



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## NC 4<sup>TH</sup> OF JULY FESTIVAL COMMITTEE ANNOUNCES 2020 PLANS

SOUTHPORT-OAK ISLAND AREA, N.C. – For over 220 years Southport has celebrated our nation’s independence in full fare. The history of North Carolina’s Fourth of July Festival celebration was first recorded in a newspaper in 1795. Now the event has grown to attract over 60,000 visitors each year. Through the years it’s the efforts of civic groups and citizens that has allowed the festival to evolve to encompass a wide variety of American celebration traditions.

We are all aware of the challenges we face the COVID-19 environment. Many individual and families continue to be affected by the virus. Our heart goes out those that are sick and caregivers and those mourning the loss of a loved one. Our local business community for the most part is at a stand-still and those that are operating their efforts are largely focused on serving the public’s essential needs.

In light of the pandemic and with the recommendation of the Honorable Mayor Joseph P. Hatem., MD, MPH., this year’s festival will be cancelled. It is worth noting that all City of Southport public events are cancelled through Labor Day. “The July 4<sup>th</sup> Celebration in Southport has been an iconic event for over 200 years. This year, due to the need for instituting public health mitigation measures for the protection of our city, our citizens, and our state, it is my recommendation during this COVID-19 Pandemic, that the Fourth of July Festival in 2020, this celebration of independence and freedom, be cancelled to assist in stopping the spread of this contagious disease. This was a difficult decision, but the most prudent one and will overall prevent disease and save lives.” Mayor Joseph P. Hatem, MD, MPH.

This year would have been the 225<sup>th</sup> year. While this year’s event has been canceled the committee will be with members of our community in spirit celebrating the nation’s Independence. The Festival’s mission to promote patriotism to the United States of America, the state of North Carolina, County of Brunswick and the City of Southport as first evidenced by the celebration of the Nation’s Independence by the military personnel at Fort Johnston and the local townspeople will return in 2021.

A special thank-you to all our faithful sponsors, local business community, residents and volunteers who make the festival a success year after year. It is heartwarming for festival committee members to hear stories of families that return home each year, visitors who return annually, and the economic lift the festival provides to area stores, restaurants, rental companies and hotels.

We share your disappointment about not holding the festival but encourage each of us to reflect on our freedoms. On behalf of the NC 4<sup>th</sup> of July Festival Committee, be well and God Bless America!