

PRESS RELEASE:

Cordele-Crisp Chamber of Commerce

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May 19, 2020

Cordele's Watermelon Days Festival Has Been Canceled Due to Coronavirus Concerns

The Cordele-Crisp Chamber of Commerce met via conference call last week with local leaders, including city and county officials, Sheriff Hancock and Steve Gautney, CEO of Crisp Regional Hospital to discuss several items. The main topic was the annual Watermelon Days Festival and the Fireworks on the Flint. The festival and fireworks bring thousands to the community annually, the third week in June and on July 4th and there is no way you can "social distance" at the various events that are held. The group discussed the number of cases that continue to pop up around the state and how communities can slow the spread of the virus. After much discussion, the consensus of the group was to cancel the festival, including the Fireworks on the Flint. This will be only the second time in the 70-year history that the festival has been cancelled. The other time was the flood of 1994. Marlene Kimball, chair of the chamber of commerce stated "this is a very difficult decision to make...the Watermelon Festival is a signature event of the chamber and an event that the whole region and state looks forward to." But, keeping our community and visitor's safe is our priority". Monica Simmons, president of the Chamber, says she knows this is what's best for the community, but is disappointed that this year "won't be the same" as the last 70. "I will honestly say I am sad. We will all miss the festival. It is such a fun time of year that brings our community together to celebrate the fruit that has made us famous," says Simmons. "This is just one of those things that we have no control over."

Kimball also stated that "we cannot in good conscious hold events that could spread COVID-19. This would not be fair to our citizens and especially our front-line folks who have been working tirelessly since March to take care of those sick with the virus."

Many communities around the nation and world are also canceling events that could spread the COVID-19 virus. It's just the right decision to make at this time.

We will begin plans soon to make the 72nd Festival the best one ever. Volunteers are always needed, so please call the Chamber if you are interested in helping.