

Wednesdays set aside for music

Algiers Point attendance grows

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There's a party going on in New Orleans. That statement may not seem surprising, but this isn't the typical Bourbon Street party scene.

Wednesdays on the Point is a free weekly concert series in Algiers Point that takes place from 6 to 9 p.m. weekly throughout the summer. A different music group puts on an outdoor concert each week at venues throughout Algiers.

Performers this summer include Big Sam's Funky Nation, Dr. Gonzeaux and Fredy Omar con su Banda.

Although the event began only two years ago, it attracts crowds of 300 up to 1,000 attendees, organizers said.

"We are very pleased with the attendance numbers. As you know, whenever a series starts, it tends to be lighter on the front end," said Bethany Lemanski, special event coordinator. "As people get to know what's going on, we're anticipating a lot larger numbers toward the end of the series."

Wednesdays on the Point was initiated by local businesses in Algiers Point.

"The summers have always been the typically slow months," Lemanski said.

The concert series has gone through some changes. For instance, this year's event is 12 weeks, up from eight weeks last summer. Interest in sponsorships has also increased.

Algiers Economic Development Foundation has increased involvement, along with the addition of a professional event planner to handle logistics.

The concerts are geared toward those from different areas, backgrounds and walks of life.

"We've been really targeting different groups of people to come to Algiers Point by diversifying each weekly event," Lemanski said. "Our July 7 event, for example, targeted those who love to salsa dance."

She said organizers have been working with the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce to try to target the Latin community. Family Fun Day will take place Wednesday. It will include kid-based activities.

The event is not just for residents in the New Orleans area. Lemanski said they are making a marketing push in Alabama, Mississippi and north Louisiana.

Jane Cavallo, who attended the July 7 event, said she looks forward to the show every week.

"We've been coming since it started, and I love it," she said. "It doesn't matter what kind of music, it's still fun."

Emile Cloutet, who was raised in Algiers, was a first-time attendee.

"I thoroughly enjoyed it," he said. "Last time I came here for a show, I was probably 10 years old."

Cloutet said he also enjoyed the glass-blowing demonstrations. Because the event took place at Rosetree Glass Studio, attendees had the opportunity to view and purchase works of glass art.

"I was really impressed," Cloutet said. "I was just telling my wife that this is an asset to the community."

Lemanski suggested that visitors "start your weekends in New Orleans on a Wednesday with Wednesdays on the Point, and then enjoy the rest of the city through Sunday."

For more information about the concert series and a schedule of events, go to www.wednesdaysonthepoint.com.