



**For Immediate Release**

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## **44<sup>th</sup> Denver PrideFest Celebrates Historic Stonewall Anniversary June 15-16 at Civic Center Park**

New York's 1969 Stonewall Riots Regarded as Beginning of LGBTQ Civil Rights Movement

**DENVER, CO** – The 2019 Denver PrideFest will commemorate the 1969 riots at the historic Stonewall Inn in New York City, regarded by many as the beginning of the contemporary LGBTQ civil rights movement. The 44<sup>th</sup> annual Denver festival, which runs from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Saturday June 15 and 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Sunday June 16, is expected to draw over 400,000 people to Denver's Civic Center Park over two days.

Denver PrideFest will feature three live entertainment stages, the Coors Light Denver Pride Parade, the PRIDE 5K, and a special art installation created by artist Lonnie Hanzon called *Stonewall 50: Progress and Reflection* that will track the history of the LGBTQ+ civil rights movement.

"It's incredible to think about how far we have come since Stonewall," said Debra Pollock, CEO of The Center on Colfax. "At the same time, we know that much of our progress is being threatened by people who would like to halt our upward trajectory. PrideFest is a time for our entire community to celebrate our accomplishments while renewing our commitment to continue moving forward."

On June 28, 1969, New York City police raided the Stonewall Inn, a gay club located in New York City's Greenwich Village. The raid sparked a riot among bar patrons and neighborhood residents as police roughly hauled out employees and patrons of the bar, leading to protests and violent clashes with law enforcement outside the bar on Christopher Street. The Stonewall Riots served as a catalyst for the gay rights movement in the United States and around the world.

One year after the Stonewall riots, the first Christopher Street Liberation Day march was organized on June 28, 1970 to promote LGBTQ civil rights. The celebration was so popular that similar events began popping up as gay pride events in cities across the country. LGBTQ pride events have now become an annual June tradition for many cities across the globe and have led to increased visibility and acceptance for LGBTQ people everywhere. The first gay pride celebration took place in Denver in June 1975. This community gathering brought increased energy to the Denver LGBTQ community and one year later, activists moved to form what would become The Center on Colfax.

Denver PrideFest is the largest Pride event in the Rocky Mountain region. The annual event is produced by The Center on Colfax, one of the state's oldest LGBTQ organizations. In addition to entertainment, the festival features more than 250 exhibitors. The Center on Colfax is a nonprofit organization that serves more than 57,000 people annually at its facility in Denver's Capitol Hill neighborhood with programs that serve LGBTQ youth, older adults, and the transgender community, as well as training and legal programs.

Festival highlights include:

- The PRIDE 5K kicks off the weekend on Saturday June 15 with a run/walk from the State Capitol to Cheesman Park and back. The 5K includes prizes for individual runners and teams.
- The centerpiece of the weekend is the Coors Light Denver Pride Parade on Sunday morning, June 16. Stepping off at 9:30 a.m. and attracting 100,000+ spectators, the Coors Light Denver Pride Parade marches from Cheesman Park to the festival at Civic Center Park via Colfax.
- Interactive games and fun, age-appropriate performances are offered in the Walmart Family Area (for young children with parents or caretakers) and Youth Alley (for youth ages 11-21). The AARP SAGE of the Rockies Resource Area offers a relaxing respite from the hustle and bustle of the festival, while the Trans Resource Area builds connections among the community.
- Two days of non-stop, live performances on three stages featuring festive musical acts; over-the-top drag queens, and audience contests. Featured acts include headliner Todrick Hall presented by Nissan, Denver's biggest little band Wheelchair Sports Camp, multi-talented drag artist Lady Bunny, and *Ru Paul's Drag Race* alums, Peppermint and Yvie Oddly.

## **Denver PrideFest sponsors include:**

### **Major Sponsors**

- **Coors Light** (presenting the Coors Light Denver Pride Parade)
- **Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment**
- **Get Your Gay On!!!** (Official Denver PrideFest Retailer)
- **Nissan** (Official Vehicle of Denver PrideFest and sponsor of Todrick Hall's performance)
- **Sheraton Denver Downtown** (Official Hotel)
- **Smirnoff** (sponsor of Smirnoff Dance World)
- **U.S. Bank** (presenting sponsor of the U.S. Bank Latinx Stage)
- **Walmart** (sponsor of the Walmart Family Area)
- **Wells Fargo** (sponsor of the Wells Fargo VIP Area)
- **A Perfect Bite Catering**

## **Supporting Sponsors**

- AARP Colorado (sponsor of the AARP Colorado SAGE Resource Area)
- Eldorado Springs Natural Spring Water
- Floor & Décor (sponsor of the Floor & Décor Family Dance Area)
- King Soopers (sponsor of the Denver Pride Volunteer Program)
- Target
- United Airlines
- University of Colorado

## **Participating Sponsors**

- Advance Auto Parts
- AMR Ambulance
- Babes Around Denver
- Barefoot Wine
- BBVA Compass
- CO Bank
- Colorado LGBTQ Chamber of Commerce
- Denver Economic Development & Opportunity Office
- Denver Film Society
- Denver Museum of Nature & Science
- HP
- Jacobs Engineering
- Matthew Shepard Foundation
- One Colorado
- PDC Energy
- UC Health
- Visit Denver
- We the People Clothing
- Workday

**Complete entertainment and festival information is available at: [DenverPride.org](http://DenverPride.org)**

**Find us on Facebook: [Facebook.com/DenverPrideFest](https://www.facebook.com/DenverPrideFest); follow us on Twitter: [@CenterOnColfax](https://twitter.com/CenterOnColfax)**

## **About The Center on Colfax...**

The Center on Colfax opened in 1976 and over the years has grown to become the largest LGBTQ community center in the Rocky Mountain region, giving voice to Colorado's LGBTQ community and playing a pivotal role in statewide initiatives to reduce harassment and discrimination. Today the Center is focused on fulfilling its mission – to engage, empower, enrich and advance the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community of Colorado – by ensuring that every member of the LGBTQ community has access to the programs and resources they need to live happy, healthy, and productive lives. The Center

currently operates on an annual budget of \$2.3 million, employs 20 staff members and utilizes more than 500 community volunteers to serve more than 52,000 people each year. [www.lgbtqcolorado.org](http://www.lgbtqcolorado.org)

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