

NEWS RELEASE
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North Dakota Chokecherry Festival Scheduled for August 13-14

The Williston Convention & Visitors Bureau along with the North Dakota Chokecherry Festival Committee is excited to bring this community festival back for its 15th annual year. The event celebrates the chokecherry as the North Dakota state fruit and honors the accomplishments of youth. The 2021 ND Chokecherry Festival will be held at Spring Lake Park.

Prior to 2007, North Dakota had not named a state fruit. Williston students in Nancy Selby's sixth grade class reached out to state lawmakers as part of a persuasive letter writing assignment, which led to legislation designating the chokecherry as the State Fruit of North Dakota. Senator Stanley Lyson and Senator Nick Hacker sponsored Senate Bill 2145, and Governor John Hoeven signed the bill into law on March 29, 2007. Williston held the first North Dakota Chokecherry Festival August 18, 2007. The celebration has continued to evolve and grow each year.

Longtime festival supporter Nemont will kick things off at 4pm with the 1000 Burger Feed (free burgers for as long as they last!) and another annual sponsor, American State Bank, will be offering free ice cream sundaes with chokecherry syrup while supplies last. This year, live music will be hosted both on the stage near the burger feed and in the vendor area. The evening kicks off with cello phenom Andrew Savioa, who started playing at the age of 9. He chooses popular songs he likes and recreates the vocal melody with his instrument, by ear. "It's like my way of singing," he explained. "I feel like I can create my own voice through the instrument." The evening line up will also include Ben Johnson, Schmittty, Justin Ward, Mooncats and Heather Rae. The evening will conclude with the 5k LiteBrite Run after sunset.

The festival continues on Saturday with a free pancake breakfast prepared by local Lions members, from 8-10a. Event guests will enjoy food and craft vendors, a classic car show, cornhole and volleyball tournaments, a kid zone, mini golf and other family friendly activities. See the full schedule on the Visit Williston Facebook page or on the website at www.visitwilliston.com.

New this year, children are welcome to participate in the Money Dig, held near the sand volleyball courts on the east side of the park at 6p on Friday and 2p on Saturday. Kids will also enjoy the Chokecherry Stroll on Saturday. All children are encouraged to dress up however they like, decorate their bikes and wagons, and meet at the tennis courts at 9:30a to parade through the park. Kids who participate in the stroll will receive a raffle ticket for fun prizes! The

Dock Dogs, a nationally-acclaimed dock dog jumping organization will be at the ND Chokecherry Festival on both Friday and Saturday with demonstrations by their own dogs and competitions for the public throughout the day.

Festival guests are asked to not park in the ditches and shoulders around Spring Lake Park. Free parking is available in the field adjacent the Holiday Station Store and in the Mountrail Williams Electric Cooperative parking lot, with free shuttles circulating to both lots during the festival. Low cost paid parking will be available inside the Spring Lake Park while space allows. Festival goers are welcome to enter the park and drive along the south end to a turn around point, drop off riders, and exit to find parking in one of the free lots if they choose.

The North Dakota Chokecherry Festival is supported the Williston Convention & Visitors Bureau as well as many business and individual sponsors. Events like the ND Chokecherry Festival could not happen without public support and sponsorship. If you are interested in being a festival supporter, contact the CVB. For more information, view the North Dakota Chokecherry Festival Facebook page (www.facebook.com/chokecherryfestival) or contact the Williston Convention & Visitors Bureau at 701-774-9041.

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