



Seth Daniel | July 14, 2015

Getting Ready for Sand Sculpting Festival: Annual Event Set for July 24-26 with 29 Sculptors, Hot Air Balloon and Food Trucks among Attractions

More sand sculptors than ever before will hit Revere Beach this month, along with a hot air balloon and a fantastic Food Truck Festival, during the International Sand Sculpting Festival (July 24-26).

As the date quickly approaches, organizers are putting the finishing touches on the colossal Beach celebration and ready to unveil a few new details for this year's festival.

"I have brought more of a business aspect to the festival since I've been involved and I think it's important to figure out how to do something well, leverage what we do well and repeat it the next year and, at the same time, add something new to make it better," said John Hamel of the Partnership. "In the last four years, every year has had something new added to it."

This year, in the competition, there will be a lot of new things, including a doubles competition.

First, of all, there are more sculptors than ever before, and a majority of them are from outside the U.S., giving it more of an international flair.

"We have officially re-branded it the International Sand Sculpting Festival," said Hamel. "We have 14 international sculptors and a majority of the sculptors are international this year. In all, we have 29 sculptors. There are 10 in the solo competition, 10 in the doubles competition and nine non-competing sculptors. That's the most we've ever had."

The centerpiece sculpture, as previously announced, will feature the 'Spirit of Massachusetts' and have several notable landmarks from around the state.

An exciting new aspect aside from the sculpting is the presence of tethered hot air balloon rides on Saturday afternoon, and potentially on Sunday. The balloon will come from the well-known Re-Max company, whose symbol is the giant hot air balloon.

"We want to eventually add a hot air balloon festival," said Hamel. "We know those who go up will have an amazing view of the beachfront and Boston for those visiting the Beach and those visiting who may be thinking about moving to Revere Beach or buying a condo in one of the buildings. This is a test, just like with the Food Trucks, to show one hot air balloon can be a success, and like the Food Trucks, attract more in the future."

That model has worked stupendously with the Food Trucks.

Three years ago, the first year, there were a few bumps with the idea, but last year was an unbridled success with the Food Trucks doing well in concert with the Beach businesses. This year, there is a waiting list to get a Truck into the Festival.

"After last year's success, this year we are oversubscribed," he said. "We accepted 20 trucks and we have a huge waiting list. That's exciting because the first year we had to pay people to come."

The professional stage will return with a wide variety of acts all weekend, though it has been positioned this year to face the Beach so that folks can take in the music while on the Beach.

Naturally, the fireworks will return over the water on Saturday night, and will be just as impressive as last year, Hamel said.

"Some year, we hope to compete with Boston's July 4th show," he said. "We'll never be able to spend what they do, but having it so close and near the water makes the total experience rival Boston's. Anyone can just walk up to the Beach and get a front row seat for our fireworks and enjoy the show."

Other highlights include:

Senior Citizen Day, which will be held Friday, July 24, at the Revere Beach International Sand Sculpting Festival, will be hosted by the East Boston Neighborhood Health Center (EBNHC) and will feature a special tent with wellness tests, health brochures and more.

Senior Citizen Day will also feature the 'Thinkin' Big Band,' an 18-piece big band from Boston that was formed in 2010. Thinkin' Big is a tight-knit musical group made up from Berkeley College of Music and New England Conservatory students, representing some of the finest young musicians from all over the world.

'Thinkin' Big Band' will play from 2-4 p.m. on Friday, July 24.

Amateur Sand Sculpting Competition. The Partnership has added an official amateur competition with categories for children, adults and families/groups of four. There will be small fees associated with entry, and prizes will be awarded to winners.

Major sponsors this year have stepped up, Hamel said. Those giving more than \$10,000 to support the Festival were Waterfront Square, Global Oil, EBNHC, Geico, Mohegan Sun, CDM Smith, Waste Management, Vanguard Waterfront, and Save the Harbor/Save the Bay.

Organizers reported that they hope to be adding a much larger Ferris Wheel this year so that more people can get on and that the views are much higher and impressive.