

10th Annual Kool-Aid Days Celebrates Kool-Aid's 80th Anniversary

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Award-Winning Festival features Free Judy Collins Concert and New Grand Parade

Over 30 events return to Hastings, Nebraska, the second weekend in August as part of the biggest ever Kool-Aid Days, celebrating the invention of Nebraska's Official Soft Drink by Edwin Perkins in Hastings 80 years ago, an anniversary recognized in this year's festival theme, "Kool Ruby Jubilee." All of the events that were new last year are returning along with all the old favorites. Saturday night's free Konkert Kool-Aid in Brickyard Park features an evening with folk legend Judy Collins, preceded by Nebraska's own Kokyo Taiko Japanese drummers from Lincoln, and followed by a large fireworks display. The return of the Kool-Aid Jammers Boat Races at the City Aquacourt on Friday and the Kardboard Boat Races on Lake Hastings on Sunday is drawing a lot of advance interest. We expect 18-20 thousand people to head for Hastings to participate in all the events and drink over 1,500 gallons of Kool-Aid from the World's Largest Kool-Aid Stand. Saturday's festivities will kick off at 9:00 am with a new Grand Parade, featuring entries from all over Nebraska, the family and descendants of Edwin Perkins, and of course, the official arrival of Kool-Aid Man to welcome thousands of guests to the festival. Last year's Kool-Aid Days won the Governor's Award for Most Outstanding Nebraska Event in a city of 20,000 or more.

Kool-Aid Days' new Grand Parade will step off at the intersection of 2nd Street and Minnesota Avenue at 9 am on Saturday, August 11th. Family members and descendants of Edwin Perkins will serve as Grand Marshals in recognition of Kool-Aid's 80th anniversary. Other entries from all over Nebraska will include classic cars, kids from the Make-A-Wish Foundation, mascots from sports teams and events, Adam 12 and Mayberry vintage police cars, Shrine units, horses, Kardboard boats getting ready to race on Sunday, and of course, the official arrival of Kool-Aid Man at the festival. The parade will proceed down 2nd Street to Lincoln Avenue, where it will turn north for three blocks, ending at the Middle School practice field, the site of the World's Largest Kool-Aid Stand. A reviewing stand at Hastings Avenue will announce each parade unit as it passes.

Besides the parade, there are a few other changes to long-standing festival events. We've moved the Friday morning opening event of the festival -- the Kool-Aid Kerr Chevrolet Golf Scramble -- to the Elks Country Club in Hastings. This year's hole-in-one prize is a Chevy Tahoe LZ valued at over \$50,000.

We're also very excited about this year's inflatable rides. Ultimate Survivor, after the television show, is one of the largest inflatable rides in the country. There are over 750 feet of obstacle course on the three levels, including suspension bridges, climbing walls, giant slides, and zip lines. Best of all, along with the Tropical Giant Slide, and Mount Neverest, our three large inflatables are, for the first time at Kool-Aid Days, designed to be enjoyed by adults, as well as children, so the whole family can participate in the fun instead of mom and/or dad standing around waiting for the kids. We're assured that all of the most challenging obstacles in Ultimate Survivor have detours available for the less adventurous, so every member of the family can go along for the fun.

Kool-Aid Days Webcast Around the World

For the first time, internet users around the world will be able to tune in to live webcasts of many of the Kool-Aid Days events. Glenwood Telecommunications, a Kool-Aid Days corporate sponsor, will be utilizing their wireless network to provide live feeds from the Jammers Boat Races, Grand Parade, Downtown Stage & Kool-Aid Stand, from the Konkert

Kool-Aid grounds, and the Kardboard Boat Races. We've wanted to share the excitement of Kool-Aid Days with distant fans ever since we knew it was possible with a webcast and we're grateful to Glenwood for stepping up and providing such wide coverage in their first year. We receive emails about the festival from all over the world and it's exciting to think that those fans will be able to join in some of the fun. To view the webcasts, you'll just click on a link on the home page of this site and you'll see all the action. For now, you can find a schedule of webcast times by clicking here .

Both Sides of Kool-Aid Days at Koncert

Koncert Kool-Aid's performers are about as diverse as you can find. The incomparable Judy Collins is genuinely a legend in her own time and critics continue to hail her new recordings as her best work ever. Collins' new album, *Judy Collins Sings Lennon and McCartney*, was released on July 4th. For almost 45 years, Collins' dulcet tones have graced the world's ears, and her poetic lyrics have galvanized a generation. Best known for her recordings of "Both Sides Now," "Send in the Clowns," and "Amazing Grace," she has released more than 40 albums, and had many Top 10 hits, Grammy awards and nominations, and gold- and platinum albums. The first to record the songs of Leonard Cohen, Collins has ushered others like Randy Newman and Joni Mitchell to widespread public exposure.

Kool-Aid Days begins a new tradition of featuring Nebraska artists to open the concert and this year the Kokyo Taiko Drummers from Lincoln. Wadaiko Japanese-style drumming has been described as dynamic, thunderous, and powerful. With the sound of the drums resonating in the soul of both performer and listener, Kokyo Taiko savors this connection to their beloved Japanese culture and feel proud to share this amazing tradition with their audiences. The contrast between Kokyo Taiko and Judy Collins will make for a dynamic evening in the park, with a 15-minute fireworks display, just to add icing to the cake!

The 4th Annual Kool-Aid Cruise of America will also culminate at Brickyard Park before the concert, bringing hundreds of classic cars to be on display through the evening. After a day in its traditional location across from Hastings City Auditorium downtown, the World's Largest Kool-Aid Stand will again move to the park for the concert. Revelers will be able to buy Kool-Aid Days mugs and other collectibles through the evening, as well as feast on funnel cakes, buffalo burgers, chicken on a stick, and other festival foods. Cold Stone Creamery will be serving the new permanent addition to their line of creations -- Kool-Aid Crunch Punch Munch -- at Brickyard Park and again at Lake Hastings on Sunday.

Help make this Kool-Aid Days the best EVER!

Volunteers are still needed to watch the hole-in-one greens at the Friday morning golf scramble and help out at the late afternoon events at the YMCA. On Saturday, we need volunteers to work at the Kool-Aid Stand outdoors, run games in the air conditioned City Auditorium, and sell Kool-Aid merchandise and game tickets (inside and outside). This is a great chance for families, service organizations, or school and community groups to work together and show their community spirit. Volunteers should be at least 13 years old and some jobs require that you be 16 years or older. Younger children may volunteer when working with an adult.

If you want to help make the tenth annual Kool-Aid Days the best ever, click here to send an email to Pam Bohmfalk, our volunteer coordinator. We'll give you a special Kool-Aid Days volunteer button, and you can receive a \$3 discount on a Kool-Aid Days t-shirt as a small token of our appreciation.

Bringing more color and light to the concert grounds, the Soft Drink Heritage Foundation will be selling lighted necklaces, magnets, fans and other light-up items. In recognition of the tenth anniversary of the festival, the foundation has issued a limited edition special light-up mug bearing the Kool-Aid smile. The anniversary mugs feature a removable light module with replaceable batteries and will be on sale throughout the festival for \$8.

Boats for All

Kool-Aid Days inaugurated two new events last year which have proven to be very popular. For the younger set, the Hastings City Aquacourt hosts the Kool-Aid Jammers Boat Races at 2 pm on Friday afternoon. Response to the Jammers boat-building workshops earlier this summer have been enthusiastic and organizers are expecting several times the number of entries as last year. In two small changes to the event, boats this year may be built using Kool-Aid "Bursts" bottles, in addition to the Kool-Aid Jammers packets, and there is a new award category — People's Choice — for which fans attending the races can buy tickets to vote for their favorite boat. The trophy for the People's Choice award will be second in size only to the Jammers Cup. The grand prize which will accompany this year's Jammers Cup is a custom-painted pair of Nike Air Force One Kool-Aid shoes valued at \$100 from OnlyUrbanCustoms.com of Salt Lake City.

Last year's inaugural Kool-Aid Kardboard Boat Races were a big hit,

even after a week's rain delay. The wildly popular races will return to Lake Hastings at 2 pm on Sunday afternoon. Cardboard mariners will again strive for best time on the 150-yd. course and compete for other awards, such as Best Kool-Aid Days Theme, Best Design, and of course, the Most Spectacular Sinking. Other Sunday events at Lake Hastings will include the Kool-Aid Flying Disc Golf Tournament in the morning and a Kooolest Pet contest and outdoor photo studio, by Paw Prints pet photography, on Sunday afternoon. Food vendors will have festive fare for revelers, while Aquafina Water will provide free bottles of chilled water and Kool-Aid "Singles," in a choice of five flavors.

Community Support Runs Deep, but More Needed

Visitors may notice a few more appeals for donations to Nebraska's Official Soft Drink Heritage Foundation at this year's festival. We have amazing support from the businesses and foundations in and near Hastings to help us grow Kool-Aid Days, and Kraft Foods doubled their support this year. It shows a real commitment to the cultural and economic health of Hastings, and our citizens owe a debt of gratitude to our sponsors. However, the foundation has a philosophy of providing as many Kool-Aid Days activities as possible for free or at very low cost. Even the items we sell to help offset some of the costs are priced much lower than similar items at other fairs and festivals. That means raising an extraordinary amount of money in order to bring nationally-known performers and other entertainment to the thousands of people who come out and celebrate Kool-Aid Days. So this year, visitors will have an opportunity to make small donations to the festival in order to keep it affordable. We'll have donation boxes wherever our Kollektibles and mugs are sold, and we'll "pass the pitcher" through the audience at the Koncert. Just a dollar or two from festival guests who can afford it will go a long way toward keeping Kool-Aid Days one of the most affordable festivals in the country.

New Events Join Returning Favorites

The over 30 events that make up Kool-Aid Days are a mix of new ideas and returning favorites. The Hastings Family YMCA will host its annual "Krazy for Kool-Aid" events on Friday night, August 10th, including the preliminary rounds of the Kwickest Kool-Aid Drinking Contest, a 3-on-3 basketball tournament, Bike Safety Track and half-price day passes. Pastime Lanes will continue the traditions of Krazy Kart races and a Mini Golf Scramble at the facilities they've recently taken over from the YMCA.

The area in and around the City Auditorium will be packed with rides, entertainment and events on Saturday, August 11th. After the parade, everyone will gather at the downtown stage for the official opening ceremonies at 10 am. The Nebraska Freemasons will repeat their free Child Identification Program (CHIP) in the Masonic Center all day Saturday. The Kool-Aid Days Trolley will be back, connecting all the events — and with an interpretive guide on board telling the stories behind the Kool-Aid Building and other downtown historic sites.

The Trolley will also run on Saturday night to shuttle concert-goers

between overflow parking lots and on Sunday to carry attendees from the Museum to Lake Hastings events, the Fun in the Sun Car Show at Pastime Lanes, and overflow parking at Hastings High School. Also on Sunday, August 12th, the Hastings Museum will again be open free to the public for the day, featuring the "Ride 'Em Cowboy" exhibit and "Kool-Aid: Discover the Dream," an extensive interactive exhibit of Kool-Aid's creation and history. The museum will also host the "Nebraska Creations Fair," featuring original Nebraska-made products to celebrate Edwin Perkins' entrepreneurial spirit, hold special Kool-Aid activities on the museum grounds, and serve free Kool-Aid from 1:30-4:30 pm.

Reprising an Award-Winning Performance

Kool-Aid Days was proud to receive the Governor's Award for Most Outstanding Nebraska Event in a city of 20,000 or more in 2006. In addition, the festival won ten awards from the Nebraska Festivals and Events Association for Best T-shirt, Best Ad Campaign, Best Poster, and for many other of the event's collectibles and marketing. We were pleased to bring these awards home to Hastings. As one of the smallest cities in our category for Outstanding Event, we're very proud that Hastings is capable of hosting a celebration that's recognized across the state for its excellence. We hope to live up to that reputation as we grow Kool-Aid Days even larger with entertainment that will draw more and more fans to our big party!

Fun for "Kids" of All Ages

Thousands of people are already preparing for Kool-Aid Days, building cardboard and Jammers boats; putting up posters; practicing their Kool-Aid drinking and flying disc skills; building parade entries; and preparing performances for the downtown stage. We want Kool-Aid Days to appeal to every member of the family, regardless of their age. We want families from all over the region to come back year after year and find something new that appeals to them every time they return. That's really what Kool-Aid Days is all about — unique fun for everyone!

Complete information on all of the Kool-Aid Days events, the history of Kool-Aid, and links to many other Kool-Aid resources can be found at the festival's website: <http://www.Kool-AidDays.com>