

## SUMMER FEST

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which also sponsored the “Family Fun Centre” with free activities for families.

Summer Fest wasn’t all dancing, parades, and games. There were live musical performances and plenty of local businesses supporting the effort and serving the community with food and beverages.

Town Board member Jay Farrell, one of the owners of Virilies, stayed busy serving customers frosty beverages while other business like Chatham Cider Works served apple cider near the old Capital Bank building.



PHOTO: GARY SIMPSON

Owners, Maureen Ahmad and Chatham County Commissioner Jim Crawford, worked the event in 2018 and were even more successful in 2019 as their cider became a preferred elixir to combat the heat. “We had a blast serving cider at Summer Fest 2019. It was good to see two new providers of local libations, Thirsty Skull Brewery and Fireclay Winery. Chatham has a terrific market for craft beverages. When music, good food and the Pittsboro streetscape are mixed in, a great time is guaranteed. We want to thank the organizers and the public safety officers who made Summer Fest a great success”, said Crawford.

And a success it was although the threat of rain may have reduced numbers as compared to the 2018 event. Maria Parker-Lewis, a board member of the Pittsboro Business Association (“PBA”) and the president of Main Street Pittsboro, wasn’t discouraged, “[the] level of enjoyment for those who attended was still high.”



Big kids and children who attended Summer Fest with their families, enjoyed live performances on Hillsboro Street by:

**Imagination Circus** Stilt walkers who led the parade and LED hoop artists who performed during the laser light show

**Ballet Folklorico Guadalupano** A dance tour of the folk music, dances, and costumes of the different regions of Mexico.

Musical performances by **Crucial Fiya**, a multi-faceted reggae band with the capability of performing for the most serious roots reggae music lover delivered with a blend of R&B and classic rock with a Caribbean flavor.

**Jim Quick and Coastline** wove together threads of Soul, Blues, R&B, and Americana into a fabric of their own genre of music known as Swamp Soul that captures the honest spirit of traditions born and bred in small southern towns of America.

Pulling off events on Hillsboro Street and in the Main Street District requires coordination with the Town of Pittsboro as well as a lot of work from volunteers and support from sponsors.

Pittsboro Town Manager, Bryan Gruesbeck, who supports these types of event, said, “The Town of Pittsboro is fully committed to keeping its historic downtown vibrant throughout the year. It’s also important that people enjoy themselves in our downtown because they’ll be more likely to return. That’s why town staff and police commit a considerable amount of time and resources to events like Summer Fest. These experiences are necessary to maintain a sense of place that is important to growing towns like ours”

Of course, the PBA could not host its events without such help and is very grateful for its sponsors, volunteers, local law enforcement and the support of the Town.

The message from their leadership was that “without all of this, the event couldn’t happen. We extend a huge thanks to all who attended and look forward to seeing you in downtown Pittsboro next year and throughout the year.”

Heather Johnson of *Chatham Magazine* and a member of the PBA Summer Fest committee put a finer point on it, “Our committee was grateful to bring even more diversity to this year’s Summer Fest! Activities and entertainment for everyone and highlighted the very best of our community.”

Coming on the heels of the very

successful fund raiser “Local on Main” in May and with Abundance NC’s Pepper Fest relocating to downtown Pittsboro on Sunday September 22, it appears that the Town of Pittsboro, the PBA and the non-profit Main Street Pittsboro have begun to figure out the secret sauce for closing down Hillsboro Street and hosting memorable local events that even the toughest event critics and connoisseurs of live music find enjoyable.

“Pittsboro Summer Fest was the best yet!” said local resident Bill Russell “The weather held up nicely, and I was impressed by the growing family of artisanal brewers and cider makers, as well as the music! Pittsboro is establishing a unique brand that’s being recognized, and putting us in a league with the best art, talent, and food the Triangle has to offer. I’m really glad my wife and I made the choice, 15 years ago, to move here.”

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