



Monday, September 28, 2009

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First Fridays is no longer for a small group of art enthusiasts. It is becoming an event the whole community can enjoy. From 5-9 p.m. on Friday, downtown will live with the usual art and entertainment events, but this time money will be raised for local nonprofit organizations.

The community should step out to support not only participating artists, downtown shops and restaurants, but to give to worthwhile Ruston charities. The First Fridays planning committee has found a way to offer fun events while making a positive impact on the lives of the less fortunate.

This is a welcome addition to the monthly gala, which now has the potential to extend charities reach to help more of those in need.

On Friday, Acres and Avenues Realty Inc. will partner with Townsend House to raise money for the Domestic Abuse Resistance Team.

With Pumpkins in the Park, families and friends will make lasting memories.

For \$5 people can have a fall-themed photo made, take home a small pumpkin from the Townsend House's pumpkin patch and make a difference in the lives of women and children.

Also, there will be a Junior Auxiliary Coats for Kids drop-off site that evening in Railroad Park.

Robyn Brown, First Fridays planning committee member, said this business-to-business collaboration is the result of a committee meeting in which ideas from Ruston 21 — the city's master plan for the future — were brought to the table. First Fridays will continue to partner with businesses and nonprofit groups for the benefit of the community, she said.

Events this Friday will include free face painting by the Ruston Junior High cheerleaders, the Buddy Terzia Band, and a fall fashion show will showcase apparel from local boutiques.

Also, the North Central Louisiana Arts Council will host a sidewalk chalk contest, and the Dixie Center for the Arts will drop the big screen for a showing of *Animal House* (1978).

Live music is also scheduled at Sundown Tavern, Art Innovations and Ponchatoulas.

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