Crowds watch festival parade in Breaux Bridge

'Day of Crawfish' celebrated

By Sebreana Domingue
Acadiana Writer

BREAUX BRIDGE – Neither heat nor threat of rain kept a crowd of thousands from celebrating the “Day of the Crawfish” in Breaux Bridge Saturday.

Several people at the Breaux Bridge Crawfish Festival paid homage to the crawling crustacean — wearing hats, T-shirts and tennis shoes with pictures of the creatures.

Young and old, man, woman and child braved the heat and took part in the celebration which featured a parade, contests, food, music and dancing.

“This is our first year here,” said Rolfe W. Goode, a Houston resident in town for the festival. “I learned about it from my friend.”

Goode and his friend, Marshall Elo, who has relatives in Breaux Bridge, said the festival was “worth the trip.”

“I am thoroughly enjoying the festival,” Elo said. “It is just a great time with all the food, drinks and people.”

Festival activities were held at Parc Hardy and in the downtown area in Breaux Bridge.

In the downtown area, five stages attracted crowds of people to hear the music of Danny Brasseaux and Cajun Express, Bad Boys, Johnny Sonnier and Cajun Heritage and others.

Activities in the downtown area were sponsored by the Crawfish Festival Merchants Association, which had more
than 50 booths set up in the area.

In Park Hardy, there were carnival rides, music, food and a friendly alligator named Wally greeting festival goers.

"It is going just great," said Kathleen Hebert, a member of the Crawfish Festival Association. "We have had a lot of volunteers and a lot of other wonderful people who came out to help.

Hebert said there were 30 food booths, 20 regular item booths and 80 arts and crafts booths, along with carnival rides, a band stand and other activities.

"We have about 15 Cajun bands and one of the largest carnivals ever for the Crawfish Festival," Hebert said. "We hosted crawfish eating and peeling contests, we are selling the official Crawfish Festival poster and several T-shirts.

Arts and crafts attracted a lot of attention with items from alligator tooth earrings to hand-made accordions available for sale.

"We participated in the festival last year and had a great response," said Penny Huval, who along with her father makes hand-made accordions. "We don't get many sales but we got a few orders from people.

Sitting behind a row of shining instruments, Huval said the biggest questions she gets from the festival goers are "Why do we use this wood? How do we make them and other things?"

Others have more hands on questions and ask to play the accordions, which sell for $900 or more, she said.

On every end of the festival grounds, people gathered for demonstrations on making soap or bonnets, story telling activities and cooking demonstrations.

Bernice Bernard was happy to oblige passing festival goers with a demonstration on making sweet dough pies.

While handing out recipes, Bernard showed how to mix sweet dough in a large bowl with a cake beater and rolled it with a rolling pin.

"This is my third year participating in the festival," said Bernard. "We started working on the treats two to three hours a day beginning on Thursday to Friday evening.

For those with a sweet tooth, Bernard had peanut pralines, peanut butter fudge and potato, lemon and other types of sweet dough pies.

According to Gene Hebert, a festival volunteer, activities will continue in Park Hardy today until 6 p.m.

Events will include a crawfish steuillezfrie cook off at 9:30 a.m., dancing and music.