



Don Campbell / HP file photo

Liam Houseal-Haight, 2, of Benton Harbor tries out a variety of homemade musical instruments June 4, 2016, during the Southwest Michigan Mini Maker Faire held at Whirlpool Centennial Park in St. Joseph. Hundreds of people gathered at the second annual event. The third annual event is June 3.

Maker Faire returns to Southwest Michigan in June

By **TONY WITTKOWSKI**
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ST. JOSEPH — The third annual Mini Maker Faire in Southwest Michigan has been scheduled for June.

The event will be 10 a.m.-4 p.m. June 3 at the Whirlpool Centennial Park. It will be a day of family-friendly making, learning, crafting, inventing and tinkering below the bluff in downtown St. Joseph.

Area makers are encouraged to participate in

the event, as the application window is open until May 1.

The Southwest Michigan Mini Maker Faire is produced, in partnership with Maker Media, by the Berrien Regional Educational Services Agency, Cornerstone Alliance, Kinexus and St. Joseph Today.

Joe Rommel, educational technology consultant for Berrien RESA, said the event will attract artists, engineers and designers from across the region.

“It’s been fun for us to

see the change the last few years,” Rommel said. “Before we had to explain it a little bit, but now it is a lot more commonplace. It’s been fun to see that shift.”

A stage portion was added to the Maker Faire last year, which Rommel said they want to expand this year.

Rommel confirmed that Wausau Homes, a custom home builder in Stevensville, would supply kids with material to build a few playhouses. Rommel

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said the company would then donate the completed houses to charity.

With the opening of its new Hanson Tech Center, Rommel said Lake Michigan College is expected to have an impact on this year's faire. Last year, LMC brought a portable welding booth for kids to test their skills.

"We have some really great partners," Rommel said. "This will help the local manufacturing community to teach the next generation on what it takes to make things. We want to feed into that pipeline."

Festivities are free to the public and will include hands-on demonstrations.

The event, which works as a convergence of science and technology, will include crafting and horticulture activities.

The Maker Faire made its Berrien County debut in June 2015.

The faires originated in California's San Francisco Bay Area. With more than 150 events taking place in 2014, the nearest faires had been in Detroit, Grand Rapids and South Bend .

Makers can register and learn more about this year's event at www.swmimaker-faire.org.

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