

# PRESS RELEASE



**PRIDE FESTIVAL  
OF CENTRAL PA**

MAY 22, 2020

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

HARRISBURG, PA

## **PRIDE FESTIVAL OF CENTRAL PA ANNOUNCES 2020 FESTIVAL CANCELED**

Like many of our sister Pride organizations across the country, it is with heavy hearts and deep sadness that we regrettably announce the 2020 Pride Festival of Central PA will not take place as planned.

This agonizing decision was made after many hours of spirited discussion and in close consultation with the Pennsylvania Capitol Facilities Management Office, the Office of the Governor, Tom Wolf and our superhero, Dr. Rachel Levine, Secretary of Health for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Safety has always been one of our organizations bedrock principles; given the current magnitude of the COVID-19 pandemic and the difficulty practicing social distancing at large scale events such as ours poses, we overwhelmingly feel the only way to adequately protect our patrons, vendors, staff and entertainers from the virus is to sacrifice this year's festival.

While heartbroken, The Executive Board of the Pride Festival of Central PA knows this is the right course of action. The health, safety and well being of our community is of paramount importance.

"We pulled off moving the festival from the riverfront to the Capitol grounds in 48 hours a couple years ago, but as the days have gone on and the closer we get to Pride, our team came to the heart wrenching conclusion, there's just no way to safely host this year's festival," said Brad Martin, President of the Pride Festival of Central PA. "Pride is a joyful socially close intense experience. Pride isn't pride without that. As there's no end to social distancing anytime soon that we can see, we felt this year's festival was untenable."

Vendors and exhibitors who submitted applications for the 2020 festival will have the option for a refund or having their 2020 application extended to the 2021 festival.

As a member of InterPride, the Pride Festival of Central PA plans to fully support the virtual Global Pride event on Saturday June 27, 2020. Information on this event will be made on the organization's website and social media channels soon.

"Better for us to cancel the event and show our pride virtually than lose one precious member of our community," added Martin. We'd hate for anyone to end up catching this virus at Pride and become deathly ill. That would be even more devastating than not having the festival."

Since 1992, the Pride Festival of Central PA, a 501(c)3 organization; has held a festival each July in the Pennsylvania Capital City of Harrisburg to provide a safe environment for people of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT+) and straight ally community to express and celebrate their diversity emphasizing acceptance of all individuals regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.

The 2018 festival made history being the first LGBT+ Pride Event to be held on the grounds of a US State Capitol. The festival is a combination live bands, performances, commercial and nonprofit exhibitors as well as food vendors. An estimated 5,000 people attend annually. The 2021 Festival, the 29<sup>th</sup> Pride Festival in the Harrisburg Capital Region will be held Saturday July 24, on the grounds of the Pennsylvania State Capitol Complex in the Soldier's Grove Park.

###

Media Contact: Brad Martin 717.599.4576 [bradmartin1976@gmail.com](mailto:bradmartin1976@gmail.com)