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CONTACT: Richard King
rking@thumperentertainment.com
573-442-5862

Julie King, Festival Director
jking@thumperentertainment.com

Hilton Peeples, Assistant Festival Director
hpeeples@thumperentertainment.com

The 10th Annual Roots N Blues N BBQ, presented by U.S. Cellular® draws over 32,000 attendees to Columbia, Mo.

COLUMBIA, MO- The 10th Annual Roots N Blues N BBQ Festival presented by U.S. Cellular®, at Stephens Lake Park, Columbia, Mo., drew over 32,000 attendees from 46 states, 3 Canadian Provinces, Norway, Japan and Belgium.

From Friday Sept. 30 to Sunday Oct. 2, 2016 The Roots N Blues N BBQ Festival celebrated its 10th anniversary with 31 national and local artists in the oasis of Stephens Lake Park. Over three days, The Great Southern Bank Stage and the Missouri Lottery Stage featured headliners such as: The Avett Brothers, Grace Potter, Jason Isbell, Nathaniel Rateliff & the Night Sweats, Ben Folds, and St. Paul & the Broken Bones. Along with other performances from Devil Makes Three, Houndmouth, Shovels & Rope, Blues Traveler, G. Love & Special Sauce, and many more.

As attendees entered the festival grounds, they were greeted with acoustic melodies and ballads preformed by festivalgoers at The Front Porch Stage built by Huebert Builders, decorated by the Roots N Blues Art Crew, with instruments provided by Palen Music. The new Front Porch Stage was the third stage at The 2016 Roots N Blues N BBQ Festival and gave anyone the chance to jam, if they wanted.

"Total strangers from around the world met on the stage, picked up guitars and started playing songs for people passing by," said Nate White, manager, of Palen Music Columbia, MO. "I got to witness friendships and memories being made through music. People would stop and listen and encourage someone who they never met. It truly was a magical thing and all of us involved felt very honored to be part of it."

26 food vendors created the aromas that filled Stephens Lake Park during the weekend. Smells of BBQ, caramel and kettle corn, and non-traditional fair-foods had all attendees

buzzing. 19 craft and non-profit vendors displayed original craftsmanship and educated festivalgoers about local and national topics.

Roots N Blues N BBQ would not be the same without the one-of-a-kind art installations crafted by Lisa Bartlett and the Roots N Blues Art Crew. Life size installations, illuminated puppets, glimmering chandeliers, and transformed memorabilia from the last 10 years created a fantasy in Stephens Lake Park.

The Sober Party Tent brought a new experience to Roots N Blues N BBQ. Throughout the weekend several Gratitude Meetings were hosted and stickers were passed out to reassure and support sobriety at music festivals.

The Roots N Blues N BBQ ½ Marathon and 10K, presented by Tryathletics, had a total of 1,271 participants on the brisk morning of Saturday Oct. 1. All participants crossed the finish line and received a commemorative medal, collectors shirt, a BBQ sandwich, and a Michelob Ultra beer.

Five Columbia-area schools rocked the Blues in the Schools performance on Oct. 1 at the Stephens Lake Park Amphitheatre. Two guitars signed by the 2016 artists were raffled-off during the weekend, with all proceeds benefiting Blues in the Schools.

The Blind Boys of Alabama, Music Maker Blues Revue, and Broadway Blues rejoiced through songs at The Gospel Celebration, presented by Broadway Christian Church on Sunday Oct. 2.

“The entire fest was held at Stephens Lake Park which offered more than enough space for the two stages, multiple food vendors and thousands of fans in attendance, assuring that you never felt caged in or claustrophobic... People were able to spread out and if they wanted, set up shop and just take in the festivities at their leisure,” said Chris Prunckle from Wannabe, a six-panel music blog.

The 2016 Roots N Blues N BBQ Festival was the best yet! Thumper Entertainment would like to thank each and every person for making the 10th year magical. It would not have been possible without The City of Columbia and Parks & Recreation, all the fantastic sponsors, staff, volunteers, and most of all, the fans. We’re looking forward to 10 more years with all of you!

The 2017 Roots N Blues N BBQ Festival will be held September 29 through October 1 at Stephens Lake Park in Columbia, Mo. Additional information and official pictures can be found online at rootsnbluesnbbq.com.

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