



Virginia Highlands Festival
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High-resolution photos may be downloaded from the
website www.VaHighlandsFestival.org

NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

THE 71st ANNUAL VIRGINIA HIGHLANDS FESTIVAL
“CREATE” - TEN DAYS OF ARTS AND CULTURE
FESTIVAL DATES: July 26 - August 4

ABINGDON, Va./June 17, 2019/ – The 71st Annual Virginia Highlands Festival offers a diverse and multi-faceted celebration of culture and creativity with a full schedule of new events and returning favorites. Running July 26 – August 4, the Festival features a regionally-renowned antiques market, award-winning juried arts and crafts show, live concerts, performing arts, culinary events, and more!

New to the Festival this year:

- **The Wolf Crystal - Festival Opening Ceremony:** As the sun sets on Abingdon, the Festival officially kicks off its celebration of local folklore and creative innovation with our new *Wolf Crystal* immersive theater project. Puppets meet pageantry in this original story based on the old legends of Abingdon’s wolves—an interactive story told with puppets and dancers, robots and flying drones, animated video and a large interactive sculpture. Join us Thursday, July 25 at 8:30 PM in the Sculpture Garden at the William King Museum of Art when the first chapter of our Festival story unfolds!
- **Antiques Market - Opening Night Preview:** Be the first in line for an exclusive preview of our Antiques Market on Friday, July 26 from 4-6 PM. Located indoors at the Washington County Fairgrounds, the Antiques Market features over 45,000 square feet of distinctive shopping opportunities. Pining for that perfect piece to complete your living room, den, or bedroom? Select from beautiful and unique decor items guaranteed to put a spark in your summer shopping. No assembly required! Items are ready to take home and embellish your current DIY home projects. Weather worries? Not a problem! Shop

for your treasures in a comfortable environment with food and refreshments available on site. \$25 includes a season pass—visit as often as you like! Come see us at 17046 Fairground Drive in Abingdon. Parking is available at the fairgrounds for cars and RVs.

- **Parade:** The Festival is partnering with local Shriners' clubs to bring our community parade to life on Saturday, July 27 at 11 AM on Main Street, downtown Abingdon. Bring the family to see the National Dance Day performance, classic cars, and a special appearance by Abbi the Wolf and her wolf pack from the *Wolf Crystal* experience. If your community organization would like a spot in the parade, contact the Festival office at (276) 623-5266.
- **Photography:** The theme for this year's photography competition is "Acceptance." With that in mind, our panel of jurors is expanding the prize categories to include one for cell phone images. Cell phone photography doesn't have to mean blurry action shots and duck-faced selfies. People are taking extraordinary images with their phones and we think that deserves artistic recognition—and Acceptance!
- **Performing Arts: "Off the Canvas"** Watch as paintings come to life and "leap off the canvas!" Aerial Silks and AcroYoga Performance — an outta-the-box, up-in-the-air, performance art extravaganza! The whole family will enjoy aerial silks and gravity-defying performers as they create a new level of acrobatic art live and in-person.
- **Culinary Arts and Traditions: "Chopped"-style challenge:** The clock is ticking! Can Chef Charles, Southwest Virginia's food ambassador, complete a dish utilizing every single ingredient in a 'mystery basket' provided by the Abingdon Farmers Market? It's a thrilling race against time, just like the TV show! The excitement starts at 11 AM on Saturday, August 3 at the Farmers Market Pavilion.

"CREATE" a memorable dinner date experience with the return of our **Grand Finale Farm-to-Table Dinner**. Join us as we conclude our Festival on Sunday, August 4 at 6 PM at Festive Celebrations for an exquisite multi-course dinner made from locally-sourced ingredients, complete with wine and cocktail pairings. Master chefs Hyacinth Barbara (Morgan's), Steve Gilbert (Morgan's), Bradley Griffin, Joel Jerkins (JJ's/Papa Tom's) and Travis Milton (Taste) stand ready to pamper your palate with a dining event you won't soon forget!

And there are plenty of old favorites returning this year:

- **Juried Arts & Crafts Show at Barter Square:** Visit the Arts & Crafts show named "Best in Virginia!" Artisans bring their beautifully handcrafted items to Barter Square. Browse, shop, enjoy live art demos, and find one-of-a-kind items. Vendors may change without notice, so check the Festival website for up-to-date information. The show is open rain or shine!
- **Music Concerts at the Farmers Market Pavilion:** The Highlands Festival is rich with a diverse sampling of traditional and modern musical arts. Whether you're a little bit country or a little bit rock and roll, the party begins at the Abingdon Farmers Market Pavilion with seven days of summer sounds featuring rock, country, bluegrass, and Celtic music—guaranteed to satisfy fans of all ages! Bring a chair or use one of ours and

enjoy great music, the region's best food trucks, and beer and wine from some of your favorite summer brands. Be sure to check out the new Festival Music pass to enjoy every night of music at a savings!

This year's lineup includes:

- Friday, July 26; 6-11 PM – Party rock with From the Edge and Phantom
 - Saturday, July 27; 5-11 PM – Celtic Ceilidh with Appalachian Highlanders, Sandra Parker, and Jennifer Cutting and OCEAN Orchestra (pipe and drum, Celtic melodies, and contemporary Celtic)
 - Sunday, July 28; 3-5 PM – Traditional bluegrass with Primitive Quartet
 - Thursday, August 1; 5-11 PM – Southern Rebellion and Wyldeheart (party rock)
 - Friday, August 2; 7-9PM – Folk Soul Revival (Americana)
 - Saturday, August 3; 5-11 PM – Johnny Cash tribute band and Kaitlyn Baker (country)
 - Sunday, August 4; 2-5 PM – Carson Peters and Bella Raye (bluegrass and country)
- **Outdoor Adventures:** Have you spent too much of your summer “in-of-doors?” Come explore the outdoors with guided nature hikes, bike rides, and farm tours! The Outdoors committee has a lineup of adventures for every ability and interest, from easy lectures to strenuous hikes through the great Channels. Many activities require advance registration, so check the specific events on the Festival website.
- New this year is a “Day in Mendota.” Spend your day in a beautiful farming community teeming with history. Explore Mendota’s origin as a Native American village along a walking tour. Enjoy a picnic lunch beside the river (lunch available for purchase at Katie’s Store or you can bring your own). Conclude your day with a farm tour, a walk on the Bristol-Mendota Trail, or kayaking on the river with Adventure Mendota (reservations required).
- **Historic Homes Tour:** Tour some of Abingdon's most historic downtown houses, all within easy walking distance on Main and Valley Streets. Tickets will be available for advance purchase on the Festival website or at Shady Business (180 E. Main St.). Visit vahighlandsfestival.org for a full tour roster and description of all houses.

AND MUCH MORE!

For a complete listing of the 200-plus Festival activities happening from July 26-August 4, including registration requirements, advance ticket purchases, parking and trolley info, and more, visit www.vahighlandsfestival.org or pick up a program guide at Food City locations near you.

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About the Virginia Highlands Festival: Founded in 1948, the Virginia Highlands Festival is an annual, ten-day event devoted to the celebration of Southwest Virginia heritage and rich Appalachian tradition. Held in historic Abingdon, Virginia, in the foothills of the Blue Ridge

Mountains, the Festival attracts thousands of visitors each year. The Festival was selected as the “Best Art Event” by the readers of *Virginia Living* magazine in 2019, recognized as a Top 20 Event by the Southeastern Tourism Society and was named as Blue Ridge Country’s Best Non-Music Festival in 2018. The 71st Virginia Highlands Festival will run from July 26-August 4 (Antiques Market July 27- August 4) and feature live concerts, a juried arts and crafts show, and an antique market, as well as workshops, lectures and tours. To learn more about the Virginia Highlands Festival and this year’s events, please visit <http://www.vahighlandsfestival.org>