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High-Powered “Skiff” Speedboats and Many More New Attractions Featured at Sixth Annual Bradenton Area River Regatta Feb. 8

BRADENTON, Fla.— A captivating and unique watercraft race, and other exciting new attractions, join all the fan favorites at the **ALL-FREE** Bradenton Area River Regatta, presented by LECOM, when the sixth annual event returns to the shorelines of the Manatee River Saturday, Feb. 8.

The largest spectator event in Manatee County, the River Regatta has evolved into the Bradenton area’s signature event, delivering major entertainment on land and water. This year’s Regatta promises the same jammed-packed slate of high-speed watercraft racing, family-fun interactive activities, and chart-topping musical entertainment from dawn to dusk...and it is **ALL FREE**. Events begin at 10 a.m.

An amazing pageantry of pyrotechnics, sponsored by Manatee Memorial Hospital and produced by the first family of fireworks—Zambelli International, culminates the day’s activities, starting at approximately 6:50 p.m.

The featured attraction and marque event, unquestionably, is the high-speed racing and sheer force of the F-2 Powerboats. Powerboat Super League, the oldest and most respected racing circuit in the F-2 division, will rock the Manatee River with these powerful and nimble watercrafts for the largest single-day racing event on the APBA Circuit.

New in 2020 is the uniquely crafted Jersey speed “skiff” racing. These oddly shaped but powerful two-man skiffs will not only impress with their design and construction, they are capable of reaching speeds of 80 mph, delivering riveting racing action. Fans will be able to see these distinct shaped crafts—and the other F-2 machines—up close at the Powerboat Village near the Palmetto Riverside Park area all day.

Also new this year is the LECOM Regatta Bridge Run, a 5K family fun run and walk, whose participants will travel through the streets of Palmetto and finish on the Green Bridge under the glare of the cascading fireworks. Pre-registration is required and the race begins at 5:30 p.m. Runners will be chip-timed and will compete for special prizes for the top 100 male and female finishers.

“We are looking forward to the 2020 Bradenton Area River Regatta,” said Palmetto Mayor Shirley Groover Bryant. “In its sixth year now, the event continues to grow and add more excitement to Manatee County and surrounding communities. It is a great opportunity to showcase our tremendous city and especially the Riverside Park area. The organizational team has been working hard lining up food vendors, exciting powerboat racing on the water and of course all types of entertainment on both sides of the river for every one of all ages.”

—more—

add one...sixth annual river regatta

“The excitement is building, and we are looking forward to the 2020 Regatta on the beautiful Manatee River, the link between Bradenton and Palmetto,” said Bradenton Mayor Wayne Poston. “Our expectations for the sixth annual event are for good weather, great family fun, terrific food and a huge audience turnout that helps put the Bradenton Area on the map as a local and regional destination. It will be a great event for our residents and visitors.”

“It is easy to see why the Regatta has become one of the Bradenton Area’s top, annual signature events, and one that resident and visitors alike look forward to each year,” said Elliott Falcione, executive director of the Bradenton Area Convention and Visitors Bureau. “This year’s event is shaping up to be the best yet, and I cannot wait to welcome the attendees, partake in the fun and see the event’s economic impact on the entire destination.”

Returning to the waves of the Manatee this year is World Flyboard Champion Kristen “The Destroyer” Smoyer, who will entertain spectators throughout the day with her incredible and improbable stunts that have garnered her world-wide accolades.

On land, top musical acts are always a staple for the River Regatta and this year’s headliners are nationally acclaimed ***Bowie Live***, the ultimate David Bowie Tribute band on the Bradenton Main Stage, and Florida-native son, Andy Pursell—and the Andy Pursell Band—in Palmetto.

Other featured entertainment generating diverse soundwaves throughout the day includes: Bradenton’s Sam Woolf; the Billy Rice Band; Soul Circuit Cowboys; and Trevor Bystrom & Firewater. Bystrom, an acoustic virtuoso, plays a wide range of instruments in various styles, including a Weissenborn slide guitar, 12-string guitar, and an instrument he built himself called an ngon (African harp).

Two separate stunt dog corps—Team Zoom and Dare Devil Stunt Dogs—both nationally recognized tricksters, will perform gravity-defining maneuvers on the Manatee Riverwalk Great Lawn all day.

Uniquely Crafted and Powerful...Jersey Boats Join Super League Powerboat Racing

Through the first five years, the Bradenton Area River Regatta has established a reputation of producing high-drama, high-speed F-2 powerboat racing on the challenging waves of the Manatee River. In 2020, the event will add a different—but just as spectacular—racing component.

Jersey Speed skiffs, unusually designed and constructed two-man watercrafts, join the powerboat fray, bringing a dynamic blend of speed and skill to the Manatee waterways.

Meantime, the F-2 racers always bring it. Many of Super League’s top pilots, including former-champion Ashton Rinker of Tampa, FL—who returns after a year’s absence—and Bradenton’s own Jeff Reno, join a talented field of highly skilled drivers, who will have to negotiate the tight turns and tricky Manatee surf to win the day. The racing is an electrifying demonstration of speed and maneuverability in watercrafts capable of climbing from 0-100/mph in less than four seconds, all of which leads to another promising day of breathtaking drama in one of the most explosive spectacles on water.

A series of Division I qualifying runs and time trials precede championship racing. Spectators can also get an up-close look at some of these awesome watercrafts on display all day near the Riverside Park Area, Palmetto.

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Throughout the day and in between the racing action, Smoyer, the 2016 Pro Ladies Flyboard World Champion, will dazzle the audience with her uncanny flips and stunts in one of the newest crazes in watercraft entertainment—the fly board. She also will perform a special post-Regatta show beginning at approximately 7:15 outside Pier 22 Restaurant.

Zambelli Brings World-Class Fireworks Extravaganza to Palmetto-Bradenton Skyline

Zambelli International, world renowned as the king of pyrotechnics, creates the perfect conclusion for the evening. This year, Zambelli brings an international flavor to its show, collaborating with European makers to provide a kaleidoscopic display for Regatta enthusiasts.

The skyline spectacle, presented by Manatee Memorial Hospital, is set to begin at approximately 6:50 p.m.

By staging multiple firing points, including the Green Bridge, with at least a third of the shells exploding over the Manatee River, Zambelli creates amazing views from both sides of the river. Cleverly choreographed to music and featuring a brilliant array of pyrotechnical excellence, the climatic explosion produces aerial visuals never seen before in the state of Florida and will surely leave spectators in awe, an appropriate conclusion to a day of Regatta action. Crowds can hear the music through speakers staged along the Riverwalk.

Chart-Topping National, Regional and Local Musical Entertainment Provide Soundwaves All Day

Known for its high-quality musical lineup, the Regatta promises another powerful slate in 2020. One slight change in the schedule this year is the starting time of the headline performers. Traditionally, the headliners close the day's musical performances, but this year the acts begin at 4 p.m., at their respective stages in Bradenton and Palmetto.

Headlining on Bradenton's Riverwalk Main Stage is the BowieLive tribute band, which formed shortly after the legendary David Bowie's death in January 2016. In just three years, BowieLive has become a nationally booked show with appearances in Las Vegas and other top venues.

Across the River, "The Andy Pursell Band" tops the Palmetto Main Stage. Blending country with a rock edge, the band keeps fans on their feet with an energetic mix of originals and cover songs. Started by lead singer/songwriter Andy Pursell in 2015, the band has performed at venues such as: Grand 'Ole Opry, Hard Rock Café, and the Whiskey a GoGo.

A powerhouse collection of musical entertainers performs on both stages all the day. The Bradenton Main Stage lineup includes: Delaney and Friends at 2 p.m., followed by the Klick Band...Tribute to the Beatles. Bradenton's Sam Woolf, of American Idol fame, performs his "Chicago" tribute beginning at approximately 5 p.m. Following Woolf is "Shaman" (formed by Del Couch and who has toured throughout the southeast for 20 years) with a tribute to Abba at 5:20 p.m.

Popular regional and national groups performing at the Palmetto Main Stage are: Trevor Bystrom and Firewater at 2 p.m.; The Billy Rice Band with a tribute to George Strait at 3 p.m. Soul Circus Cowboys wrap up the day at the Palmetto stage, beginning at 5:15 p.m.

Talented students from The Del Couch Music Education Foundation open all the musical entertainment, performing on both stages, beginning at noon.

add three...sixth annual river regatta

Other activities throughout the day along the Bradenton Riverwalk include two separate nationally-acclaimed stunt dog troupes: the Team Zoom and Dare Devil Stunt Dogs.

A variety of other activities and interactive fun are available on both sides of the River at the Bradenton River Walk and Palmetto River Park area. On the River Walk Main Lawn, the Pittsburgh Pirates/Bradenton Marauders-sponsored Family Fun Zones has a cornucopia of activities including interactive sports fun and face painters; pitching machine and corn-hole pitch; and Hernando De Soto Historical Society food festival featuring an assortment of Bradenton Area's finest cuisine. At the Palmetto Riverside Park, families can enjoy all the interactive experiences of Tampa Bay Lightning Street Team, an expo area sponsored by the US Army and The National Guard and many top local food vendors.

Kicking off the festivities is the De Soto Little Anglers Fishing Derby (at Palmetto Fishing Pier).

Full details, schedule and additional information are available at: bradentonarearegatta.com. Follow all the fun and activities on Facebook: www.facebook.com/RiverwalkRegatta.

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The Bradenton Area River Regatta is produced and managed by ISM/USA—a sports event management and marketing firm with offices in Pittsburgh, PA and Lakewood Ranch, FL.

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About the Bradenton Area Convention & Visitors Bureau:

The Bradenton, Anna Maria Island and Longboat Key area is located on Florida's West Coast between St. Petersburg and Sarasota. It is bordered on the north by Tampa Bay, and to the west by the Gulf of Mexico. Easy to get to, but off the beaten path, filled with "Old Florida" ambience brimming with opportunities to experience Florida at its most real and authentic, the Bradenton/Anna Maria Island/Longboat Key area is a part of the state worth discovering and exploring again and again. For more information, please visit www.bradentongulfislands.com.

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