

Agenda Item: Discuss and Consider Special Event Incubator Funding For 2020 Ben Temps Rouler Cajun Throwdown

Background:

The Ben Temps Rouler Cajun Throwdown, scheduled for March 27-28, 2020 at Tin Cup's Caddyshack, is a 2-day celebration of all things Cajun. Anchored by an all-you-can-eat crawfish cooking competition and some of the country's best Louisiana Cajun live entertainers, the event is designed to help boost Galveston's economy, give back to the local community and become an annual event where family and friends gather to enjoy Cajun cuisine, music and family atmosphere.

Activities will include:

Friday night Cajun Cookoff
Crawfish cookoff including all-you-can-eat crawfish
Crawfish races
Crawfish eating competition
Zydeco Throwdown
Bloody Mary Throwdown
Cajun cuisine food trucks
Onsite oyster bar throughout the festival
Children's activities
Cajun Throwdown Pageant at Galveston Island Convention Center
Live entertainment throughout, featuring Keith Frank, Frank Foster, Jamie Bergeron and many more, including surprise guests.

A portion of event proceeds will benefit St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, and donations are encouraged through the event website.

The 2019 event had an estimated 6,000 in attendance and generated 542 trackable hotel room nights.

For 2020, the promoter expects over 10,000 attendees and well over 500 trackable hotel room nights.

Staff Recommendation:

With the popularity of food and cooking events continuing to rise, as well as the regional and national attention Cajun culture is receiving, staff believes this event could become a great annual addition to our calendar of events.

Staff recommends approval of up to \$10,000 in incubator funding.

Funding Source: FY 2019-2020 Special Event Incubator Fund. Balance of that fund, including tentative commitments, is \$20,000.