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Kingston ready for new summer festival

By JILL ZEGER
Gazette Staff Writer

It's touted as Ohio's newest festival and will arrive in Kingston next week.

Kingston Summer Fest will open 5 p.m. Wednesday, June 9 and wrap up with a square dance late Saturday, June 12.

Festival organizers Ronny French and Donna Hartbarger say the celebration was organized following years of complaints from area residents about the absence of festival life in the village. Other nearby communities, such as Adelphi and Hallsville have annual celebrations, said French, chairman.

"We tried a couple of other times (for a festival), but there was not enough interest," French said. "It's to promote the community, to create better morale."

The schedule includes a beauty contest Wednesday, a cruise-in Friday and Kingston Youth League baseball games daily except Friday. Live entertainment is offered daily, including Chillicothe's Mike Boyle and the Broken Bow Band and Dayton's Dixie Gold, both performing country music.

A parade on the festival's last day will include the winners of various contests, floats and the Adelphi Band. Betty Davis has been selected as the parade's Grand Marshal, in light of her work in Kingston festivals years ago.

Also daily at the festival are about 60 craftsmen, 11 rides from Noble Amusements and food booths from area organizations and vendors.

About 30 volunteers make up Kingston Summer Fest Inc., the public non-profit organization that hopes to make the festival an annual event in the Village Park. The festival follows in the tradition of Kingston Festival and Homecoming, which took place in June during the 1960s.

That homecoming festival be-

came the Kingston Geranium Festival in 1971, with the last such festival in 1980.

Some elements of those past festivals will be contained in this year's, such as the antique car and truck show June 12. This same day is geared to youngsters, with a kiddie tractor pull, a pet contest, special ride prices and a pie eating contests among the area's officials.

French, a millwright for Mead Paper, said the event will cost \$5,000 to \$10,000 and is being paid for through corporate sponsorship, advertisement sales in the fest booklet and from booth rental to craftsmen and vendors.

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