

Powwow to be part of Nautical City Festival

6/30/2009 11:43:34 AM

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by Richard Lamb-- Advance Editor

A first-ever kind of event is planned for this year's Nautical City Festival August 8 in Rogers City. The Mackinac Bands of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians are teaming up with the Presque Isle County Historical Museum to put on the first full-blown powwow to ever be held in northeastern Michigan. Mark Thompson, curator of the museum, said the museum is accustomed to dealing with old traditions, but this takes it to an entirely different level. The original ship *Welcome*, which will be represented at the festival by way of a replica, was built two years before the Declaration of Independence, but American Indian traditions predate that.

"THE NATIVE Americans involved in our powwow many of their families came here 3,000 to 10,000 years ago. Our powwow celebrates Native American cultures in the northern Lake Huron area and we will even take in the Petoskey area, even though it is not on Lake Huron," Thompson said. At last week's media night celebrating the introduction of the festival schedule of events, Thompson introduced the Woodland Singers, who performed an American Indian song for the group assembled at the Rogers City Area Senior and Community Center. (Click on the video for a portion of this performance). They gave a sampling of music to be performed at the powwow. The powwow will be staged on the beach area at Lakeside Park, south of the harbor. It will feature several drum teams, singers, costumed dancers, storytellers and American Indian crafters. The Northern Lake Huron Powwow is from Saturday, August 8 from 1-4 p.m.

Thompson encouraged people to bring a lawn chair to be a part of an educational afternoon of family-friendly entertainment celebrating the thousands of years of American Indian culture in this area. Admission is free.

"It will begin with a cannon salute from the *Welcome* and then numerous canoes full of Indians and voyagers coming ashore at the beach of Lakeside Park," Thompson said. "It will be a beautiful spot with the lake in the background, much as, probably most Indian powwows would have had here in the Great Lakes area over the years."

THOMPSON SAID he expects a huge turnout of American Indians from all over Michigan and Ontario and many from other areas of the United States. But that is not all the museum is coordinating during the festival. Organized by Al and Jean Gross, the rendezvous will feature reenactors making history come alive by donning period attire and demonstrating skills that would have been practiced by the voyageurs who frequented the northern lakes during the 1700s.

"Al and Jean are experienced reenactors who travel all over the state going to rendezvous such as we are having," Thompson said. Visitors can participate in tomahawk throwing, see meals cooked in Dutch ovens over an open campfire, watch fires being started with flint and steel, see sashes and leg ties being woven on a small portable loom, and learn to make and use quill pens. Among the campsites will be a American Indian trapper's camp and "Ringtail Tavern," where voyageurs and early settlers might have gone to eat, drink, catch up on the news of the day, and swap stories. The encampment will run both days from 10 a.m. until 5 p.m. Admission is free.

The Woodland Singers

