Citizen Potawatomi Nation Cancels 2020 FireLake Fireflight Balloon Festival and Outdoor Nation Expo

Out of an abundance of caution and concern for public safety, the Citizen Potawatomi Nation (CPN) has announced the cancellation of the 2020 FireLake Fireflight Balloon Festival and Outdoor Nation Expo. The event was scheduled for August 7-8, 2020 in Shawnee. The event will return August 13-14, 2021.

The festival was cancelled on counsel from CPN Health Services (CPNHS) Chief Medical Officer George A. Vascellaro, D.O.

“CPNHS medical leadership continues to advise CPN officials, including event organizers, on implementing mitigation strategies to protect the public,” Vascellaro said. “We feel hosting a large public gathering like the Balloon Festival, which typically draws thousands of people, many from out of state, is not in the community’s best interest. While this was a difficult decision, we know it is the right one to make.”

People registered for the 5K Fun Run or balloon rides can receive a refund by emailing balloonfestival@potawatomi.org.

“Our public health team has been providing expert advice since late February, before Oklahoma even had its first confirmed COVID-19 case,” said Tribal Chairman John “Rocky” Barrett. “Cancelling a beloved community event is disappointing, but we trust their guidance and direction on keeping everyone safe. We’re already looking forward to next year.”

The Outdoor Nation Expo, which is held in conjunction with the balloon festival, is also canceled.

“We are deeply disappointed that we have to cancel the Outdoor Nation Expo due to COVID-19, but we believe it is in the best interest for the safety of our community,” said Rick Gage, owner, Outdoor Nation Expo. “We look forward to seeing everyone in 2021 and hope that everyone will continue to enjoy the outdoors.”