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PROMOTERS TO BEEF UP SECURITY AT X-FEST

MODESTO, Calif., June 22, 2005 – Xclamation Festival promoter Chris Ricci wants to make sure his guests — all 15,000 of them — have a good time at the downtown Modesto music and arts celebration on July 23.

“We want to keep X-Fest safe so we can have it every year,” Ricci said.

A few individuals can spoil a good time for everyone, Ricci said, and he takes extraordinary measures to insure X-Fest is a safe and sane street party.

Ricci said he spends twice as much on his security force than he does to hire the more than 40 bands that will be performing on six stages. “That shows you how important security is to me,” he said. “We’ll have as much security people in place as when the Raiders play to 60,000 fans at the Oakland Coliseum.”

This year, X-Fest has increased its private security team by 10 percent to 220 guards. In addition, 60 Modesto Police Department officers have been contracted to help maintain the peace at X-Fest.

“More security is typically a good thing,” said MPD Lt. Tim David. “The more people you have, the more eyes you have.”

Following the example of many sporting venues, Ricci said ticket sales for beer and wine will be closed at 10 p.m. and no alcohol beverages will be served after 11 p.m., an hour before the conclusion of X-Fest.

The MPD this year also will debut a “soft” close at the event’s conclusion at 12 midnight. “It’s totally kinder and gentler,” said Ricci about the soft close.

Instead of herding partygoers out with policemen on horseback as in past years, the MPD and the private security team will escort guests out of the festival area.

“The idea is to open more exits and disperse more people in more directions,” said Lt. David. “We wouldn’t be exploring it, suggesting it, recommending it, if we didn’t think it would help.”

X-Fest, added Ricci, greatly benefits Modesto local businesses. “Virtually every hotel in this town is sold out that night,” he said.

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