



NEWS RELEASE

SMOKY HILL RIVER FESTIVAL 2020 CANCELLED

(Salina, KS 03-20) Salina Arts & Humanities announces due to health concerns, the Smoky Hill River Festival has been cancelled this year. Projections of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) over the next eight to 20 weeks make the feasibility of large gatherings such as the River Festival unlikely. Since the Festival draws artists, performers, vendors, and guests from more than 30 states, conditions are further decreased for the likelihood of a safe event for everyone. On average, the River Festival attracts 60,000 guests and \$3.5 million to the Salina area each year.

“We did not make this decision lightly,” says SAH Executive Director Brad Anderson. “Unfortunately, we don’t believe that the full spirit of the Festival and its wonderful celebration of the arts and community can occur in the way everyone is accustomed to, in these unprecedented times.”

The SAH staff and SAH Foundation board, along with City of Salina management and the City Commission, reviewed options and consulted with health officials and City legal services before making this decision. A number of artists and vendors had already contacted staff to express doubt about the economy by the summer months, alongside the travel, inventory and labor expenses necessary for them to participate in the Festival each year.

The Arts & Humanities staff will begin to notify artists, performers, food vendors, sponsors, committees and key volunteers, to determine how to best transition from putting the final touches on the 2020 event to envisioning the Festival’s 45th-anniversary year.

“We know that tens of thousands look forward to the Festival each and every year, and they share in our disappointment,” says Anderson. “All those involved can be proud of the foundation which has been built over 44 years of River Festival leadership, including many longtime donors and volunteers. That strong legacy will sustain us through the challenges that lie ahead.”

Planning for next year’s River Festival begins as leadership handles 2020 cancellation details and arrangements. To volunteer at or support the River Festival, contact 785-309-5770 or sah@salina.org. Next year’s Festival dates are Thursday through Sunday, June 10-13, 2021 in shady Oakdale Park.

For needed accommodations, please call Amanda Morris at Salina Arts & Humanities at 785-309-5770 between 8:00 a.m. - Noon and 1:00 - 5:00 p.m. Every effort will be made to accommodate known disabilities. For material or speech access, please call at least five working days prior to the event.

RELEASE DATE:

Immediate

CONTACT:

Brad Anderson or Kay Quinn
785-309-5770 or

Brad.anderson@salina.org

Kay.quinn@salina.org

DATE SUBMITTED:

March 24, 2020

Salina Arts & Humanities, a department of the City of Salina, has served a unique role in arts advocacy and support since 1966. The Smoky Hill River Festival, Horizons Grants Program, Smoky Hill Museum, Arts Infusion Program in schools, Community Art & Design and Friday Night Live performance series are among the programs of Salina Arts & Humanities, located at 211 W. Iron Avenue in Salina.

###

**City of Salina
300 W. Ash
P.O. Box 736
Salina, KS 67401
www.salina-ks.gov**