



Tennessee Soybean Festival
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

27th ANNUAL TENNESSEE SOYBEAN FESTIVAL ANNOUNCES CANCELLATION

May 15, 2020 - MARTIN, TENN. – The *Award-Winning* Tennessee Soybean Festival Board of Directors has made the decision to cancel the 27th Annual Tennessee Soybean Festival planned for September 5-12, due to the uncertainties that still lie ahead from the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to TSF Executive Director, David Belote, “The information we are currently receiving from state and federal governments indicates that we should discontinue our efforts to host festivals, fairs, or other special events that have the capacity to draw large numbers of people until further notice. The Tennessee Soybean Festival requires advance planning in the form of securing agreements with carnivals, street vendors, entertainment acts and other attractions. From a planning perspective, we simply cannot take the financial risk given the uncertainty of the future. We are dealing with a pandemic and the obvious restrictions that it imposes.”

“Also, the Tennessee Soybean Festival relies solely on sponsorships and contributions from local businesses to operate,” Belote stated.

“Truly, these are difficult times for all of us and as stewards of our festival, we would be hard-pressed to ask our local retailers and businesses to contribute to the festival this year while their own financial futures are uncertain due to the many closures and restrictions as a result of COVID-19.”

The Tennessee Soybean Festival was awarded in February 2020 the Best Festival in the Southeast by the Southeast Festivals and Events Association. The festival last year attracted over 24,000 people to Martin, Tennessee. Currently, the State of Tennessee Economic Recovery Group is asking local governments to not plan events that encourage close contact and the assembling of large groups.

Director Belote emphasized that public safety is one of the most important planning components of the Tennessee Soybean Festival.

“The safety and well-being of our citizens is paramount. Our board of directors has emphasized that ensuring the safety of Martin residents, attendees, entertainment acts, and vendors is of utmost importance. The inherent risks involved with this pandemic are self-evident. Given all of the factors that it takes to produce a festival and the current uncertainties surrounding the pandemic, at this point in time we strongly feel that it is not in the best interest of our community to continue the pursuit of the 2020 Festival.”

Mayor Randy Brundige was asked for comment regarding the significance of what the TSF means to the Martin community. Mayor Brundige stated, “Not only does the Tennessee Soybean Festival contribute to the city’s economy but also puts us on the map. We will miss making people smile and making Martin a destination to celebrate the soybean this year.” Mayor Brundige stated that in his travels across the state the Tennessee Soybean Festival has become one of the premier associations with the city. If you visit the TSF website, one will see that Martin truly becomes a destination during this week. Documented and identified are those who travel to Martin to attend the festival from all parts of the United States and throughout the world.

ABOUT THE TENNESSEE SOYBEAN FESTIVAL

*The **Award-Winning** Tennessee Soybean Festival is fortunate to have collaborative efforts of the University of Tennessee at Martin, local industry and businesses, leaders in agriculture, churches and community organizations, and countless other volunteers who work together to produce a prestigious festival each year. The Tennessee Soybean Festival provides an opportunity for food, fun and fellowship, all in celebration of Weakley County’s cash crop- the soybean. The event pays tribute to the soybean farmer, yet includes something for everyone. From humble beginnings the festival has grown to have more 20,000 attendees throughout the week. While the Tennessee Soybean Festival places a major emphasis on the soybean, education, community, families and children, the festival itself makes the City of Martin a destination during the week. One can visit our website to determine where people travel from to attend our festival, but folks travel from Europe, China, California, Texas, Alaska, the midwest and throughout the Heartland area. The Tennessee Soybean Festival has received many accolades and awards from the Southeast Festivals and Events Association, most noted being recognized as the Best Festival during the February 2020 awards ceremony in Muscle Shoals, Alabama. For more information visit our website at www.tnsoybeanfestival.org*

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