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## Portland brings back Oktoberfest Fri., Sat.

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PORTLAND - People will be taking to the streets in Portland this weekend, as the second annual Portland Main Street Oktoberfest gets underway.

"It's a two-day affair," said Patrick Reagan, DDA director and manager for Portland Main Street. "There is a lot of cool stuff going on in Portland. The little city becomes the big city this weekend."

Organizers have scheduled a fun-filled weekend for people of all ages, according to Reagan. The festival kicks off Friday night at 6 p.m. when the Mid-Michigan Radio Entertainment tent opens, featuring a heated escape from the crisp fall air and a number of on-tap refreshments. Cheeky Monkeys will have food for sale in the tent.

People will need to be 21 years or older to take advantage of the entertainment tent after 9 p.m., however.

For those looking for a bit of a challenge, a cornhole tournament will also start around 6 p.m. Friday, testing contestants' hand-eye coordination and depth perception.

Oktoberfest coincides with the monthly "Third Friday Art Walk," with local businesses displaying a number of local artists' work on their walls.

"We're hoping that as people leave the football game, they'll stop by," Reagan said.

At 8 p.m., "The Royal Ramblers" will hit the stage on Main Street, providing two hours of live entertainment.

Saturday morning, the fun begins bright and early at 10:30 a.m., with registration for the Big Beer 5K run.

"The race starts at noon and begins and ends at the Bridge Street bridge," Reagan said. "It follows the Portland River Trail. So far we have about 40 runners, and the weather looks like it will be good."

The entertainment tent opens up at noon, with the Portland VFW post 4090 providing food all day.

For the youngsters, Oktoberfest organizers have called in Ultimate Bounce Inflatables. Giant inflatable slides and bounce arenas will be set up in the City Hall parking lot.

Reagan said they have also called in the US Army for the festivities, who will be there with a Humvee and a rock climbing wall.

At 3:30 p.m., guests will have to slide off of the road to make way for the Dave Wells Strolling "Oompah" Band. The group will bring the sounds of Germany to Portland's Oktoberfest, playing traditional music.

Although organizers are hoping that Oktoberfest will draw people downtown, they're also giving participants a chance to get away. Reagan said the Portland Main Street organization will be raffling off trips to Las Vegas and Frankenmuth.

It wouldn't be an Oktoberfest without beer, and organizers have a special treat in store for those who come by on Saturday. Local brewer Eric Frederick will be setting up shop to show bystanders how beer is made around 2 p.m.

"That's going to be pretty cool," Reagan said. "From everything I've heard from people, he's really good at brewing."

Reagan said that the homebrew will not be available for sale - all of the alcohol sales will be at the entertainment tent.

Admission is \$2 per person. The proceeds from the two-day festival benefit the Portland Main Street organization.

"People think that we've got this huge budget that we use, or that it's all government funded," Reagan said. "We don't. So we'll use this money to offset some of our costs, to host new events or bring in speakers."

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