



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Stoughton's Syttende Mai Celebration Returns with Alternative COVID-Safe Programs

STOUGHTON, Wis. – The weekend where “Everyone’s Norwegian” is returning to Stoughton after having to cancel last year’s festival due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

The weekend in Stoughton, Wisconsin, May 14, 15, & 16th, kicking-off Wisconsin’s season of festivals, celebrates Norway’s National Constitution Day.

This year’s celebrations will offer some in-town attractions and activities, as well as robust online programming that features some of the traditional events locals and visitors would come to see.

The Norwegian heritage event focuses on family-centered events and fun activities for all ages. Visitors and locals will find downtown a three-day quilt show at Chorus Public House, an abundance of niche shops, and multiple Norwegian Dancer performances. Athletic events continue their tradition of kicking off Saturday: featuring a 20-mile-run (it’s the 49th Annual for this one), a 17-mile-walk, a 10-mile-run and a 2-mile Lil’ Run geared for athletes of all ages and abilities. Later Saturday morning, the Strongman-Viking Games Competition takes place downtown. It has gained national attention, as it is now a United States Strongman sanctioned event that brings in competitors and spectators from across the region.

The local favorite canoe race will be available as is an independent activity this year. By signing up, participants will receive a collectible shirt to wear while canoeing the Yahara anytime during the festival! Official race times, prizes, and portage will not be part of the route this year.

For participants and fans working up an appetite at the Syttende Mai festival, long-time food favorites return. Whether it be from a food stand set up by one of Stoughton’s local non-profit organizations, or a bite to eat at the many local restaurants, traditional Norwegian favorites will be available, including Kjøttkake pronounced, key-ut kah KEE (Norwegian meatballs), Krumkake pronounced CROOM-kak-A (a waffle cookie), Lefse (Lef-suh) – a traditional soft flatbread made from potatoes and flour and *varme Pølse* pronounced VARM - uh PULL-se, (hot dogs served Norwegian style, wrapped in *lefse*).

While the food and athletics could very well be deemed as entertainment on their own, there are plenty of other events to be enjoyed for festival goers.

Two new events this year encourages the community to get out and explore Stoughton throughout town. The Scavenger Hunt will bring family and friends together and find 13 Norwegian and Historical stops throughout town. The socially based game encourages fun photo ops and witty tags to win prizes sponsored by King Oscar Seafood. There will be multiple opportunities to get your King Oscar fix throughout the weekend! The other promotion directly supports shopping in Stoughton. Many businesses will be offering Syttende Mai sales or door prizes to anyone supporting a booster button while they shop.

The 68th Annual Norwegian Parade takes place on Sunday, May 16 at 1:00 p.m., which is the last day of the festival. The parade this year has been amended to accommodate COVID safety protocols and will be a reverse parade. The driving route begins southbound Van Buren (HWY 138) to E Milwaukee Street, with the parade floats set up along Mandt Parkway. Community members are encouraged to dress up their car and drive through the route, giving both excitement to the parade floats and community cars alike.

TDS, the festival's Diamond sponsor, is pleased to present the Community Spirit prize, which will be awarded by this year's King and Queen to their favorite best-dressed car. Participants must register in advance so the King and Queen know who to look for!

Capping off the weekend are the many performances by the World-Famous Stoughton High School Norwegian Dancers. For over 60 years, the high school has been pleasing audiences with their lively and athletic performances and beautiful *bunad* costumes. Be sure to catch one of four performances throughout the weekend. Saturday, 2:00, 3:30, and 5:30 and Sunday at 3:45. All performances will be at the Community Building.

The festival is sponsored in part by Diamond Sponsor TDS, Tent Sponsor King Oscar, and Platinum Sponsors Conant Automotive, Kunes Country GMC-Buick of Stoughton, and Stoughton Trailers. Without the support of the dedicated and returning festival sponsors, festival goers, and volunteers, the Syttende Mai Festival would not be the attraction that it has become.

"We have a great team of volunteers that take pride in the festival and make the best it can be year to year", said Callie LaPoint, Events and Visitor Services Manager of the Stoughton Chamber of Commerce. "Without our local sponsors and community, this festival just wouldn't be the same."

Syttende Mai, which translates in Norwegian to "May 17th," marks the day the constitution of Norway was signed in 1814. There are many more events scheduled throughout the 3-day weekend long event. For more information, go to <http://www.stoughtonfestivals.com> or call the Stoughton Chamber of Commerce Events Manager, Callie LaPoint at (608) 873-7912.

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