

Celebrate summer's sweet melon

Hermiston's Melon Fest is Saturday, Aug. 20

By Lisa Britton
Go! Magazine

HERMISTON — It's time to break out your most creative watermelon-themed costume for Hermiston's Melon Fest on Saturday, Aug. 20.

If you don't want to dress up, Melon Fest offers plenty of other activities — including slices of fresh Hermiston watermelon.

"Hermiston is noted for Hermiston watermelons being juicy and sweet. They're famous," said Judy Pederson, president of Hermiston Downtown District, which is organizing the festival along with the City of Hermiston and Hermiston Chamber of Commerce.

And August is the time for these ripe melons, donated by Bellingers, Pollock and Walchli.

"August is the best time to open a melon," Pederson said. (She should know — she is a member of the watermelon-growing Walchli family and said she's "eaten watermelon since I was born.")

Melon Fest runs from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. on Hermiston's Festival Street.

Activities throughout the day include free face painting (watermelon themed, of course), a photo booth, games for kids, an obstacle course, food and craft vendors and free watermelon.

"We give out free watermelon slices all day long," Pederson said.

Melon Fest started in 2019, then skipped 2020. A scaled-back version happened in 2021.

"This year we're going all out," Pederson said. "We provide a fun family celebration. It's a fun day."

CONTESTS

Those who want to enter the watermelon costume contest should be ready at 10 a.m. Prizes will be awarded for first, second and third places. This is open

MELON FEST

9 a.m.: Entertainment by Jonna Kopta

10 a.m.: Watermelon Costume Contest. Open to all ages. Prizes awarded for first (\$300), second (\$200) and third (\$100).

11 a.m.: Music by Dallin Puzey

11 a.m.: Watermelon Seed Spitting Contest

11:30 a.m.: Gems Cheer Royals Performance

Noon: Watermelon Bathtub Races

to all ages.

"That's so popular," Pederson said of the contest. "People are so creative."

The watermelon seed spitting contest starts at 11 a.m., and at noon teams will try their skills in the watermelon bathtub races where one person sits in a tub full of water and is pushed around a course by the rest of the team.

"It's action, fun, wet. It's awesome," Pederson said.

ENTERTAINMENT

Jonna Kopta will start the entertainment at 9 a.m., and Dallin Puzey will start playing live music at 11 a.m.



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Hazel Huber, 1, wears a watermelon-themed hat during the 2019 Melon Fest in Hermiston.

Staff photo by Kathy Aney

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