



Parish of Ascension

OFFICE OF THE PARISH PRESIDENT

TOMMY MARTINEZ
Parish President

Preliminary 2015 Attendance Numbers Surpass Last Year's Ascension Hot Air Balloon Festival

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GONZALES – Preliminary attendance estimates for the 2015 Ascension Hot Air Balloon Festival show a total of around 54,000 people attended the two-day festival on the grounds of Lamar-Dixon Expo Center, surpassing last year's numbers by 4,000, festival organizers said.

“Again we were blessed with good weather and a steady flow of people wanting to enjoy a family friendly festival,” said Ascension Parish President Tommy Martinez. “And it was truly a family event because you could easily see the children far outnumbered the adults.”

Festival committee chairman Martin McConnell said attendance figures were estimated to be between 10,000 and 12,000 people on Friday, and 40,000-plus on Saturday.

“Plus, when you take into account all of the volunteers, balloon teams and their families, vendors, law enforcement, first responders and others, we had a lot of people on the grounds of Lamar-Dixon Expo Center and one begins to think 54,000 may be low, McConnell said.

“The success of this year's festival assures that it will continue in the upcoming years, showing that it can stand on its own without any government assistance. It was through the help of our Crown Sponsor L'Auberge Casino Baton Rouge, and all of our sponsors and their generosity that made this happen and we can't thank them enough.”

McConnell said a festival of this magnitude could not go off as planned without the professionally coordinated help from the Ascension Parish Sheriff's Office, the Gonzales Police Department, the fire departments, first responders, and the State Police.

“We also want to thank Volunteer Ascension, Tour Ascension, and the hundreds of volunteers who helped make 2015's Ascension Hot Air Balloon Festival a premier successful event.”

PHOTO CUTLINE – Special shape balloon “Claw'D the Crazy Crab” loomed over arriving festival goers Saturday at the 2015 Ascension Hot Air Balloon Festival held at Lamar-Dixon Expo Center. Festival organizers said an estimated 54,000 people attended the two-day family festival. Claw'D stands 85 feet tall and weighs 425 pounds, according to his owners CT Ballooning, LLC of Kensington, Ct. Claw'd and two other special shape balloons were joined by 30 competitive hot air balloons from around the country.



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