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Busy calender for all to enjoy in the city of Warwick this summer - by Frank Picozzi

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Frank Picozzi

The city of Warwick certainly has a robust and diverse commercial base. And, its central location in the heart of southern New England, coupled with easy access to I-95 and I-295, Rhode Island T.F. Green International Airport and the InterLink intermodal commuter rail station, are making the community increasingly popular with commercial and residential developers. But the residents and business people who call Warwick home know that what also makes the city so attractive is its small-town feel and a focus on creating and sustaining a welcoming, affordable, and family-friendly place in which to live and work. With that in mind, there's a full lineup of events planned through the fall that are sure to be a hit with crowds of all ages.

Warwick's food truck themed nights never disappoint, and this year, some of them are being offered in conjunction with the city's free summer concert series. July 19 features Mary Day at beautiful Pawtuxet Park, and on July 26, Cee Cee & The Riders will be performing at the gazebo in the Norwood neighborhood. Atwood & Donnelly will be singing songs by the seaside on August 2 at Conimicut Point Park. Also scheduled in August are Gary Hope & Friends at City Park on August 12, The Bowling Shoes on the 16th at Oakland Beach, and D Train in Norwood on August 30. Except for the Gary Hop & Friends concert, which runs from noon to 3 p.m., all concerts will be held from 6 to 8 p.m., with food trucks on site beginning at 5 p.m.

Evening summer skies are often bright with fireworks, and there are three special extravaganzas planned this year: June 3 at Salter's Grove, as part of the annual Gaspee Days celebration, July 3 at the Oakland Beach seawall in commemoration of Independence Day, and August 1 at seaside Rocky Point Park, for the exciting conclusion of National Night Out festivities. All fireworks begin approximately at 9 p.m./dusk. Pack a cooler full of snacks and bring a blanket or chairs to watch the fireworks in comfort!

Speaking of Gaspee Days – the annual celebration of the actual first act of rebellion leading to the Revolutionary War that's been an integral part of the community for more than half a century – its hardworking organizers again have a full slate of activities planned in May and June. The season kicks off on May 20 with Proclamation Day, marked by the issuance of proclamations from various Rhode Island officials recognizing the state's role in history and food and music at Pawtuxet Park. Other events include the three-day arts and crafts festival, including a Saturday night block party, throughout Memorial Day weekend, Symphony in the Park, and fireworks extravaganza. The weekend of June 10 and 11 is the culmination of events, featuring an Ecumenical Service, 5K foot race, the always highly-anticipated and beloved parade, a Colonial encampment, Blessing of the Fleet, Sunday in the Park, and Burning of the Gaspee. An essay contest and raffle drawing are also part of the activities. For information on these family-friendly events (the block party is limited to individuals 21 years of age and older, however), please visit gaspee.com/events.

Enjoy outdoor shopping, live music, good food, and supporting local small businesses? The Marketplace/Food Trucks events will not disappoint! Great bands, hundreds of vendors, and a variety of food trucks are the hallmarks of these increasingly popular events. All will be held from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Rocky Point State Park, with performances slated from noon to 3 p.m. Mojo

Rhodes will perform June 3, followed by the Black & White Band on July 15. Greystone Rail performs on August 26, and Mojo Rhodes will be back to cap off the season on September 9. Rocky Point will also be the site for "Movies in the Park," presented by the Central RI Chamber of Commerce. Dates are June 22, July 6, and July 27, with rain dates of August 3 and 24. Film titles will be announced shortly. These are always fun evenings, featuring food trucks and vendors as well, and perfect for the entire family. Minors must be accompanied by an adult.

Summer also means Oakland Beach Cruise nights, which are sponsored by the non-profit Greater Warwick Lions Club and held Tuesdays from 4 to 8 p.m. through September 19. Come on down by the seawall to enjoy displays of classic cars, listen to oldies music, and buy some raffle tickets to support the Lions Club's good work. While you're there, why not cap off the evening with some delicious seafood or classic American fare at one of our local seaside restaurants?

As the summer months inevitably turn toward fall, the first Warwick Fall Apple Festival, presented by the Warwick Police Department and We Be Jammin'RI, will help to welcome in autumn. The event is scheduled for September 9 from 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at Rocky Point Park and will feature the 88th Army Band, the southern New England Chapter of the Wolfshager Hexenbruts Dance Troupe, food trucks, crafters, vendors, demonstrations, special character guests, Touch-a-Truck, live music, children's activities and more.

But you don't just have to visit Warwick for the day. While our recreational facilities, shopping opportunities, restaurants, theater and museums offer plenty of attractions, with 16 hotels offering a wide range of accommodations and prices, you can stay conveniently in Warwick and also see all that Rhode Island has to offer. Log on to visitwarwickri.com for information about lodging options, all the events mentioned here, an interactive restaurant guide, and a host of other information about what to do, see, and experience while you're here.

We hope to see you here soon!

Frank Picozzi is the mayor of the city of Warwick, R.I.

New England Real Estate Journal - 17 Accord Park Drive #207, Norwell MA 02061 - (781) 878-4540