



Citizens for 1 Greater New Orleans

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FONO Hosts Nonpartisan Benefit Events at National Party Conventions

As the third anniversary of hurricanes Katrina and Rita nears, Friends of New Orleans will host benefit events at the Democratic and Republican national party conventions. Its convention events will showcase the best of Louisiana food and music, while calling attention to the ongoing rebuilding effort and the immediate need to prevent further loss of Louisiana's coastal wetlands.

"FONO will continue to bring much-needed awareness of the ongoing efforts to rebuild this unique region, and more importantly, to honor the extraordinary work of the local organizations who are restoring their homes and communities in new and innovative ways. The nation could learn a lot from them about 'what works' after a disaster. Their efforts must be supported for the long term," commented FONO Director, Emily Byram.

The "NEW ORLEANS ALL STAR JAM-BALAYA" events will take place in Denver at 8 p.m. on Sunday, Aug. 24, at the Fillmore and at 8 p.m. in Minneapolis on Monday, Sept. 1, at First Avenue. The National Restaurant Association joined as an early sponsor to ensure the unique cuisine of the area is well-represented.

Lending their musical experience and heritage to the events, the Voice of the Wetlands All-Stars will perform with 2008 Blues Music Awards Contemporary Male Artist of the Year and wetlands activist Tab Benoit. All-Stars include George Porter, Jr., Cyril Neville, Waylon Thibodeaux, Johnny Sansone, Anders Osborne and Johnny Vidacovich. They will be joined by Irma Thomas, "The Soul Queen of New Orleans"; Marva Wright, "The Blues Queen of New Orleans"; and piano legend Marcia Ball. The all-star horn section will feature saxophonist Donald Harrison, Jr., sousaphone player and Dirty Dozen founder Kirk Joseph, Troy "Trombone Shorty" Andrews, Funky Nation front man Big Sam and trumpeter James Andrews. The opening of each evening will feature New Orleans brass band the Soul Rebels, the Wild Tchoupitoulas Mardi Gras Indians and New Orleans natives Lauren Barrett and Mary McBride.

Members of the original Meters will join together for a special reunion on August 24 in Denver, where funk drummer extraordinaire Zigaboo Modeliste, bass legend George Porter, Jr., and guitar master Leo Nocentelli will be joined by Allen Toussaint, three-time Grammy winner Terence Blanchard, pianist Henry Butler, Walter "Wolfman" Washington, Academy Award and multiple-Grammy winner Randy Newman and surprise guests.

A special sneak preview of the Broadway-bound new musical, "BROTHER RAY-- the life, the loves and the music of Ray Charles" will feature Tony-nominated performer Brandon Victor Dixon in the title role along with selected members of the NAACP Theatre Awards-winning ensemble.

Hosts for the Denver event are Louisiana Lt. Gov. Mitch Landrieu, actors Harry Shearer and Wendell Pierce and Democrat strategists James Carville and Donna Brazile. In Minneapolis, the hosts include former Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson and Republican strategist Mary Matalin. FONO Board Chairman Gloria Dittus, Walter Isaacson, Former Congressman Billy Tauzin and actor and FONO Board Member John Larroquette will host both events.

Individual tickets and sponsorships are still available. For information contact FONO at (202) 842.1707.

The events will also serve as the culmination of FONO's "**Heroes of the Storm**" campaign, an effort to honor organizations that have made significant contributions to the recovery and rebuilding effort in the Gulf region. Several organizations have already been recognized for their efforts, and more will be announced before the events. The Heroes announced to date include The Tipitina's Foundation, Women of the Storm, St. Bernard Project, Holy Cross Neighborhood Association, Music Rising, New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Foundation, **Citizens for 1 Greater New Orleans**, Beacon of Hope, Café Reconcile, Broadmoor Improvement Association, Idea Village, and New Schools New Orleans.

Both events will be broadcast in New Orleans on WWOZ 90.7 FM and streaming live at wwoz.org. In Denver, the August 24 event will be aired on Jazz 89, KUVO 89.3 FM.

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