

The Florida Strawberry Festival, More Than Fresh Strawberries

By Karen McBride

The Strawberry Festival (Festival) is being held March 3 to 13, so mark your calendars. The Festival is located in Plant City right off I-4. Plan to arrive early and wear your favorite walking shoes, because once you get there, you won't want to leave. If you have never been to the Festival then you are in for a treat as it will bring you back to a simpler time of Ferris

wheels, roller coasters and cotton candy.

The Festival is more than delicious fresh strawberries from Plant City. Award-winning entertainers such as Bobby Vinton and Kenny Rogers will be performing. For those of us who don't think of the 80s as the "olden days" you will remember .38 Special with songs like "Hold On Loosely" and "Caught Up in You". The band is scheduled to perform on Friday, March 4 at 7:30 pm. Tickets are reasonably priced at under \$25 per ticket, but they do not include admission to the festival.

For the Hannah Montana fans, her dad (or Billy Ray Cyrus as he is known in the Country Music world) is playing on Saturday,

March 12 at 7:30. Tickets are \$20 and \$25. Lady Antebellum won Vocal Group of the Year and Single of the Year for "Need You Now" at the CMAs this past November and they are coming to the Festival on Sunday, March 13 at 7:30. Tickets are \$45, which is much less than you would pay at other venues.

Country music fans will also enjoy seeing Tracie Adkins, performing at 3:30 on Sunday March 6, followed by the Judd's "Last Encore" at 7:30 p.m. Charley Pride and hunky cowboy, Clint Black perform on Monday March 7. Are you ready to "twist"? Come see Chubby Checker March 8 at 3:30. Tickets priced \$15-\$20.

Many other talented performers are scheduled, such as Tanya Tucker, Rick Springfield, George Jones, and The Doobie Brothers. Free entertainment includes The Guy Lombardo Band and newcomer, Suite Caroline.

Natalie Burgin, 2010 Florida

Strawberry Festival Queen, will end her reign and a new queen will be crowned. Other activities include a Youth Craft and Baking Competition, Strawberry Shortcake Eating Contest, Photography Contest, Art Show, and beautiful Baby Contest. For the animal lover, there will be rabbit, poultry, dairy shows and more. For a complete list of the events and rules to enter the contests, go to www.flstrawberryfestival.com/contests.

Discounted tickets are available at SweetBay Supermarkets. Adult tickets \$8 (ages 13 and up), Youth tickets \$4 (ages 6-12). Monday through Thursday from 3:00 pm – 11:00 pm are Ride-A-Thon Days. Friday night from 11pm to 3am is Moonlight Magic. You can purchase \$25 armbands to ride the midway rides during these special times. The Midway opens at 12 noon Tuesday through Friday and at 10:00 a.m. Saturday through Monday.

For more information visit www.flstrawberryfestival.com.



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