

Salute to Freedom expected to draw a crowd

This year's event will feature the Air Force Concert Band

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MOUNT VERNON — If the weather cooperates, this year's Salute to Freedom Fourth of July Celebration in Mount Vernon is expected to draw a sizable crowd to the grounds of the Mount Vernon Outland Airport.

For the first time, the annual patriotic celebration will feature a performance by the United States Air Force Concert Band, the premier symphonic wind ensemble of the Air Force. There will also be a new Jelly Ball game option for kids, as well as a Kid Zone with inflatables, laser tag, a DJ, a variety of food vendors, and of course a massive fireworks display to conclude the evening.

"I think this weekend we're supposed to have some rain but we're hoping it's all cleared up by the time they come out for fireworks," said Mount Vernon Tourism Director Angela Schrum, later adding, "We usually see around 5,000 people and we're hoping there'll be more this year with the great entertainment, but a lot of it will depend on the weather."

Gates open for this year's Salute to Freedom at 5 p.m. on Monday, July 4, at the Mount Vernon Outland Airport. At that time, there will be a Kid Zone with inflatables, as well as laser tag and a lot of different food trucks, including some that

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Sentinel File Photo

SALUTE TO FREEDOM — Mount Vernon's 36th Annual Salute to Freedom celebration will be held on Monday, July 4, at the Mount Vernon Outland Airport. Pictured is one of the food vendors from the 2019 celebration.

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have never been at the event before. Then there will be a DJ from 5 to 7 p.m. that evening, live music starting at 7:30 p.m., and finally the fireworks which will take place at around 9 p.m.

Organizers of the 36th Annual Salute to Freedom are proud to welcome the United States Air Force Concert Band to the event. This free concert will kick off at 7:30 p.m. and will lead up to the fireworks presentation. The group usually performs in Washington, D.C. on Independence Day but their tour brought them to the Mount Vernon area for this special day, Sentinel archives state.

"I'm pretty excited since we're going to have the U.S. Air Force Concert Band, because all the military bands are the best in the nation,"

said Mayor John Lewis. "The people that don't come out and at least listen to the quality of the military band are missing out."

Admission and parking are free for the event, but food and Kid Zone vendors do charge a fee. Like last year, the public will be asked to enter the airport on Firebaugh Drive, by the maintenance road, not at the main



Angela Schrum

entrance, Schrum said. There will be signs up to direct people.

Kid Zone vendors this year will include Martin Family Bounce Houses, R&J Tactical Lazer Tag, and Brandy's Fancy Faces (face-painting). Also, food vendors at the event sell corn dogs, tenderloins, polish sausages, ribeye sandwiches, funnel cakes, pretzels, nachos, cotton candy, shake ups, and more. The event also features snow cone vendors, mini-donuts, and kettle corn, Sentinel archives state.

Organizers ask that attendees not bring sparklers, other personal fireworks, or their pets to Monday's event.

For more information on Salute to Freedom, contact Schrum at (618) 242-3151.

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