



Speed into Port Neches for the annual RIVERFEST

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By Mary Meaux

PORT NECHES — Port Neches Riverfest is seven years strong and still growing.

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Debbie Plaia, executive director of the Port Neches Chamber of Commerce and co-chairperson for the event, said this year promises to be bigger and better than ever.

This will be the third year for the "Battle of the Bands," an event where local musicians vie

for top spot. Plaia said last year's winners, Kill Cliché, will open for the Friday night May 2 headliner, Jesse Stewart and Ridin' High.

The biggest draw, which brings hundreds of spectators, is the Southern Professional Outboard Racing Tour. Racers include local talent and international drivers in the two-day event.

John Schubert, boat race producer of Sport Racing Series, will bring in drivers in three class divisions, SST 120, SST 45 and Tri-hull Superstock.

The boats race through a three-quarter mile course along the Neches River laid out by Schubert. Riverfest officials contact the U.S. Coast Guard

months prior to the event for a permit that allows them free access to the water.

A former event co-chairperson, Forest Barber, said the races are like "NASCAR on the water."

The fun packed four days also features an annual talent show scheduled for Saturday, May 2 at a time to be announced. Local dance troupes, martial arts studios and vocalists will entertain the crowd during intermission.

"And this year we will have a new and bigger pet show," she said of the popular event. "Gator Country will be back again and we're looking forward to it."

Rev-It-Up At the Park Car Show, featuring antique cars and hot rods, will likely bring out the automobile aficionados. Entries can range from a 1913 Oldsmobile to a brand new Corvette.

There are even events planned for those souls with a competitive nature. Hoop-It-Up Basketball, Horseshoes, Washerboard Shoot out, 2-day Fishing Tournament, Kid's Fishing Contest and a Cajun Waltzing Contest are open for all.

Saturday, May 3 will feature a fireworks display, Plaia added.

For more information, contact the chamber of commerce at 722-9154 or 722-9155 or e-mail to pnccoc@swbell.net.