


Cannon Beach's 54th annual event takes place June 9, with events on June 8 and 10

By **BRENNA VISSER**
FOR COAST WEEKEND

For one weekend a year for the past 53 years, the long, narrow sands of Cannon Beach change from an empty oasis into a giant sandcastle-building competition. Cars flood the beach, bonfires rage, music plays and 6-foot sculptures are built out of sand. This year, several thousand people are anticipated to come watch it all happen Friday, June 8, through Sunday, June 10, with the main event happening Saturday, June 9. The Cannon Beach Sandcastle Contest began in 1964 as a way to encourage people back onto the beach after a tsunami hit the Oregon Coast. Now entering its 54th year, it is the oldest sandcastle competition west of the Mississippi River. While the Sandcastle Contest seems to come each year as dependably as the tides themselves, the annual event is the product of a years' worth of planning and coordination. Behind the scenes are Debbie Nelson, the event's chief organizer, and Jim Paino, the executive director of the Cannon Beach Chamber of Commerce. Together they shared what it takes to make Cannon Beach's headline event happen. 

BY THE NUMBERS

(Note: These are the projected figures for 2018 based on 2017's totals.)

8: The number of people on the official Sandcastle Contest committee.

100: The number of volunteers it takes to set up, facilitate and tear down the event.

1 year: The time it takes to organize one Sandcastle Contest day. "In fact," Paino added, "we've already done some planning for next year."

8: The number of law enforcement officers on duty to help direct traffic onto the beach and keep the event safe. Usually, they are accompanied by a handful of Community Emergency Response Team members, as well.

20: The number of sponsorships it takes to finance the event.

165: The number of first, second and third place medallions ordered for contest winners.

400: The number of participant ribbons ordered for both the sandcastle building competition and the Singing Sands run on Sunday, June 10.

3: How many hours it takes to set up all the infrastructure on the beach the day-of Saturday, June 9.

4: The number of different permits required by the city, state and health department to put on the event.

500: The number of cars that must be shepherded onto the beach for the day. The



ERICK BENGEL PHOTOS

Eric Hawley, of the Pacific Northwest team Wabi Sabi, chisels away at an emperor sculpture at a previous Sandcastle Contest.

Sandcastle Contest is the only day where people are allowed to park on the sand in Cannon Beach without a special permit.

16: The number of porta-potties ordered to handle 30,000 spectators and participants.

178-200: The number of participants Paino and Nelson expect any given year.

1 1/2: The number of pallets of water and soda the team orders to quench everyone's thirst.

36: How many boxes graham crackers are purchased for free s'mores offered at the bonfire Saturday, June 9.

250: The number of marshmallows needed to make s'mores at the bonfire.

216: The number of chocolate bars it takes to make enough s'mores at the bonfire.

IF YOU GO

FRIDAY, JUNE 8

10 a.m. to 5 p.m.: Packets n' Pail Pickup. Cannon Beach Chamber & Visitors Center

5:30 p.m.: Sandcastle Parade. Participants line up at Second and Spruce streets at 5 p.m.

SATURDAY, JUNE 9

Noon: Sandcastle Contest Begins on the beach

5:30 p.m.: Final judging and awards presentation to follow

7 to 10 p.m.: Live music on the beach. Bonfire with free s'mores starts at 8 p.m.

SUNDAY, JUNE 10

9 a.m.: Singing Sands 5K fun run/walk. Starts on the beach at the end of Second Street.



Jennie and Jacob Jessop, of the team The Jessops, put the finishing touches on a car sculpture in 2014.

400: The number of hamburgers ordered and served on average at Sandcastle Contest day.

966: How many official Sandcastle Day T-Shirts have been ordered.

1,066: The number of yards of string it takes to mark off about 30 sandcastle-building plots on the beach.

Unquantifiable: The amount of coffee it takes to get it all done. "Although I think we mostly run off adrenaline," Nelson said.

Priceless: The feeling Paino and Nelson get after seeing everyone enjoy the event. "My favorite point is when you see smiles on everyone's faces. When we've hit that point, I know we've done it," Paino said.