

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Contact: Egan Orion, Festival Director
Main Info-Line: 866-974-2008
Web Site: seattlepridefest.org
Email: info@seattlepridefest.org
Fax: 206-299-3512

A Unified, Financially Competent and Scandal-Free LGBT Pride Returns to Seattle

2007 brought to Seattle Pride® competing factions, financial problems, and lingering doubts over the move downtown. With 2008, many in the Seattle LGBT community are asking, “Scandals? Competition? Problems?” and the two organizations producing the Official Pride Parade and PrideFest have answered: “Not this year.” The parade sold out at the beginning of June, and the festival, having doubled in size from last year, is at 98% capacity.

PrideFest 2008 will run from 11a.m. to 7p.m. on Sunday, June 29, at Seattle Center. Nearly 150 sponsors, commercial vendors, non-profits, arts and craft vendors, two beer gardens featuring major sponsor Redhook and restaurants are featured at this year’s events. Vendors and stages are spread throughout four different areas: the International Fountain space, the Fisher Green, the Fisher Pavilion, and the roof of the Fisher Pavilion.

A diverse collection of artists round out the PrideFest experience on the mainstage. Headlining this year is Kristine W, an artist with more consecutive #1 dance hits than Madonna who has a huge following worldwide, especially amongst LGBT fans. Hosting the show are local drag sensations Lily Armani and GLAMAZONIA. Also featured are Seeing Blind, a local rock band, musicians Lisa Marshall and Sue Quigley, and comics Barbara Sehr and Matt Bragg. The DJ stage next to the International Fountain features gay, lesbian, and trans talent from the Northwest and from around the country: DJ Kyler, LA Kendall, DJ Rob Hall, and Mathematix. Also coming to PrideFest this year to speak are Mayor Greg Nickels and State Representative Jamie Pedersen, as well as other prominent local and state politicians. Although the Festival begins at the same time of the Pride Parade downtown on 4th Avenue, the main programming will begin at 1:30, at the tail end of the Parade. The parade route will drop participants and spectators off at the edge of Seattle Center.

A special emphasis was taken this year with outreach and entertainment booking for the trans community in Seattle. Explains Orion: “The trans community has been the most affected by the move from Capitol Hill. There, they found a bastion of safety and the downtown events seemed out of their Capitol Hill comfort zone. With the bitterness over ENDA this year, we thought it was especially important to reach out to our trans brothers and sisters, as they are an essential part of our greater community. For LGBs everywhere I think they are a model for bravery, strength, and dignity in the face of adversity, and I hope they come out in force for this year’s PrideFest.”

Last year’s PrideFest drew over 15,000 people, and this year’s Festival is expected to draw up to 50% more people. “I have been encouraged by the response this year,” says Festival Director Egan Orion. “The drama of last year is officially over and people throughout the community have reached out to tell me how excited they are for this year’s events.”

2007 had competing parades and festivals between Capitol Hill and Downtown. With a different direction taken for the LGBT Center this year in regards to the Broadway March and Queerfest in Volunteer Park – both cancelled – the Pride Parade and PrideFest were allowed to grow and prosper and vendors and sponsors alike weren’t pulled in two directions. “Finally, we have a unified Pride,” said Orion. “Lots of lip service is done to the idea of unity, but this year I really feel like the community is rallying behind the Parade and Festival. There will always be other events throughout Pride, thankfully, but it’s nice to have two events where we can all get together and celebrate as one community.”

There is significant support from sponsors in 2008. Presenting Sponsor for PrideFest 2008 is MOViN 92.5. Platinum sponsors of the event include the W Seattle, Redhook, The Stranger, and Manhunt. Bringing significant support to PrideFest are VitaminEnergy, SmartWater, the Seattle Gay News, Cause & Effect Creative and the event's photographers, Team Photogenic. Other sponsors include: Microsoft, Comcast, Solar Tan, Seattle Out and Proud (producers of the Seattle Pride Parade), American Laser Centers, the GSBA, Metro Remodel, Efficient Communications Solutions, Inc., Tylenol PM, the Human Rights Campaign, 'mo Magazine, ajaxx63, and the Baltic Room. Rounding out the sponsors are community support from Kelcema Productions, Re:launch-HitGirl!, Girl4Girl Seattle, City of Seattle, GayWhistler.com, Rane, PSNI, and ABC Rentals.

PrideFest is produced by One Degree Events with help from the Pride Project, and Production Management from New Growth Event Solutions.

Donations will be collected at the entrance to the Festival and during PrideFest to benefit 3 local non-profits: The Pride Project, Lambert House, and Rosehedge AIDS Housing and Health Care. For more information on Seattle PrideFest, visit seattlepridefest.org.

As part of the kickoff for Pride Weekend, Pride Festival organizers are also involved in producing a new dining benefit, PrideFeast. On Friday, June 27, thousands of diners will attend a dozen different restaurants to help support LGBT health, wellness, and pride. A portion of the proceeds from every check will go to three community non-profits: The Pride Project, Gay City Health Project, and Seattle Counseling Service. For more information on PrideFeast, visit pridefeast.org.