

Virus unknowns cancel Atchison's Amelia Fest

(KAIR)--For the second year in a row, Atchison's long-running Amelia Earhart Festival has been canceled.

According to a release from Festival Coordinator Jacque Pregont, the Festival Committee made the decision "in light of the continuing threat of COVID-19 virus and variants," saying "the safety and well-being of volunteers and all who would attend are the highest priority."

The annual festival, held each year to celebrate aviatrix Amelia Earhart, who grew up in Atchison, was planned to be held July 16 and 17.

Pregont, in the release, said that even with COVID-19 vaccinations, "herd immunity is not expected before the end of summer or early fall," meaning, what she calls, "substantial uncertainty" that holding large scale events such as concerts, carnivals, and fireworks shows, all part of the festival, would be permitted or advisable by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment and/or Atchison County by the date of the festival.

The release calls the festival "a massive team effort" that requires many layers of permitting and coordination that must be complete well in advance of the actual festival date, which causes "too much risk [to health, finances, and logistics] to proceed this year."

The festival committee will begin planning to return in July 2022 with what Pregont calls "an outstanding celebration" of Earhart.

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