

KP Parks' Fourth of July Event Returns

Written by [Alice Kinerk](#)



Key Peninsula residents learn how low they can go at last year's Hot Dog Social.

Photo courtesy of KP Parks

After a successful debut in 2015, Key Pen Parks' Fourth of July Community Hot Dog Social promises to be even bigger and better in 2016, according to Christina Hallock, the recreation coordinator for Key Pen Parks.

Key Peninsula residents of all ages are invited to the free, family-friendly event, she said, featuring community games such as tug-of-war, a three-legged race, water balloon toss and sack race, as well as activities like bouncy houses, kids' crafts and free raffles. Hot dogs, soda, watermelon, chips, cake and ice cream are back this year, thanks to many generous sponsors.

Among the major changes this year is location. While the 2015 event occurred at Volunteer Park south of Key Center, this year it will be held closer to the Purdy Bridge, at Gateway Park.

With last year's sizzling temperatures, feedback from attendees included requests for more shade. Hallock scouted a new location, Gateway Park, with its mix of tall trees and open fields.

A ceremonial groundbreaking for the new park will also occur during the festivities. (See Key Pen Parks Director Scott Gallacher's column in this edition.) Attendees of all ages are encouraged to bring a shovel to take part.

"We're really excited about Gateway Park. It's a great property, great characteristics, and will be around for generations," Gallacher said.

"We wouldn't be able to do this without Food Market," Hallock said. "Last year, they were the people who donated the bulk of the food. There is a good number of generous sponsors this year."

More sponsors also means more fun things to do. There will be three bouncy houses this year, up from two. Children and teens can hunt through hay for buried treasure in a game sponsored by the Angel Guild. More than double the number of gunnysacks will mean more participants in the sack race. A beanbag toss, ducks-in-the-pond game and a go-fishing game are just a few more additions.

Chad Oliveira returns as master of ceremonies of games for 2016.

With an estimated 500 attendees and many new activities, Hallock is seeking volunteers to help with the event. She would prefer to be contacted in advance, but there will be work to do for anyone who is willing. "If people show up and they want to help out for an hour or two, we'll find something for you to do," Hallock said.

While there is no plan to limit game play with a punch card or bracelet, residents should be mindful of others. "We ask that people be considerate to those behind you in playing games," Gallacher said, adding that there were no problems last year and that Key Peninsula residents tend to be thoughtful and share. No fireworks or sparklers of any kind are allowed.

The fields at Gateway Park have not been graded or leveled, which could make walking difficult for some of the more senior guests. Gallacher and Hallock plan to use flatter portions of the field where possible for much of the event. Plenty of accessible parking and restrooms will be available.

Want to go? Key Pen Parks' Second Annual Fourth of July Community Hot Dog Social will be held Monday, July 4, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Gateway Park, 10405 State Route 302, south of Wauna. For more information or to volunteer at the event, contact Christina Hallock at Christina@keypenparks.com