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HISTORY OF THE MINNESOTA RENAISSANCE FESTIVAL

SHAKOPEE, Minn., (January 2, 2014) - The Minnesota Renaissance Festival began its journey in September of 1971 on a 22 acre field in Jonathan, MN. More than 25,000 people visited the two weekend grand opening of the festival then named “A Celebration of Nature, Art, and Life!” That celebration has since relocated to Shakopee, MN and has grown to be the largest Renaissance Festival in the United States with an annual attendance of 275,000.

The Minnesota Renaissance Festival includes more than 500 entertainers, 275 crafters, and 120 food booths, all adding to the magic that entices visitors from across the nation.

As patrons enter the festival gates, they are welcomed by roaming street characters with a gracious “Good day my lord and lady.” They are slowly immersed into the sounds, smells and sights of an authentic 16th century village.

Patrons then select their pleasure, whether it be spending time engrossed in the fine crafts and art demonstrations at one of the many artisan booths or participating in spontaneous theatre with one of the hundreds of street characters. Visitors may venture into the Children’s Realm for an educational and entertaining experience or enjoy one of the dozens of shows while tasting some of the delectable treats the Minnesota Renaissance Festival has to offer.

The Children’s Realm at the Minnesota Renaissance Festival is a destination within the festival for children of all ages. The Children’s Realm offers free crafts daily, including Merlin’s Free

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Wand-making sponsored by the Children’s Museum of Minnesota. Children can test their wands with Merlin himself at the wand testing station. Child friendly entertainment provides an experience that will last a lifetime.

The Minnesota Renaissance Festival prides itself on providing a unique shopping experience. Each shop contains handmade wares such as jewelry, pottery, worked wood, leatherwork, paintings, hand-blown glass and fine metal craftsmanship. The skilled artisans also entertain and amaze patrons as they demonstrate the long-established methods of making their craft. Patrons can learn many different historical processes from glass making to blacksmithing all in a day's trip to the Minnesota Renaissance Festival.

With more than 300 street characters roaming the village, it is inevitable to come face-to-face with the town beggar, the common peasant, the royal court and even the King and Queen.

It is hard to escape the smell of tasty delicacies with more than 100 food booths throughout the village. A trip to The Minnesota Renaissance Festival would not be complete without the famous Turkey Leg. Rotisserie smoked Turkey Legs have become a staple to most patrons who visit the Festival. However, a Turkey Leg is not on the menu for everyone. The Festival also offers a variety of customary Renaissance foods, for instance, scotch eggs, spinach pie and bangers and mash.

In addition to traditional Renaissance festivities, the Minnesota Renaissance Festival elaborates on the events that occur at most Renaissance festivals to include theme weekends that focus on unique aspects of the Renaissance era.

These weekends have changed over the years to bring new and fresh events to the Festival. Each weekend takes on a feel of its own with special events, dancing, singing and competitions that are directly related to each weekend. For example, our Royal Ale Festival includes free beer tasting, home beer demonstrations, pub sing-a-longs and the yearly Wench Press Competition.

The Minnesota Renaissance Festival is a first-class experience whose 44th season begins on Saturday, August 16 and ends on September 28, 2014. The Festival is open weekends, Labor Day and a special day for schools and seniors on Festival Friday, September 26, 2014 open from 9 a.m. – 7 p.m., rain or shine. The Festival is located seven miles south of Shakopee on Hwy 169. Admission at the gate: Adults \$22.95; Children 5 – 12 \$13.95; seniors \$20.95; four and under are free! Discount tickets are sold at participating Walgreens, Menards, Whole Foods

Market and Super America stores. Discount coupons are available at participating Subway and Papa Murphy's locations. For more information, visit www.renaissancefest.com or call 952-445-7361.

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