Festival goers want the ‘old’ Crawfish Festival hack

By Jonas Breaux
Staff Writer

BREAUX BRIDGE — The absence of music, food and drink from downtown Breaux Bridge, for the 1993 Crawfish Festival, did not sit well with many who attended and for some unsuspecting visitors, was shocking to the point of no return.

Under a new city ordinance put in place this year, the longtime, downtown, street party format was abandoned. City officials and festival organizers opted to hold activities at two separate and confined locations.

The Breaux Bridge Crawfish Festival Association held activities at Parc Hardy and the Creole Crawfish Festival Association at the National Guard Armory, conspicuously deleting activities from the downtown area.

City officials said the format changes were made in response to problems with drunkenness, vandalism and general rowdiness by an “undesirable” group of festival participants.

“We are trying to get away from the wild, street parties of recent years,” said city alderman Kenneth LeBlanc at a recent special Board of Alderman’s meeting to review the festival survey.

“Our focus is to make the festival a family oriented event, with more community involvement,” LeBlanc said. “If these changes were not made the future of the festival was definitely at stake.”

A survey conducted during the festival revealed dissatisfaction with the new festival makeup.

When asked if they would return in the future, only 46 percent of the festival goers interviewed said they would be back in 1994. Of 169 visitors polled 32 said they would not be back, 18 said maybe or were undecided, seven said not unless there are downtown activities, nine said not under the present format and five said not at Parc Hardy.

The survey, which was conducted by the Marketing Group, of Lafayette, conducted interviews at three sites: Parc Hardy, the Creole Festival and downtown Breaux Bridge.

A total of 326 people were surveyed, with 184 of that number being out of town visitors. Fifty visitors traveling in recreational vehicles also were interviewed and their responses tabulated separately.

Survey information also included 92 responses from Breaux Bridge area residents, via a form published in the local newspaper.

According to survey data, a significant number of visitors came from Houston and a surprisingly small number from the Lafayette area.

Almost 50 percent (91) of the 184 people surveyed came from Texas, 48 were from Houston and 43 from other localities in the Lone Star State.

More than 50 percent of the visitors were between the ages of 25-39. Only three percent were 18-24 years of age.

According to the survey, almost everyone attending the festival knew about it through “word of mouth” information.

When asked what they liked most about the festival, the leading response was crawfish and food. Music and dancing came in second and with “party atmosphere” third.

When asked what they liked least, the top response was “no downtown activities,” followed by the separate locations and third, racial segregation and separation.

The survey also revealed that the average festival goer spent between $10-$200 during their festival stay.

A surprisingly small number of visitors brought their children with them. Only 14 percent of those surveyed had brought children under the age of 16 with them.

Survey data also shows that 35 percent of those who attended planned their trip to Breaux Bridge six months in advance. More than 73 percent decided to attend three months or more in advance.

According to the survey, almost everyone attending the festival knew about it through “word of mouth” information.

When asked what they liked most about the festival, the leading response was crawfish and food. Music and dancing came in second and with “party atmosphere” third.

When asked what they liked least, the top response was “no downtown activities,” followed by the separate locations and third, racial segregation and separation.

The survey also revealed that the average festival goer spent between $10-$200 during their festival stay.

A surprisingly small number of visitors brought their children with them. Only 14 percent of those surveyed had brought children under the age of 16 with them.

Survey data also shows that 35 percent of those who attended planned their trip to Breaux Bridge six months in advance. More than 73 percent decided to attend three months or more in advance.

According to the survey, almost everyone attending the festival knew about it through “word of mouth” information.

When asked what they liked most about the festival, the leading response was crawfish and food. Music and dancing came in second and with “party atmosphere” third.

When asked what they liked least, the top response was “no downtown activities,” followed by the separate locations and third, racial segregation and separation.