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SKy Science Festival returns on April 23

By ANN MARIE DOTSON amdotson@bgdailynews.com
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Oden Oraelosi and Natalie Spangler of Lexington play with an albino squirrel
Matt Lunsford/

The SKy Science Festival Expo Day will return to Bowling Green's Circus Square Park after being postponed in 2020 and 2021 amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

The free festival, which started in 2015, will be from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. April 23 and will feature exhibits, music and stage demonstrations.

There will be close to 30 tent activities or tables, according to Ronn Kistler, who is secretary on the board of directors for the SKy Science Festival and also serves on the planning committee.

“The theme is science, so we represented virtually every branch of science,” he said.

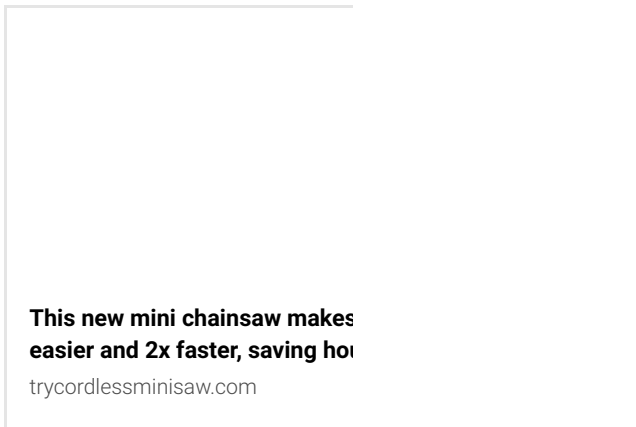
Several organizations will participate in the event, including Mammoth Cave National Park, Wild Bird and Nature Store, Warren Rural Electric Cooperative Corp., the Kentucky Thermal Institute and the Bowling Green Fire Department. Science students from schools throughout southcentral Kentucky will demonstrate various activities.

Kistler said that since this is Brain Awareness Month, Dana Alliance for Brain Initiatives will have several stations that will explore the human brain.

Other exhibits will include a 10-foot high inflatable colon and the Mammoth Cave Area Beekeepers. Kistler said beekeepers will provide demonstrations on empty beehives and how bees interact with the hives.

The Hilltoppers Astronomy Club will have special telescopes available to look at the sun, which work much like solar eclipse glasses, and an exhibit by WKU’s Hardin Planetarium will demonstrate light and reflections.

Kistler said there will be something for everyone, including novices and experts and the young and old.



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“Every single exhibit is ideally designed so that visitors can actually do something, not just talk about science,” Kistler said. “They can actually try a game, a challenge or a

puzzle or put something together. The whole focus of the festival is to interact with science.”

An exhibit from the Kentucky Forge Council will get participants involved by allowing them to make their own aluminum pendant or ornaments. Kistler said attendees can trace their own patterns using scratch blocks and pour aluminum into the pattern.

In addition to the exhibits, he said there will be stage acts that will demonstrate various phenomenons in science, including a science magic show performed by Jason Lindsey from Hooked on Science, with performances several times during the event.

Food trucks with various foods and T-shirt screen printing will also be available to guests.

The festival will feature a variety of music, and a group from Mannette Musical Instruments will play steel pan drums in front of the Southern Kentucky Performing Arts Center. The group was founded by Eli Mannette, known as the father of the modern steel drum instrument, “who trained his proteges to carry on his legacy,” Kistler said.

In the days leading up to the event, Kistler said there will be a three-day steel drum workshop in which participants will be allowed to make their own steel drum and take it home. The workshop is limited to six people, and the cost is \$850.

Kistler hopes for a successful turnout during this year's festival.

“In the past, we have had thousands of people, and it has been growing over the years,” he said. “With people getting a chance to spend time outdoors, this will hopefully increase the attendance.”

Ann Marie Dotson

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