



For immediate release
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Origin Bank RiverMarket kicks off season with Bloody Mary Festival

The Origin Bank RiverMarket is celebrating its fifth birthday along with the annual Bloody Mary Festival, presented by Tito's Handmade Vodka. The event will be held on October 7, 2017 and will feature shopping from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Bloody Mary tastings start at 12 p.m.

The birthday party will feature testimonials from a few vendors who have used the RiverMarket as a launching pad, such as Sarah Lee from M&K House, Chris Spires from Pelican State Clothing, Jeff Landry from Landry Vineyards, and Iantha Thomas from Etouffeenin's. The first 50 attendees will receive a complimentary cupcake. Everyone is invited to celebrate five great years of the Downtown RiverMarket.

"This is going to be a fantastic event to kick off the new season and to celebrate the RiverMarket's fifth birthday," said Myra Gatling-Akers, director of the Origin Bank RiverMarket. "We're really focusing on promoting handmade and healthy products this year. This event brings people from other parts of Louisiana, Arkansas, and Mississippi."

The Bloody Mary Fest participating bars and restaurants are Brass Monkey Pub & Patio, Copeland's of New Orleans, Corner Bar, Iron Cactus, Nell's Airport Lounge, Monterrey Grill, Pink Monroe, Portico Restaurant & Bar, Restaurant Cotton, SQ's on the Ouachita, Trapp's, and Warehouse No. 1 Restaurant. They are competing to be named Best Bloody Mary.

Tickets for the Bloody Mary Festival can be purchased for \$25 online at www.bloody_mary_fest.eventbrite.com until 5 p.m. on October 6th or for \$35 at the event

The shopping that will be available at the event includes snack vendors, food trucks, boutique clothing, and handmade and healthy products such as essential oils, woodwork, jewelry, produce, soaps, jams, jellies, sauces, and more.

There will also be a car raffle to raise funds for St. Francis Medical Center's NICU and pediatric services. The two vehicles that will be raffled off are a 2017 Nissan Titan and a 2017 Toyota 4Runner, both white. Tickets for the car raffle can be purchased by calling 1-833-884-2277, by going to Sparks Nissan-Kia, Van Trow Toyota, St. Francis Medical Center, any Ouachita Valley Federal Credit Union location, and St. Francis Community Health Center or at stfran.com. Also present at the event will be salsa dancers from Harvey's Dance Hall, and a station for painting DōMo rocks to be hidden around town in geocaching locations.

The DōMo rock painting is a fundraiser for the Save the Train initiative at the Louisiana Purchase Garden & Zoo. It is one dollar to participate to participate in the rock painting. Other donations can be made as well. All the proceeds from the DōMo rock painting will go towards saving the train.

Parking will be available behind Riverscape, at the sheriff's annex, and street side.

The 2017 Bloody Mary Festival is sponsored by Origin Bank, Monroe Civic Center, Spherion Staffing, Choice Brands, Inc., Downtown Monroe Alliance, City of Monroe, Monroe-West Monroe CVB, Bear's Towing, The Kirksey Agency, Dusty & Co, Sanican, Protection 1, Woodforest National Bank, Comcast Spotlight, Tubbs by Grubbs, The News-Star, DeltaStyle, Thrifty Nickel, Holistic Chamber of Commerce, Ouachita Green, Spa Bella, M&K House, Assurance Financial, Arrow Public Art, and Tito's Handmade Vodka.

Thanks to the new RiverMarket Advisory Council: Brooke Foy of Arrow Public Art, Hope Anderson of Health with Hope, Kristin Lambrecht of Holistic Chamber of Commerce, Liz Knope Lee of Spa Bella, Sarah Lee of M&K House and Stuart Hodnett of Ouachita Green. This committee is seeking handmade and healthy vendors and making "handmade and healthy" a focus of the RiverMarket.