

## 2023 SCHULENBURG FESTIVAL ON TAP FOR AUGUST 3<sup>RD</sup> THROUGH AUGUST 6<sup>TH</sup>

### “National Party of Texas” Packed with Entertainment For All

It's almost time for the 2023 Schulenburg Festival--August 3<sup>rd</sup> through August 6<sup>th</sup>. The annual event brings thousands of attendees for their various activities, including live music all weekend, two nights of rodeo competition, cook-offs, parade, sports activities, and more.

The Schulenburg Festival is also known as the “National Party of Texas” and they try to live up to that name. “I’m not really sure when we started calling ourselves that,” says Director Nicole Michalke. “It’s on our annual posters going back to the year 2000, so at least that long. And over time I’ve realized that the word ‘party’ fits what we do better than anything else. To me, we’re not a concert or even a music festival, as we are more than just music. When you throw a party, people will be having a good time together, but will often gravitate to enjoy different activities. There will be a group manning the grill, some sitting in the kitchen visiting, a few more watching a ball game, and then another group in the back yard playing cornhole or washers. Well, that pretty much describes the Festival.”

The word “party” is defined as “a social gathering of invited guests, typically involving eating, drinking, and entertainment.” The Schulenburg Festival fits that to a “T”, starting with the entertainment.

### Live Music All Weekend

No party would be complete without music. A hallmark of the Schulenburg Festival is live music all weekend, on the stage under the Pavilion.

Headlining this year are Cory Morrow and Jacob Stelly on Friday night, and William Clark Green on Saturday. “We love having Texas music acts on our stage and this year all three of our headliners are proud Texans. Many of their songs relate to small-town Texas life, but also larger themes that are common to all”, says Michalke. Cory Morrow is making his second appearance at the Festival, a long way from his show in 2001, where he followed Gary P. Nunn. Since then, he has sold hundreds of thousands of albums and has been a staple on the Texas music scene. William Clark Green is also a returning performer, with his first Festival show occurring in 2016. Green has been selling out crowds in Texas and beyond, and this year he made his debut at the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville. Michalke adds, “We are pumped to have both of these solid acts in our lineup this year. Both of them are guaranteed to get the crowd involved for the party atmosphere that we are known for.”

The Festival is always looking to showcase up and coming talent as well, and Jacob Stelly fits that bill. Although fairly new to the Texas and Red Dirt Music scene, he has already garnered a following. “We are looking forward to Jacob Stelly’s Festival debut, and hopefully one day he’ll be back for another show with an even bigger fanbase,” says Michalke.

Thursday night, the Festival has free live music with Southbound 955, an area band that started while its main members were still in high school. Friday’s opening act is The Barditch Hippies, a duo from the Luling area who are actually both veteran “Emotions Band” performers and have been performing around the Coastal Plains area since 2015.

Saturday has live music from 12:30 pm till 1 am. The Texas Sundown Band starts things off, followed by Tracy & Resendis. The ever-popular, high-energy Texas Unlimited Band (TUB) will get the crowd warmed up for William Clark Green, and will then follow Green's show with even more crowd-pleasing songs.

Sunday afternoon starts with The Dujka Brothers, and then Texas Unlimited will close out the weekend.

### Two Nights of Rodeo Action

The Festival includes 2 nights of rodeo action, and Festival Rodeo Director Ronnie Wick invites everyone to attend. "The big-city rodeos are fine, but you are so far away from the action. You might even have to look at screens to really see what's going on. At our rodeo, you can get up close and personal and really feel the excitement." In addition, world-famous Hall of Fame rodeo clown Leon Coffee will be there to entertain the crowds and protect the participants. Mutton bustin' will take place both nights, so the young kids can get in on the cowboy action too. The rodeo starts at 7:30 p.m. on Friday and Saturday nights, and includes the following events: bareback riding, bull riding, saddle bronc riding, breakaway, steer wrestling, barrel racing, team roping, and tie down.

### Cook-Offs, Sports Activities, and More

Cooks can test their skills in the chili, BBQ, beans, and bloody Mary contests. The Festival includes both CASI and IBCA-sanctioned chili and BBQ competitions, for cooks wishing to earn points in those areas, and also local contests open to everyone.

Sunday's parade through downtown Schulenburg to Wolters Park is a "can't-miss" event. The parade usually has 60-70 entries, including beautiful floats from area towns, comical entries, class reunion floats, patriotic and musical entries, fire trucks, and the ever-popular Shriners attractions.

For those who like to pursue other competitive activities, the Festival includes softball, golf, and 3-on-3 basketball tournaments. The Navidad Valley Cattlewomen Fun Run takes place Saturday morning, and the Young Farmers annual Egg Toss and Cow Chip Throwing contests are unique endeavors. New this year is a 3-point shooting contest as part of the basketball tournament, and the first-ever cornhole tournament.

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.

The younger crowd can sign up for the kiddie parade and tricycle races, and everyone can try their skill at dunking a cheerleader. The Festival also wants to note that there is no carnival this year. The Schulenburg Lions Club held the carnival in conjunction with the Festival for the last 25+ years, but they made the decision to not host it this year. The Festival has tried to find a replacement carnival, but has been unable to find one that meets their insurance requirements.

Thursday night, August 3<sup>rd</sup>, is considered the "warmup party" night with rodeo slack and free live music from the area band "Southbound 955". Admission is free on Thursday for the music and Rodeo. Food and drinks will be available as well.

### Food & Drinks, With a Larger Purpose

A party typically includes food and drinks, and the Festival has that covered as well. Attendees will have several food and beverage options. Some of the booths are operated by local non-profits.

“Sometimes people forget why we throw this big party every year,” says longtime President Michael Zweschper. “Of course, we do love to get everyone together for a good time and to show off our small town, but at the end of the day, we are also raising funds to put back into our community”. He adds that the Festival has directly donated over half a million dollars in the forms of park and other local improvements, donations to non-profits, and scholarships. Additionally, many non-profits have earned money in conjunction with the Festival over the years; for some groups, it is their prime fundraiser. Finally, all the incoming attendees, where they are former locals coming back for their class reunions or other visitors, tend to spend money in town at various businesses, and all of that supports our town’s economy. Zweschper also credits our local city employees, law enforcement, and the Chamber, who are all big supporters of the Festival. According to Zweschper, “We couldn’t do this on our own. The Directors work hard all year to plan, but the event is definitely a coordinated effort.”

### Invitation to the Party

The party definition mentioned above includes the term “invited guests”. All of the Festival Directors invite EVERYONE to their party, the National Party of Texas. Michalke adds, “The Festival provides a place for that much-needed interpersonal time. Come on out to the Festival and we’ll show you a good time!”

For more information and updates, see the Festival website at [www.schulenburgfestival.org](http://www.schulenburgfestival.org) and follow them on social media.

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