Cattle Festival hoofin' it into town

By STEPHEN J. DILL
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"It's been big before, but this year it's going to be phenomenal," Theriot said, commenting on a change in scheduling that he said would make the fair more convenient for people attending it and more profitable for vendors renting booths.

The festival, usually held in October on a Thursday, a Friday, and a Saturday, will be held this year on a Friday, a Saturday, and a Sunday—from Oct. 4 to Oct. 6—providing a long weekend of good times for anyone fancying the aroma of barbecue on the grill.

"This will be more of a convenience for the festival goers because they will be able to attend more or all of the events without having to travel from one end of the city or the parish to the other so frequently," Theriot said. "We also feel it will be more profitable for the organizations setting up at the fair."

The booths themselves, set up on Concord Street and rented by the Festival Association, will even constitute a change for the better, said Theriot:

"In the past, we've set up about 15 booths. This year, we'll have 40. And we're going to have people selling food, drinks, souvenirs, and art of all kinds. If you want for a Hurricane drink, you'll be able to get one. If you want barbecue ribs, you can get them."

In recent years, the Festival Association has operated the fair on a budget of $23,000, each year netting a profit of $2,000 and using it in turn for the following year's budget, Theriot said.

Money collected at individual booths—often totalling several thousand dollars by the end of the celebration—is usually donated to charities, the festival president said.

Those things will not change. Some other things about the fair—too embedded in tradition to be erased—will not change either, Theriot said:

"We're still going to start the festival with a fais-do-do, just as we always have, but this year, instead of having one, we're going to have four—one on Friday night, two on Saturday, and one on Sunday."

The festival will also keep the tradition of a "grand parade" on Saturday afternoon, Theriot said. But the children's parade, usually held on the first day of the festival, will be conducted on Saturday morning, he said.

The festival will bear one more important change, Theriot said, namely, its dedication to the memory of Bill Vega, a long-time photographer for the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and a decorated veteran of World War II. Vega, a Baton Rouge resident who died recently at the age of 56, took photographs at most of the Cattle Festival Association's fairs.

In charge of this year's festival will be a committee consisting of the following individuals: Elda Dill, chairwoman of the opening ceremony and blessing of the products; Jenny Rabassas, baby pageant; Alice Lancer, cooking contest; Francis Frederick, honorees luncheon; Barbara Deblanc, queen's pageant; Mark Piazza, fais-do-do; Cecil McCrory, livestock show; Steve Meador, marathon run; Tiny Manuel, children's parade; Suzanne Piazza, entertainment; Kendall Faulk, grand parade; Anna Pierce, booths and souvenirs.

More information is available by calling Rep. Theriot at 892-3653 or at 892-0644.