



Dublin Irish Festival Poster, merchandise, on-site guide and mailer as designed by Kelley Communications Group.

‘Luck of the Irish’ smiles on Dublin

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The “Luck of the Irish” surrounded Coffman Park last weekend for the 16th annual Dublin Irish Festival.

It did rain on the festival while it was closed during the wee hours on Saturday and Sunday, but the Saturday rains that appeared headed straight for Dublin in early afternoon suddenly curved to the north, sparing the festival during operating hours.

While festival officials are still crunching numbers, they expect those figures to point to a record number of attendees and sales.

Sandra Puskarcik, Dublin’s community relations director, pointed to the longer lines and the number of programs distributed as indicators that crowds were higher than in previous years.

At 6 p.m. Sunday — a time in past years when only diehard fans of Irish music remained — there was still a line for fish and chips and fried pickles at The Old Bag of Nails booth.

Brian Byrne runs the “Sports Pub” tent for the Shamrock Club of Columbus each year and reported a record day on Saturday for beer sales, going through 36 kegs of beer. The previous Saturday record for the Sports Pub had been 25 kegs, he said.

Vendors also reported record sales.

Anne Gleine, owner of HaPenny Bridge Imports of Ireland, has been coming to the festival since began in 1988.

Sales at her booth on Friday night were the best she ever had, and when final figures are in she expects sales to “far

exceed” what she’s done in the past.

The weather, with temperatures hovering in the low to mid-80s, and the mix of entertainment brought in the record crowds, she said.

“Most of the vendors were very satisfied,” she said. Many told her if they could go to only one festival a year, “they would come here” because the festival is so well-organized.

That feeling spread to the entertainers.

“Everything is so well-organized, almost ridiculously organized,” said Paul Baker of Brigid’s Cross. “We do a lot of festivals around the country and love Dublin because it’s so family-friendly. They (the city) work on it all year long and it shows.”

“One of the things we strive for with the Irish Festival is to provide something special for the Dublin community.”