

# Brandon Carnival to return in July

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BRANDON — It's official, the Brandon Carnival at Estabrook Park is on.

Colleen Wright, assistant to the recreation director, said that the popular, largely free, carnival has been in the works since January, but it wasn't until Thursday morning that she got the call from Miller's Amusements, which supplies food, games and rides, that they could make the date.

"They travel all around the northeast, so they were also running into this problem of managing a business plus COVID, and none of us could firmly say 'yes,' and I didn't want to spill the beans until we knew, so (Scott Miller) called me at 8:30 this morning and said we're a go for July 29, 30, 31, though the first," Wright said.

The carnival has been going on for about five years, but didn't happen in 2020 because of the pandemic. Wright said this will be the latest the town has ever held the event, as it normally happens in June.

She said the first thing she did after getting confirmation from Miller's Amusements was to arrange for medical standby, a cooling tent and the Wildlife Encounters attraction.

"Wildlife Encounters was actually our final program at the Brandon Town Hall before the pandemic," she said. "Literally two days after that, the entire world shut down, but we had seen Wildlife Encounters out of New Hampshire, so we were kind of tided over, you know?"

Wildlife Encounters shows off animals like alligators, hedgehogs, and the like. Wright said they get booked because they treat the animals well.

She's now working to book musical acts. Friday night is rock and roll, Saturday is always country, and Wildlife Encounters will be Sunday.

Parking is free, so is entry, she said. People pay for food and ride bracelets.

"I'm not sure what the price is, but we work so hard to make sure this is affordable for all of our families because it really is a family-oriented event," said Wright.

Scott Miller, owner of Miller's Amusements, said his is a family-owned company and that the Brandon Carnival is a good event they enjoy working.

"It's been wonderful. They get some great music in there, wonderful vendors, it's been a nice festival for us," he said.

The company will have done five or six events this year by the time it rolls into Brandon, he said. It wasn't able to work at all in 2020 because of the pandemic.

"This has just been horrible, this pandemic, so we're very excited to get back to work and bring our fun to people," he said.

There will be about 12 rides at the Brandon event, he said, featuring rides for little ones and larger rides for teenagers and adults. Miller said from what he's hearing down south, people are eager to get out and attend things like carnivals once again.

Wright said the town recreation department has a great deal planned for this summer, such as a Memorial Day Parade at 10 a.m. May 31, The Descendants playing at Otter Valley High School on May 29 and 30, also June 5 and 6, a craft sale at Estabrook Park on June 5, a job fair at Brandon Central Park on June 7, and much more.