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2007 YELLOW PINE HARMONICA FESTIVAL BECOMES MAJOR ATTRACTION OF 2008 WINTER CARNIVAL

(McCall, Idaho) Get ready for the fun! The 2007 Yellow Pine Harmonica Festival, one of the most raucous summer concert weekends in the west is going to happen after all, and it's going to happen during the second weekend of the 2008 McCall Winter Carnival, February 1st and 2nd. Harmonica players, musicians and groups from all over the country will be in town for the two day affair that will mirror most of the events that were suppose to take place last summer in the small central Idaho hamlet that is home to the festival. The event will take place at the Pancake and Christmas House on Third Street in McCall, starting at 4 pm each day with the "Front Porch Jam", artists gathered on the deck of the restaurant having fun with anyone who wants to join in.

When the fires devastated Central Idaho last summer they left more than charred ground and downed power lines. They left the community of Yellow Pine without its major source of tourism dollars. The 2007 Yellow Pine Harmonica Festival fell victim to closed roads and bureaucratic red tape.

"We had promoted the annual happening a couple weeks in advance for the Yellow Pine folks and on the last day before the first mouth organ played a note, it got cancelled", according to David Eaton, former owner of KMCL FM/AM in McCall. "So when Dave Combes, the new owner, took over the stations I gave him the idea of producing the music festival for Winter Carnival. He grabbed it and ran."

2007 Yellow Pine Harmonica Festival
Lights Up 2008 McCall Winter Carnival

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Page 2

“This is what our local radio stations are all about”, says Combes. “We got all the right people together, and the idea took off like the wild fires of last summer. First we had to get Yellow Pine to agree to try again. It’s a big gamble for them, but we assured them they’d have plenty of help.” Word got around and the help started pouring in. The community of Cascade donated promotion funds they had been given by Idaho’s Department of Travel and Tourism. The Payette River Mountains organization did the same. And, a huge donation came from McCall’s most popular restaurant and gathering place.

Bonnie and George Bertram, owners of the Pancake and Christmas House have donated their restaurant for the two days. Normally they close by 2 pm so the addition of 8 hours of music and fun fits perfectly with their operation. They also donated their beer and wine license and cooking facilities. What ever money is raised from admissions, food, beverages, even parking, all goes to Yellow Pine, according to the Bertrams. “How could anyone ask for a better location than the most popular restaurant in town?”, Combes said. And, Tate’s Party Rents of Boise is donating chairs, outdoor heaters and a dance floor. Combes and Eaton can hardly contain their enthusiasm.

The Yellow Pine Harmonica Festival is organized and produced by community volunteers. The chairperson last year was Steve Holloway, who is also spearheading the Winter Carnival effort. Holloway owns and operates the General Store and a small hotel in Yellow Pine and was hit hard by the fires. “We are so grateful to the communities around us for giving us this opportunity. This gives us a second chance to showcase our musicians and their talent. We can’t wait to make last year’s Festival part of this year’s Winter Carnival.”

This event brings something fresh and new to Winter Carnival that everyone can enjoy and we are privileged to be its sponsor”, said KMCL’s Combes. It’s not subject to the weather. There probably won’t be a fire in February that closes the road to the Pancake and Christmas House. So we’re looking forward to a rousing weekend of foot stomping music and fun. We’re looking forward to Yellow Pine’s harmonicas blowing the doors off the 2008 Winter Carnival.”

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