Zydeco Festival turns up heat in Plaisance

PLAISANCE — As if summer wasn’t hot enough, the end of August will bring the sizzling sounds of Zydeco to the Zydeco Festival in Plaisance.

The 4th annual Zydeco Music Festival will last from noon until dark on Aug. 30.

Distinctive Zydeco musicians such as 1985 Grammy award winner Rockin’ “Don’t Mess With My Toot-Toot” Sidney and Clifton Chenier, the father of Zydeco, will be featured.

Other performers include Alphonse “Bois Sec” Ardoin, a recipient of the National Heritage fellowship award from the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C. for his contribution to America’s cultural heritage, and Terrance Semien and the Mallet Playboys, who made their debut at the first Zydeco Festival.

Zydeco artists such as Willie Prudhomme and the Zydeco Express, Little Willie David, Little Jeff and the Zydeco Band, Wilfred Chevis, Jude Taylor and the Burning Flames Zydeco Band, Swampy and the Bad Habits, Morris Francis and Marcel Dugal will also perform at the festival.

Zydeco is a form of black-Creole music characterized by the use of a “frottoir” (metal washboard) played with thimbles, spoons or bottle openers.

Zydeco bands also feature accordions and the words of rhythm and blues and boul songs sung in Creole-French.

The Zydeco tradition has been kept alive by an informal circuit of devotees residing in cities like New Orleans and Lake Charles where Zydeco bands travel monthly.

The festival was organized in 1981 by the “Treasures of Opelousas” a subsidiary of Southern Louisiana Developmental Foundation to further promote Zydeco music.

This outdoor folk-music festival has quadrupled in attendance since it became an annual event.

Louisiana’s down-home culinary specialties will also be available for sampling.