

April 1, 2009

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Hot air balloon rides offered as part of Pioneer Days festival

ESCANABA – Soar above the treetops and take in the beauty of Delta County from a birds-eye view this summer while enjoying a hot air balloon ride. As part of this year's Big Ole's Pioneer Days Festival June 26-27, a limited number of free-float (un-tethered) hot air balloon rides will be available during the week of June 22nd. The community is invited to participate.

“Whether marking a special occasion, recognizing a business associate or simply celebrating the return of summer, a hot air balloon ride is a fun, unique way to experience our beautiful Bays de Noc,” said Lanna Scannell, community relations manager at OSF St. Francis Hospital & Medical Group and a coordinator of the Big Ole's Pioneer Days festival.

Scannell said the festival committee is once again bringing to the community licensed, experienced hot air balloon pilots who will be offering tethered balloon rides at the festival, weather permitting, as well as un-tethered rides prior to the festival based on demand and weather permitting.

A limited number of un-tethered rides will be offered during the week. Reservations will be taken on a first-come, first-served basis. Cost is \$150 per person or \$250 per couple. A \$75 per person down-payment is due at the time the reservation is made, with the balance due by May 31, 2009.

Cancellations prior to May 31st will incur no cancellation fees. Rides cancelled by the Big Ole Festival Committee members or pilots due to inclement weather will result in a full refund.

Big Ole's Pioneer Days is scheduled for June 26-27 at the U.P. State Fairgrounds and will feature a variety of activities, including as the turn-of-the-century steam and gas engine village, sawmill and historic museum; timber jack show; adult beverage tent; live music; special kids' activities; dog show; food and craft vendors; wood carving demonstrations; members of the Tuskegee Airmen; a fiddler's competition; a homebrew competition by the Bay de Noc Brewers Association; authentic campfires with Paul Bunyan sized marshmallows; an arm-wrestling competition; and a “Big Ole Enduro” competition with log throwing, climbing, jumping, dragging, running and tossing events.

Big Ole's Pioneer Days is being sponsored by the Delta County Commerce Center, OSF St. Francis Hospital & Medical Group and OSF Home Care. Sponsors include the Delta County Convention & Visitors Bureau, Stewart Manufacturing, Bill Marmalick with Premier Real Estate, 41 Lumber, Radio Results Network, WMXG MIX 106.3 FM, Radio Eagle, WDBC/WYKX, WLUC TV-6, U.P. State Credit Union and the Great Lakes Timber Show.

For more information about the festival or opportunities for un-tethered hot-air balloon rides, visit www.deltami.org or call the Delta County Commerce Center at 786-2192.

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FOR INFORMATION CONTACT LANNA SCANNELL AT 786-5707, EXT. 5516.