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Special Event Timeline

Tombstone hosts a myriad of special events and invites new ones to enhance our tourism offering. Planning a successful running event can be an arduous experience, having a strategic plan and the support of an organization or group is a must. This could be an existing group or one you organize yourself. It is always a good idea to involve community members and businesses to ease the organizational process. Whether you want to organize a parade or weekend of fun, your initiative to create and follow a decisive checklist will be rewarding for you and the participants in your event. The Tombstone Chamber of Commerce is here to assist you along the way with tidbits of advice to help make your event successful.

SIX MONTHS TO A YEAR AHEAD

- Determine the purpose, format and feasibility of the event
- Form or join an already established group or create a committee of volunteers to assist with planning, marketing and execution of your plan
- Create an estimated budget and sponsorship plan
 - Your budget will give you an idea how large or small our event will be, fee's will include but not be limited to insurance, city permits, advertising, trophies or prizes, entertainment, etc.
- Select the date, but before confirming it double check for conflicts (or complements) with other major functions in the area
- Select and reserve a venue or facility
- Obtain a Special Events Guide and related forms from the Tombstone Chamber of Commerce
- Develop a rain plan if the event is to be held outdoors
- If a large event, contact lodgers for special rates for attendees
- Plan for decorations/signage
- Reserve rental equipment such as vans, restrooms, tables, chairs, tents
- Plan for audio and/or visual equipment, etc.
- Plan for security arrangements if necessary
- Plan for trash removal
- Plan for insurance coverage
- Get all paperwork for necessary approvals (see Special Events Guide)
- Book entertainers and talent
- Plan advertising, marketing, promotion and publicity
 - TV, Newspaper, Posters, Flyers, Radio, Social Media and the like...

THREE TO SIX MONTHS AHEAD

- Design and write copy for printed materials; flyers, posters, print ads, radio ads, internet marketing
- Finalize mailing list/e-mail list
- Create/prepare to unitize a Facebook/Web page
- Send a teaser ad
- Begin local promotion of event
- Plan for measurement of attendance and advertising success
- Meet with Marshall's office to plan for traffic control, barricades, etc
- Get necessary signatures on all City/Liquor Control and other related forms
- Obtain City approval
- Place advertising orders and insertions
- Finalize any demonstrations/shows/presentations
- Doing a parade?
 - Contact local business, schools, churches, dance troops and civic organizations. Inform them you are having a parade and are looking for participants. Call schools and inform them you are looking for marching bands and drill teams. Send information to local media to give details on how groups can participate in the parade.
- Order props, novelties, tickets or other special needs
- Begin creating a logistical outline to document all arrangements as they are decided on and confirmed.

ONE TO TWO MONTHS AHEAD

- Begin Mail/e-mail/Facebook/Website plan
- Send press releases
- Get posters, flyers and banner printed
- Make hotel and transportation arrangements for VIPs, entertainers and talent
- Recruit the extra help that will be needed including parking, registration table, security, set-up, tear-down and clean up
- Make direction and welcome signs and banners
- Inspect the facility or venue for usability and safety issues, electricity or any other needs
- Continue publicity on schedule

TWO TO FOUR WEEKS AHEAD

- Continue with advertising and publicity, distribute posters and flyers
- Finalize details with Marshall Department or support agencies
- Obtain permit for food service
- Get table numbers or booth numbers made, print credentials if needed
- Create a logistical outline/production schedule for timing of all portions of the event

ONE WEEK AHEAD

- Estimate attendance
- Brief the volunteers on their duties
- Check venue for mowing, fencing, sprinklers off, etc.
- Plan for communication with volunteers and transportation services; cell phone numbers or two-way radios
- Plan for VIPs if needed
- Prepare your reception table with any supplies, such as cash, tape, zip ties, tickets, staplers, rubber stamps, etc.

THE BIG DAY(s)

- Arrive early
- Bring the production schedule, instructions, phone numbers, credentials, cash box and the event supply box
- Check all facilities and grounds
- Conduct lighting, sound and equipment checks
- If needed; set up registration. Be sure it is ready at least 60 minutes prior to the start of the event
- Measure attendance and track advertising success
- Be attentive for needs of staff and volunteers
- Enjoy the event!

AFTER THE EVENT

- Clean up the venue, return any borrowed items
- Remove any banners, posters and flyers
- Thank the staff, volunteers and vendors
- Conduct post event debriefing to determine success or ways to improve for next year