

BUSINESS

Oyster Festival finds a \$25,000 sponsor in Nassau IDA



The Oyster Shucking contest at 2018 Oyster Bay Festival. Credit: Veronique Louis

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And the festival goes on.

Oyster Bay's annual Oyster Festival, once in jeopardy of cancelation after losing funding from several backers, has got a new \$25,000 lifeline.

Nassau County Industrial Development Agency board members voted unanimously Thursday to contribute the money to help sponsor the charitable event and ensure that the festival, planned for mid-October, can take place, IDA chairman Richard Kessel said.

"We all felt very strongly that it was the right thing for the IDA to do," he said of the event, which draws more than 150,000 people every year and features oyster eating and shucking contests, amusement rides, vendor booths and live entertainment, among other activities.

ADVERTISING

Organizers of the festival had said they were just looking for a way to save the event after losing funding.

Altice USA officials had announced that the company had reduced its \$20,000 sponsorship to \$10,000 but would offer free advertising and television coverage. Event officials declined to name another 2018 sponsor that decided not to be a part of the festival this year.

Other businesses have since come through with funding. Oyster Bay Town supervisor Joseph Saladino said that supermarket chain Stop & Shop, Ferrari-Maserati of Long Island in Plainview and the Syosset-based Blumenfeld Development Group had each offered to donate \$5,000. He also said officials were seeking a title sponsor, which involves a \$40,000 donation, as well as additional donors.

Harmony Home Concierge, a Woodbury-based home maintenance and personal concierge company, was the Oyster Festival's title sponsor last year. Steve Goldman, the company's CEO and a longtime attendee of the festival, died late last year. For the time being, Harmony Home Concierge will not be sponsoring any events, a spokeswoman for the firm said.

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Alissa Marti, spokeswoman for the Oyster Festival, which is organized by the Oyster Bay Charitable Fund as a project of the Rotary Club, said event officials are happy to have the IDA's support.

"We are thankful for the group's commitment to help keep the festival tradition going in support of the Oyster Bay Rotary Club and the more than two dozen charities that benefit from this event," she said.

The Oyster Festival takes over three football field-sized areas in addition to four blocks, organizers say, and is scheduled to be held Oct. 19-20 at the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Park.

County Executive Laura Curran, who had written to Kessel to urge the IDA to sponsor the festival, said she was elated.

"It was disheartening to think that it might not happen. That's why I decided to reach out to Richie for help, and I'm so glad the IDA was able to," she said. "It's just such an iconic Nassau County event....Plus, I love oysters!"



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