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Artisphere changes date

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Weather hasn't been kind to Artisphere.

The international arts festival of Greenville started with a fierce thunderstorm on its first day in April 2005 that had artists holding onto their tents for dear life and left one artist with nothing but green, red and purple shards of pottery.

And it's rained on every festival since.

So Artisphere organizers have decided to move the festival to the second weekend in May, which their research shows isn't as likely to have rain and is more likely to have warm, pleasant temperatures.

The fifth annual Artisphere will be held May 8-10, 2009.

And that weekend, Artisphere will only be competing against one other prominent arts festival in the Southeast – the Birmingham Fine Arts Festival in Alabama – instead of two.

“Anything we can do to lessen the chance for rain, the better, not only for the artists, but for the festival and its profitability,” Murphy said.

Rain washed out the Saturday morning

and early afternoon of this year's festival, something Murphy said didn't really hurt artists' sales, but cut into the festival's concession sales.

“The more folks that come the better,” she said. “It pumps more money into the local economy and we're able to give more money to the volunteer organizations.”

Artisphere board chairman emeritus Henry Horowitz said now is the time to make the change.

“At least one day of the festival weekend, it rains and it has a material impact, an economic impact on us,” he said. “We have the luxury of making the change because, as a festival, we're new. If we're going to make tweaks to the festival, we need to make them now rather than later.”

Horowitz said that he hopes the new date will stick. “We don't want to make changes all the time,” he said. “Once we decide, hopefully we'll never change it.”

Horowitz said the date change has been approved by the festival's executive committee, but still must receive approval from the full board which meets in July.

“It's a done deal,” he said.

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