



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - 15 April 2019

Cancellation of the 2019 Cotton District Arts Festival

STARKVILLE, MS -

Saturday did not turn out as any of us had hoped. Cancellation of #CDAF2019 was not taken lightly, particularly given the investment in this day by vendors, musicians, sponsors, and the community as a whole.

After multiple phone calls to the National Weather Service, the weather forecast changed significantly between Friday afternoon and Saturday morning, calling for more thunderstorms and lightning on Saturday. The risk this posed (in a street lined with metal trailers and tent poles) to vendors, staff, performers, the public, volunteers, attendees, and first responders was too great. The Committee's decision was extremely difficult and disappointing. However, with lightning flashing overhead between 4:30 and 8:00 a.m., it was the best decision possible. This storm system has caused one confirmed death at an outdoor festival in East Texas that did not cancel.

Unfortunately, there is no single indoor venue that will hold all of CDAF. This year's event planned to highlight 150 artisans (many using multiple booths), 20 food vendors (including several open-fire, working kitchen trailers), 3 stages of music, the International Village (composed of several performance groups), the Children's Village, a Pet Parade, and at least a dozen writers in the Writers' Village.

No practical solution for breaking CDAF into multiple venues has been found, given the logistics involved with multiple sites and our current volunteer capacity. Prior to Saturday, SAAC was already in conversation with several area festivals: none of them have a contingency plan that involves moving a festival or breaking it apart.

Rescheduling CDAF anytime soon is unlikely, given that many artists have already booked booths at other arts festivals for the spring season, which extends through May.

Although booth fees do not reflect the investment that many vendors have in this day, SAAC and CDAF have already contacted this year's vendors to alert them that it is considering possible refunds or other form of reimbursement. Vendors should refer to their inbox for further updates from SAAC and CDAF before the end of April. All of the 2019 art vendors are included in the Artisan Index on www.CDAFestival.com and we are exploring ways to promote this during the summer. All musicians and food vendors are also listed on the website.



Executive Director John Bateman said, “We are extraordinarily grateful for the support shown by the community and many of our vendors for this decision. Much credit goes to the business community as well, like Rick’s Cafe, 929, The Pop Porium, Starkville Community Theatre, and others who offered space on Saturday. Starkville truly is an amazing place to live.”

About SAAC

Now commencing its third decade, the Starkville Area Arts Council sponsors the Cotton District Arts Festival, runs various outreach programs, and awards almost \$25,000 each year in grants and scholarships throughout Starkville and Oktibbeha County in its mission to build a strong, creative, connected community through the arts. The Starkville Area Arts Council (SAAC) appreciates the support of the City of Starkville and the Greater Starkville Development Partnership, Oktibbeha County, National Endowment for the Arts, Mississippi Arts Commission, Visit Mississippi, Del Rendon Foundation, 4-County Electric Foundation, and various local businesses and individuals. Additional information about SAAC can be found at www.starkvillearts.org.

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