

## SCHULENBURG FESTIVAL PLANNED FOR JULY 31<sup>ST</sup> THROUGH AUGUST 3<sup>RD</sup>

It's time once again for the annual Schulenburg Festival, also known as the "National Party of Texas". From Thursday July 31 through Sunday August 3, there is a full weekend of events with something for everyone. Activities include continuous live music, rodeo, cook-offs, carnival and kids' inflatables, parade, arts & crafts vendors, cornhole, kiddie parade, tricycle races, softball, basketball, fun run, golf, cow chip and egg toss, dunking board, and class reunions.

Friday's music headliner is Logan Ryan Band, a powerhouse of Red Dirt country and Americana, blending raw storytelling from a variety of influences, including Robert Earl Keen and Charlie Robison. Lead singer Logan Ryan Skloss began writing songs at just 11 years old. Their growing catalog includes fan-favorites like "Signed, Love Wynonna", and the breakout hit "Tecovas", plus "Cigarettes and Alcohol".

Also performing on Friday night is Desert Highway, an Eagles tribute band. "We decided to try something different this year. Everyone loves to sing along with familiar songs, and what better band to pay homage to than The Eagles," says President Michael Zweschper. Texas-based Desert Highway is nationally recognized – with precision musicianship, rich harmonies, and authentic arrangements, they deliver a powerful and immersive experience that captures the spirit and soul of the Eagles. "Friday will be a nice mix of familiar tunes and a new Texas country artist," according to Zweschper.

Friday's music kicks off with Erica Daniels, a born and raised Texas Artist. She offers an eclectic music experience, pulling influences from a variety of acts. She has shared the stage with many national recording acts and will debut on the Festival stage at 6:30 pm.

The music on Saturday will continue the party atmosphere. Headlining on Saturday night is Tanner Usrey, a Texas-born singer, songwriter, and guitarist who pairs straight shot storytelling with country grit, rock'n'roll energy, and Americana eloquence. His 2023 debut album "Crossing Lines" features breakout songs "Beautiful Lies" featuring Ella Langley and "Take Me Home" which you can catch in the new Taylor Sheridan series Landman on Paramount+. His sophomore album "These Days" dropped on July 11. Tanner has opened up for many different artists, and has played at several major festivals.

And of course, it's hard to imagine the Festival without the "Official Band of the National Party of Texas", none other than Texas Unlimited Band (TUB). Fresh off their performances at the Cody Stampede Rodeo in Wyoming and the Golden Days Rodeo in Fairbanks, Alaska, the best cover band anywhere will take the Festival stage on Saturday at 7:30 pm, hand the stage over to Tanner Usrey at 9:30, and then close out Saturday night from 11:15 pm to 1 am. "We love the way they know just what the crowd needs. The first set on Saturday gets the crowd warmed up for the headliner, and then after that, they will close out the night like no one else, with the crowd engaged for every single song," says Advertising Director Nicole Michalke.

Saturday afternoon's music lineup starts at 12 noon with The Barditch Hippies, a trio from the Luling area focusing on country/Americana/red dirt style music. Next up is Texas Sundown Band, from Cypress, covering a variety of Texas country, 90's country, and some Top 40 country. Both of these bands have played at the Festival in recent years. Following that will be The Matt Bonner Band, a Schulenburg homegrown band that has been making their mark in Fayette County playing familiar country hits in local venues. "We are so excited to feature local talent on our main stage and look forward to debuting the boys of Matt Bonner Band, who all grew up here and have been attending the Festival most of their lives," says Michalke.

Music continues on Sunday after the parade. The Czechaholics lead off the afternoon with their unique style of polka music. Black Cat Choir from Round Top will take the stage next. This group has been rocking audiences for more than 20 years, playing classic rock and Texas country. Finally, Texas Unlimited will close out the weekend as they have for several years, with their setlist perfected for a Festival Sunday afternoon crowd. "Sunday will be a fun mix of polkas, classic rock, feel-good music, country – lots of music for dancing and singing. The Carnival and Kid Zone will still be going strong, so Sunday is a great day for a family, or a friend group, to start with the parade and end at Wolters Park," says Michalke.

This year the Festival is happy to provide a Carnival for the first time since 2022. "We looked into getting a carnival for the past two years, after the Schulenburg Lions Club quit operating the carnival during Festival weekend. There are not many carnivals that fit in our space who are operating in Texas during August, as they prefer to head north then, but we were able to procure one," according to Zweschper. The Festival will have a Carnival provided by Texas Born Amusements, along with a "Kid Zone" operated by B&B Big Bounce of Hallettsville. BOTH activities will be INSIDE the festival grounds, so if you choose to attend on Friday night or on Saturday after 5 pm, everyone aged 13 & up will have to purchase a Festival ticket to enter the park and then access the Carnival or the Kid Zone.

Thursday night lets you "pregame" for the long weekend. There is no admission charge, so you can visit the Carnival and Kid Zone, watch the rodeo slack, and enjoy some refreshments. Performing on stage will be Dawson DeBord & Southpaw, from Yoakum, playing original music with a mix of classic rock and country covers.

The Festival CPRA/UPRA Rodeo takes place on Friday and Saturday night at 7:30, with these events: bareback riding, bull riding, saddle bronc riding, breakaway, steer wrestling, barrel racing, team roping, and tie down. Mutton bustin' will take place both nights. Something else to check out is the inaugural Fayette County Calf Scramble, with 12 students trying to catch a calf in order to earn a certificate towards an FFA project.

Wolters Park sure smells great on Saturday as there are several cook-offs going on, including both IBCA and CASI-sanctioned BBQ and chili contests, as well as local competition for BBQ, chili, beans, bloody Mary, and salsa. Plus a kids' cook-off is a newer addition to the lineup. Teams can still sign up to participate.

There is nothing like a small-town parade, and the Festival parade on Sunday morning never disappoints. With dozens of entries, the parade marches through downtown Schulenburg, displaying floats from area towns, comical entries, class reunion floats, patriotic and musical entries, fire trucks, and the ever-popular Shriners parade unit.

The Festival has other options for fun and competition as well, including cornhole, softball, golf, and basketball. The Navidad Valley Cattlewomen Fun Run kicks off early Saturday morning, and the Young Farmers annual Egg Toss and Cow Chip Throwing contests are fun to watch or join. The cheerleader dunking booth always has a crowd. Younger patrons can enter the tricycle races and the kiddie parade, which take place on Saturday.

Dozens of arts and crafts vendors will be set up near the Pavilion for shopping as well. Class reunions will be going on under the Pavilion on Saturday afternoon for several Schulenburg and Bishop Forest High School graduates.

Gate admission for all activities is \$20 for Friday night, and \$25 on Saturday evening after 5 pm. Admission on Thursday and Sunday is free, and there is no charge to enter the park before 5 pm on Saturday. Also, there is no admission charge for children 12 and under at any time.

Detailed information, including entry forms, can be found on the Festival website:

[www.schulenburgfestival.org](http://www.schulenburgfestival.org). The Festival also has active social media to keep everyone up to date.

Profits from the Festival go back into the community in the form of improvements, donations to local organizations, and scholarships. Many non-profits use the Festival as a fundraiser as well. According to Michalke, "Over half a million dollars have been directly donated by the Festival through the years, so it's all for a good cause. The Festival Directors work year-round to plan this party, but we couldn't host it alone. We truly appreciate the support and efforts of our sponsors, the City of Schulenburg, Chamber of Commerce, and local law enforcement. Come on out and join us!"

It's the National Party of Texas, and everyone's invited!

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