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Bagpipes and pageantry to reign in Estes Park Sept. 10-13

ESTES PARK – Preparations are complete and Estes Park is ready to host visitors direct from Canada and locales throughout the United States for the annual pageantry of the Longs Peak Scottish Irish Highland Festival. Festival events occur between Thursday, Sept. 10 and Sunday, Sept. 13.

Now in its 33rd year, this rite heralds everything Scottish – from the haunting, yet exhilarating sound of bagpipes in crisp mountain air to brogues to malt beverage to the rhythmic sound of Scottish and Irish footsteps on a dance floor.

There will be an hour-long parade through downtown Estes Park on Saturday morning (9:30 a.m. Sept. 12), evening tattoos (massed pipe bands in performance), pipe band and folk concerts, battles of the bands, international jousting championships, athletics, Dogs of the British Isles, dancers, musicians, scotch tasting, ceilidhs (parties), gathering of the clans, food and crafts, comprising a veritable encyclopedia of all things Celtic.

Activities in Estes Park kick off at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 10, with the first of three evening pipe band performances (also known as tattoos) at the Fairgrounds at Stanley Park arena. Friday's schedule (Sept. 11) includes a morning seminar about Rommilly Squire Scottish Heraldry followed by a mid-afternoon seminar featuring scotch whiskey tasting at the Estes Park Conference Center (U.S. Hwy. 36 and Colo. Hwy. 7).

Those attending the festival have hard choices to make for activities on both Friday and Saturday nights (Sept. 12 and 13). Both evenings include a tattoo at the fairgrounds, a folk concert at the Estes Park Conference Center, a Colorado Celtic concert at Ruesch Auditorium on the grounds of the YMCA of the Rockies and a Ceilidh (pronounced kay-lee) Celtic New Years Party at the Estes Park Conference Center and a Longs Peak Concert at the Rodeway Inn, 1260 Big Thompson Ave.

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Festival grounds (Stanley Park adjacent to U.S. Hwy 36 at Community Drive) are open for activity from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday, Sept. 11, Saturday, Sept. 12 and Sunday, Sept. 13. There people can enjoy the Gathering of the Clans, music, dance and athletic competitions, exhibitions, Dogs of the British Isles on parade, merchants, food, drink, crafts and music.

The Saturday (Sept. 12) morning parade features festival participants heading through the heart of downtown Estes Park at 9:30 a.m.

Guest bands and performance groups include the U.S. Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center band, U.S. Army Ft. Carson Mounted Color Guard, 1st Battalion Scots Guards Pipes and Drums, Wasatch & District Pipe Band, the Isla St. Clair and Eddie Devine and the 10th Mountain Division.

The U.S./International Championships in jousting featuring teams from Canada and the U.S., and men's and women's Scottish athletic events add to the excitement, as do competitions for Irish and Scottish Dancers, regional pipe bands, folk musicians and more.

Celtic Artists include folk entertainers Alex Beaton, a native of Glasgow, Scotland; Brigadoons and Boston Kiltics. The rock concert at the YMCA of the Rockies features Brother, Angus Mohr and Hadrians Wall. Munnelly and Next Chapter will perform at the Rodeway Inn concert.

Ticket prices are: adult field pass one day/\$25 at the gate; adult field pass three days/\$58; children (ages 5-10) field pass/\$5; children 5 and under free. Discounted price field passes can be purchased at area King Soopers groceries.

Evening performances, concerts and tattoos are \$25 each.

For more information call 1-800-903-7837.

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