'Water Blast' to help launch new school year

Easley's Old Market Square to be turned into water park Aug. 29

By Julie Howle
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Residents could find a water wonderland of sorts in downtown Easley as part of the Back-to-School Water Blast planned for Aug. 29.

"We're going to turn Market Square into a water park," said Scott Buckhiester, vice president of operations for DunBurks Premier Events. "We're bringing in lots of those inflatable rides ... They'll all have water spraying on them. They're all water slides and water rides."

It's the first time Easley is having a Back-to-School Water Blast, which will be from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. in Old Market Square downtown.

"We've had a lot of really great response from it," Buckhiester said. "We hope that it turns out so we can plan it for every year."

Food vendors — with everything from ice cream and snow canes to funnel cake — will be at the blast along with a DJ playing music throughout the festival. There will also be back-to-school vendors selling school supplies and other items, he said.

The event is open to anyone, and Buckhiester reminded people to wear bathing suits and bring a towel.

"It's not going to be conducive to 2-year-olds as much as it's going to be to kids a little bit older than that," he said. "It's not like we're going to turn anyone away."

Buckhiester said it will cost $1 to do a loop, which includes one ride on each of the five water rides. An unlimited wristband will cost about $8, he said.

The event is sponsored by Foothills Gymnastics and Cheer, according to Buckhiester, and he said the group will be doing some demonstrations as well.

Tiffany Martin, senior wellness director for the Pickens County YMCA, said they are also partnering with DunBurks on the water blast themed event, which she said ties in well with the Y's Operation: Save a Life initiative.

In the wake of several local drownings, the Pickens County YMCA, working with the Pickens County Red Cross, United Way of Pickens County and Safe Kids Upstate, launched the program aimed at teaching residents how to be safe around the family pool.

"This is one of the ways that we can keep Operation: Save a Life in the forefront of people's minds to remember to get their children into swimming lessons," Martin said.

She said they will have games for children and will also hand out safety checklists and other information, including about swim lessons, at the water blast.

Buckhiester said the next event for Easley will be a Battle of the Bands in late September and early October. He said they are looking for unsigned, amateur bands to sign up to participate.

He said people can get more information at www.easleyevents.com.

"We try to provide entertainment in the city of Easley for our citizens ... so they don't need to go somewhere else," Buckhiester said.

GET WET

- What: Back-to-School Water Blast
- Where: Old Market Square, downtown Easley
- When: 4-8 p.m., Aug. 29
- Cost: $1 for a loop of five rides; other ride fees; food and products for sale
- Information: www.easleyevents.com.

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