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By Tim Peter - SGN Staff Writer

Seattle Out and Proud (SOAP) announced that this year's Gay Pride Parade will be held Sunday, June 29, starting at 11:00 a.m. from the corner of Union St. and Fourth Ave. It will be limited to approximately two and-a-half hours in length and should take about an hour to go from the start to the end.

The Parade will proceed down Fourth Avenue to Denny Way. Foot traffic will be allowed to go east or west on Denny Way, but all vehicle traffic will be turned west and have until Western Ave. to pull over, quickly disembark passengers, secure their vehicles, and leave the area. SOAP will have personnel stationed at this intersection and along Denny Way to help ensure the safe and orderly flow of Parade participants out of the area.

The Parade announcer's booth, ADA viewing area and media viewing area will be located at Westlake Park between Pike and Pine streets on Fourth Ave. All those attending the Parade are asked to watch from the sidewalk in order to keep the street open for Parade participants.

The staging area can be accessed from the check in booth on Fourth Ave. and Columbia St. Groups will be staged four across starting with the first groups between Union and University. The Dykes on Bikes will check in and stage on 4th and Union. A fire lane will be kept open down the center of the street.

There will be no parking permitted in any of these areas, and all vehicles must be registered, display an Event Pass and have a driver in the vehicle at all times. Unattended vehicles will be towed at the owner's expense.

There will also be several local events leading up to the Parade. For more information about these events, please consult the Pride Calendar in the SGN.

Following the Parade will be PrideFest at the Seattle Center. "What used to be a small community event has turned into a huge regional event," says the website for PrideFest, www.seattlepridefest.org. "The move has been a very successful one and helps to give more prominence to the second largest Gay community in the United States."

More than 20,000 people attended last year's Pride Festival. In addition to the fun and celebration together, attendees also helped to raise nearly \$10,000 for underfunded community non-profits.

"With a year to properly plan and execute this major Arts and Cultural Festival, One Degree is now working to produce a bigger and better Festival. Seattle Out and Proud, the producers of the Parade, are the most strategic of partners, but One Degree has many key alliances within the Gay non-profit and business communities to pull off an even more exciting event and raise more money and awareness than ever before," says their website.

Egan Orion is executive producer for One Degree Events and PrideFest. Orion is a Northwest Native and longtime Seattle resident. Orion became involved in event production several years ago, "when he noticed a lack of 'spice' in the local nightclub scene and thought he might be able to do something to infuse it with some new energy."

"This year's entertainment lineup is one we're very proud of, with representation from every corner of the LGBT Community," says Egan

representation from every corner of the LGBT community," says Lynn Orion, Festival Director for PrideFest. "A special focus has been made this year on women's entertainment and a solid Trans representation at the Festival. The Trans community in particular has had difficulty transitioning from the Capitol Hill events to the downtown events and we want to make sure all members of the community feel at home at PrideFest."

Entertainment for Seattle PrideFest 2008 ranges from international dance superstars and local singer-songwriters: Kristine W, Seeing Blind, Sue Quigley, Lisa Marshall, comedians Matt Bragg and Barbara Sehr, and drag shows by the Festival hosts Lily Armani and GLAMAZONIA, among others. Main programming at the main stage will occur between 1 p.m. and 5 p.m., with DJs spinning at the DJ stage by the Fountain throughout the entire festival. Featured DJs include DJ Kyler, LA Kendall, DJ Rob Hall, and Mathematix.

There are also various food booths, two beer gardens and over 100 tables and booths for businesses and non-profit companies that serve the LGBT community.

Donations will be collected as people enter the festival and at one point during the programming. Donations will be split three ways between the following organizations: Rosehedge AIDS Housing and Health Care, which provides comprehensive 24-hour care to men and women living with HIV/AIDS; Lambert House, a center for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and questioning youth and their allies which encourages empowerment through the development of leadership, social, and life skills; and The Pride Project, a Washington State non-profit organization that helps to put on PrideFest, PrideFeast, the Red Dress Party, and other important benefits throughout the year.