serving everything from seafood to barbecue and everything in between, and lots of opportunities to interact with local non-profit organizations and local commercial businesses.

Manatee Festival hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, and 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday. Entrance fee is \$5 for guests 12 and older. Parking is available at the Crystal River Mall with a free roundtrip shuttle to the festival location.

The Chamber thanks its growing list of sponsors, including the Citrus County Chronicle, Tampa Bay Times, Citrus 95.3 / The Fox 96.7, Plantation on Crystal River, Brannen Bank, Hometown Values, Norton's Riverside, WXJB Radio and Nick Nicholas Ford Lincoln.

For information, contact the Citrus County Chamber of Commerce at 352-795-3149, or www.GoManateeFest.com.

RECENT RIBBON CUTTINGS

Welcome New Chamber Members: The Chamber continues to grow weekly! We welcome our new members and thank all of them for joining the Chamber. We encourage the community to patronize their businesses.

FGE Prints

352-794-3880 • www.FGEPrints.com



The Chamber would like to welcome Kenny Cramer, owner of FGE Prints to their new location at 854 NE Fifth Street in Crystal River. FGE offers blueprint copies, printing, scanning, plotting, faxing, business cards, yard signs, brochures, car magnets and digitized items. Ambassadors to welcome them are Betty Murphy, Citrus Archives and Computers; Tom Ryan, Central Ridge Insurers; George Bendtsen, Insurance by George; Dennis Pfeiffer, Orkin Pest Control; Barbara Donohoe, Citrus County Chronicle; Arnold Virgilio, Virgilio Insurance Services; and Kristi Bortz, RE/MAX Realty One. Call 352-794-3880; visit www.FGEPrints.com.

Florida Caregivers

352-795-7800 • www.FICaregivers.com



The Chamber would like to welcome co-owners Katie Tyre and Colleen Gaines of Florida Caregivers. They are available 24 hours a day to provide a helping hand when you need it. A few of the services they offer include bathing, assistance with medication, light housekeeping, grocery shopping, meal preparation, wound care, injections, assistance with medical equipment. They have registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, certified nursing assistants, home health aides, sitters, homemakers and live-ins. Ambassadors to welcome them include Angela Chittum, Humana; Mary Pericht, Cadence Bank; Betty Murphy, Citrus Archives and Computers; Barbara Donohoe, Citrus County Chronicle; George Bendtsen, Insurance by George; Dennis Pfeiffer, Orkin Pest Control; and Kristi Bortz, RE/MAX Realty One. Call 352-795-7800; www.FICaregivers.com.

Mission of the Citrus County Chamber of Commerce

The Citrus County Chamber of Commerce is an organization of businesses unified in efforts to advance the economic growth of the region, promote the interests of the business community, provide key leadership on key commerce issues and preserve the county's quality of life.

Chamber Legacy Partners

The Chamber recognizes our Legacy Partners that have made a special investment in the Chamber to support the programs and mission of the Chamber. For information on becoming a Legacy Partner, please contact the Chamber at 352-795-3149.



Commissioner Carnahan moved to February luncheon



Scott Carnahan

Due to a schedule conflict, Citrus County Commission Chair Scott Carnahan will be the Chamber's Luncheon speaker for Feb. 10.

The Chamber is awaiting confirmation of another

distinguished speaker for the January luncheon and will post the information in next week's Chamber Connection.

To RSVP for all Chamber luncheons, call Janet at 352-795-3149.

Chamber member news

Open House Weekends at Alpaca Magic

Chamber member Alpaca Magic USA is holding Open House Weekends through Christmas on Saturday and Sundays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Visit with friendly alpacas and enjoy spinning, weaving and felting demonstrations; BOGO on plants; goat soap-making demos, sales on many alpaca items in their store; local honey tasting and free refreshments. Alpaca Magic USA, 4920 W. Grover Cleveland Blvd., Homosassa; 352-628-0156; www.AlpacaMagic.com.

New Year's Eve at Greenhouse Bistro

Chamber member Greenhouse Bistro will host a special New Year's Eve event featuring an elegant menu of butternut squash bisque, salad, Maine lobster, prime rib, dessert, bottle of wine, Champagne toast, a special gift and party favors with live music.

Limited to three seatings of 22 people each. Proceeds will benefit Nature World Wildlife Rescue. To RSVP, call 352-503-7276. Greenhouse Bistro, 2420 S. Suncoast Blvd., Homosassa.

'Chamber Report' on WYKE

Watch the weekly "Chamber Report" show on WYKE-TV to stay abreast of Chamber events, issues and member spotlights with host Josh Wooten.

Chamber Report is broadcast on Tuesdays at 8:30 p.m., and repeated Sundays at 7 p.m., and Mondays at 11 a.m. on Bright House Channel 16 and Channel 47 (digital antenna). It can also be accessed on LiveStream.com by searching for WYKE.



Jeff Janssen

This week's show features Brett Mueller and his wife Jennifer, owners of OMG Pretzel Bites, and Jeff and Kim Janssen, certified SCORE mentors, who talk about how SCORE assisted OMG develop their business

and marketing strategy for their new mobile concession business that is making waves in Citrus County for their amazing pretzel treats!

SCORE is non-profit association created under the auspices of the Small Business Administration (SBA)

that provides trained volunteer advisers and mentors to aspiring entrepreneurs and business owners.

An alliance partner of the Chamber, SCORE provides free business counseling to thousands of small businesses across the U.S.

Chamber Report is your ticket to the many happenings in Citrus County!



Brett Mueller

Chamber events

Dec. 15 — Christmas Mixer and Parade Awards, Suncoast Plumbing

Jan. 14-15 — 30th Annual Manatee Festival, downtown Crystal River

Jan. 20 — Chamber Luncheon at the Plantation on Crystal River; guest speaker TBA; sponsored by United Way

Feb. 10 — Chamber Luncheon at Citrus Hills; guest speaker Commission Chair Scott Carnahan; sponsored by Citrus Memorial Health

For more information on all Chamber events, call 352-795-3149 or go to www.CitrusCountyChamber.com.