
Such was the picture Friday and Saturday during Crowley’s 43rd annual International Rice Festival. Faces were bright despite dark clouds that hovered over the city, sporadically sending down light showers.

Festival officials estimate about 100,000 people attended the 1979 Rice Festival, a yearly celebration in honor of Acadia Parish’s most productive agricultural crop.

Some said the crowd was sparser than usual. They attributed the lighter turnout to conflicting events in Lafayette — the Louisiana Gulf Coast Oil Exposition — and Opelousas — the Yambilee.

But elected officials and candidates for state offices seemed to come in drones to the Rice Festival. Election day is Saturday.

Many of them rode or walked in the Grand Parade Saturday, while their campaigners filtered through the crowd, handing out balloons, brochures, campaign buttons and candy favors.

Parkerson Avenue, the main street in Crowley’s business district, was converted into an amusement mall for the weekend.

Game booths attracted youngsters and adults. Carnival rides thrilled them, and candied apples filled them.

Church, civic and social groups cooked barbeque and boudin on the street in makeshift booths. Spicy-smelling smoke drifted up, forming a canopy over the crowd.

Crowley is returning to normal today. Most visitors have departed, and workers are busy collecting tons of debris they left behind.