

Orange Beach Community News

www.cityoforangebeachblog.com

Orange Beach, Alabama

August 21, 2006

by Ken Grimes, Jr.

It was another Sunday afternoon filled with "thunder" down at the gulf, only this time the weather was beautiful and the "Thunder On The Gulf" was superb. The race was coordinated by the Gulf Coast Powerboat Association in conjunction with the Offshore Super Series and came off with good action and plenty of fans watching the high speed



vessels make the run. Crowds numbering in the tens of thousands lined the sandy shoreline and filled the balconies of nearly every condo in Orange Beach as many others set sail to get that up close and personal look at the racers from their own spectator boats anchored a mere mile south of the beaches. There is an obvious understanding of race day in Orange Beach as you can see the fans and race enthusiasts making their way to the beachfront with heavy traffic and congestion around town. The best report of a good plan comes when you can say there were no major problems and few incidents related to the event itself. Overall, it was another great success for the GCPBA and for the City of Orange Beach. Congratulations

to all the teams who achieved the winner's circle and to all who competed just to enjoy the excitement and competition of the sport. We look forward to Thunder On The Gulf in 2007 right here in Orange Beach, Alabama.

Do you ever wonder about the real impact of an event like Thunder On The Gulf? For each and every local resident, property owner and business person in town the actual outcome of the race week is a stronger bottom line and a good push to expand the end of the summer season. Locally, we see the traffic jams and the crowded lines in stores around town and the wait at our local restaurants but in the end, it's the economic impact for Orange Beach, Baldwin County and the State of Alabama that makes it worthwhile. Taxes from sales during the week grow in multiple levels as each traveler arrives to take in the race week. Stopping for some groceries, food and beverage is always a first as sales tax is generated. Next comes time to check into the condo or hotel for multiple nights as the event has lots to do while staying in town. This generates a lodging tax on the room rate. Need fuel for the vehicle so they gotta stop at a pump and leave some fuel tax. It's time to eat for the night so head out to the local establishments for some fried shrimp or blackened fish while paying a little sales tax and providing tips and wages for employees in the area. Pick some entertainment at the movies, go carts, dolphin cruise or such and enjoy some time with those close to you.



Tens of thousands of people made their way to the City and made purchases and rentals

Don't forget before heading back home to grab some Orange Beach souvenirs to remind you of the wonderful experience. All in all, this cycle of spending for our region is a daily and regular routine for those coming here and that is much of what our local economy is built upon. Whether it's the offshore boat racing, a fishing tournament, soccer or softball tournament or Mardi Gras, Orange Beach is always working to fill our slower weeks with good events to create this very cycle of spending in turn provide the resources to our residents such as parks, facilities, sidewalks and firetrucks. Economic Impacts aren't pretty and don't often make front page headlines but they are an important component of planning for a stronger future and building our tourism infrastructure needed to grow properly.



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Did you hear about the young lady that got kicked out at the Orange Beach SportsPlex last week? Well actually there were about eighty who were kicked as several collegiate women's soccer teams held pre season practices led by the University of Alabama and Auburn University teams. Alabama under the direction of Head Coach Don Staley is a regular in Orange Beach as the Crimson Tide sees our beachfront town as home away from home for practice and tournaments. Along with the Tide and Auburn Tigers was the University of West Florida from Pensacola and Loyola of New Orleans who established some new roots here on the Gulf Coast. Loyola University of New Orleans Head Coach David Poggi was quite appreciative to the folks around Orange Beach as his team continue to deal with the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and the damage to their campus and city. Coach Poggi and the ladies of the Wolfpack were seen working hard in the Orange Beach heat but at a brief break they posed for some photos and were all smiles as they now have found what Orange Beach offers to visiting teams. . .true hospitality. Look for Loyola to be back on the Alabama Gulf Coast soon.



Crimson Tide Women's Soccer "Loves Orange Beach"

Youth from Orange Beach United Methodist Church will be going to "En Fuego" this weekend, which is a Christian music festival in Clanton, Alabama on Saturday the 26th. The kids and a few adults will be camping out for two nights getting ready to hear "Third Day", the main act for the concert. OBUMC has also started a youth worship service on Sunday nights at 6:00 pm with some good food and the service gets started at 6:30. Thanks Lee White for the info and don't let those mosquitoes get you in Clanton.



Loyola University of New Orleans under Coach David Poggi made their way to Orange Beach to get in some practice as Hurricane Katrina recovery continues in New Orleans and all around the campus. The ladies were upbeat considering what a year it has been for them and their families.

OBFD filled the boot over the weekend as "Fill the Boot" collected donations for the Muscular Dystrophy Association. Jerry Lewis telethons made a huge impact for Jerry's Kids and the MDA and many fire departments across the country support the effort with local "fill the boot" campaigns. If you missed the opportunity to fill that boot, stop by station one or two anytime and drop that donation off to one of the firefighters on duty. Remember that water aerobics classes are underway at the Orange Beach Aquatics Center on Tuesdays from 5:30–6:30pm. Cost is \$2 per person. No pre-registration is required to participate. For more information contact the Orange Beach Aquatics Center at 251-974-SWIM (7946).



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Orange Beach now has Professional Art Supplies! People pass by everyday and many never take the time to stop and see Orange Beach's own Art Center at Waterfront Park on Canal Road. Artists of all types and experience levels can now purchase their supplies at the newly opened Art Supply Store inside the Orange Beach Art Center which is open Tuesday through Saturday, 9-5. A ribbon cutting recently took place for the new Art Supply Store inside the Art Center as local artists Al Phillips, Theresa Mirabile, and Opal Young joined Mayor Pete Blalock and other officials with the ribbon. It is said that big things come in little packages and this is definitely the case here as the supplies are top notch and priced right but without the big store shopping and pushing of carts and buggies. In fact, artists can special order with Cyndi Brewer, Orange Beach Art Center Coordinator, and get their needed tools and paints right in town. A variety of in stock items is on hand and the store provides a good foundation of art supplies for the professional to novice. What better way to shop while browsing the works in the gallery or stopping by the gift shop for a unique gift. Find out more at www.orangebeachartcenter.com.



Mayor Pete Blalock and Cyndi Brewer, Art Center Coordinator cut the ribbon on the new store with the smiles of several area artists and City Council members Joni Blalock, Tracy Holiday, Jeff Silvers and Ed Carroll (yes, they are all inside the Art Supply Store). Great job to Cyndi and the Art Center on this important step to the future.

Plenty of fun and fellowship is going on down at the Orange Beach Senior Activity Center on any given day. Call 981-3440 for details on classes and trips coming up. Here are your Bridge Scores for Tuesday August 15th: 1st: Emily Bell; 2nd: Joan Nagy & J. Richard Thompson and on Thursday August 17th: 1st: Chuck Ogle; 2nd: Oliveth Archer; 3rd: Earnest McConnell. Let's see whose name is printed next week. Get out there and shuffle. A recent trip to the Pensacola Junior College Planetarium brought stars to the eyes of those attending and was a great time of fun and fellowship. A Blood Drive will be held at the Senior Center this Friday, August 25th from 2pm – 6pm for the American Red Cross. Stop by and donate a pint and remember, they give out cookies and juice.

Waterfront Festival of Art September 2-3, 2006
 Waterfront Park and the Orange Beach Art Center on Canal Road
www.orangebeachartcenter.com

Got some news around Orange Beach? Let us know what's going on by sending your community news to obecon@gulftel.com and be sure to log onto www.cityoforangebeach.com and register to receive the weekly newsletter online which has much more detail and color photography on other events.

A Final Look at "Thunder On The Gulf" 2006



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& Cheyenne Moon

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