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## **SFEA Honors Regional Festivals with 2025 Kaleidoscope Awards**

**Chattanooga, TN** – The best and the brightest in the Southeastern festivals and events industry were spotlighted this week at the Southeast Festivals and Events Association's 2025 Kaleidoscope Awards Gala, a part of their annual conference held this year in Chattanooga, TN. An especially destructive hurricane season combined with the final stages of pandemic recovery within event teams and budgets makes what these organizations were able to accomplish all the more impressive. And with 206 applications – two of which received an average score of 10/10 – from six states in 21 categories, there were plenty of things to celebrate.

"Festivals and events play a vital role in bringing communities together and creating lasting memories. The SFEA Kaleidoscope Awards recognize the outstanding efforts of organizations that go above and beyond to deliver exceptional experiences. By celebrating these achievements, we are all encouraged to push creative boundaries and maintain the highest standards for the events we bring to our communities," said Lindsey Shaffer, the outgoing SFEA Board Chair.

### **These are the 2025 Kaleidoscope Award Winners:**

- Specialty Award: Best Pop-Up Event: Experience Honest Alley - Para La CULTURA Community Mural, City of Lawrenceville, GA
- Best Marketing Campaign: ChristmasVille in July, ChristmasVille Rock Hill, SC
- Best Festival or Event T-Shirt: Meeting Street Music Fest, City of West Columbia, SC
- Best Event Program or Brochure: Perry International Festival, City of Perry, GA
- Best Event Photograph: Boynton Beach Pirate Fest, City of Boynton Beach, FL
- Best Merchandise: Dill Pickle Soda, North Carolina Pickle Festival
- Best Promotional Poster: Not Your Mother's Art Fest, Explore Gwinnett, Gwinnett County, GA
- Best Event Series: ChristmasVille After Dark, ChristmasVille Rock Hill, SC
- Best Vendor Impact: Todd & Christa Bentley, Sweeter Days Farm, Farm to Table Dinner, Clarksville, TN, Parks and Recreation
- Best Event Impact Support: Pete Tibbs, Hickman County Emergency Management, National Banana Pudding Festival, Centerville, TN
- Best Event Within an Event: Youth Culinary Competition: A Taste of Chamblee, Chamblee, GA
- Best Event Website: Suwanee Beer Fest, Big South Productions, Suwanee, GA
- Best Festival or Event Video: Surf City Live, Surf City, NC
- Best Children's Event: Children's Festival of Reading, Knox County Public Library, Knoxville, TN
- Green Initiative Award: Lazy Daze Arts & Crafts Festival, Cary, NC
- Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Initiative Award: Multicultural Night, City of Duluth, GA
- Event Professional of the Year: Katie Sears, City of Chamblee, GA
- Best New Event: Not Your Mother's Art Fest, Explore Gwinnett, Gwinnett County, GA
- Best Festival or Event Under \$20,000 in Budget, Gold: S'mores 'N Snores, City of Duluth, GA
  - Silver winner: Snowball Festival, Town of Lexington, SC; Bronze winner: Santa's Depot, Visit Kingsport, TN
- Best Festival or Event Under \$75,000 in Budget, Gold: The Lawrenceville Boogie, City of Lawrenceville, GA
  - Silver winner: Perry International Festival, City of Perry, GA; Bronze winner: Christmas on the Cumberland, Clarksville, TN, Parks & Recreation
- Best Festival or Event Over \$75,000 in Budget, Gold: Fun Fest, Visit Kingsport, TN
  - Silver winner: National Black Bear Festival, Plymouth, NC; Bronze winner: Suwanee Fest, City of Suwanee, GA

The name “kaleidoscope” was selected in homage to the colors in the SFEA logo, which represent the many different elements and facets within festivals and events. A call for entries was posted last fall, and all communities and events, members and non-members alike, were encouraged to participate. The judges looked for originality, creativity, media impact, and the overall impact on the respective communities. The Kaleidoscope Award categories are diverse, covering just about every aspect of the industry, including vendors and suppliers.

The Southeast Festivals & Events Association is a 501 (c) 6 membership-based organization composed of festival and event planners, venues, and industry service providers. SFEA was founded in 2009 to strengthen the festivals and events industry throughout the Southeastern United States by hosting educational sessions, networking opportunities, award recognition, and additional events throughout the year, thus allowing for continued professional growth of members. Membership is open to professionals in the festivals and events industry as well as those wanting to get their start and learn more about this exciting profession.

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