

# Thirty-Two Years and Still Saluting: Behind the Scenes of Yankton's Biggest Event



When the Yankton Riverboat Days and Summer Arts Festival began approximately 32 years ago, I'll bet nobody at that time believed that it would become the event that it is today, drawing over 100,000 people to the Yankton area annually. I sat down with three women that serve on the Yankton Riverboat Days board to find out about the history of and their experience with Yankton's biggest annual event.

Most of the Riverboat Days (RBD) board members have a main job but assist with other duties as needed. Milissa Wuebben is in her first year serving as Treasurer and is one of the newest board members. Wuebben was recruited to fill the position when the preceding Treasurer retired.

Donna Madson has been involved with RBD for over 27 years with more than 18 of them on the board, becoming involved because her husband was involved. She currently heads up the committee involved with the beer garden: taking beverage tokens, checking ID's, selling wristbands and lining up workers. Madson also assists with other RBD volunteers, making lunch arrangements for helpers and coordinating the volunteers from the Yankton Minimum Unit.



Donna Madson, Nancy Teachout and Milissa Wuebben

Nancy Teachout had a hand in RBD since its origination. Teachout's husband, Bruce has been involved since it began and Teachout became involved a few years later. She has served as a chairman, board member and she and Bruce were Captain and Belle in 1990. She assists with the children's activities, volunteers, amphitheater events and helps her husband sell beverages during the band/dance. Because of her degree in recreation, she felt like RBD would be an event she would

be interested in and she was sure right. In the event's early days, Teachout assisted with the dog show.

The committee, Teachout explained, "Wanted something positive, that families could afford to go to. We have been really strong in encouraging that. We always have free children's activities, all of our entertainment is free of charge, the bands, the amphitheater, and that's something that we're very proud of." Thirty-two years later with a majority of the events family-oriented and free is definitely something the RBD committee should be proud of.

What began as Yankton RBD was scheduled for the third full weekend in August. Needing to pick a weekend for the event to get it on the state calendar, the committee opted for this weekend because historically, it was one of the driest weekends with the best



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