



**milwaukee
irish fest**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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A prelude to Irish Fest's 30th Anniversary

2009 Irish Fest to feature the entertainment and culture of County Down, Northern Ireland

Milwaukee – August 5, 2009 – Each year, the Milwaukee Irish Fest Cultural Village offers festival attendees a true snapshot of the heritage, traditions and modern culture of Ireland. This year, Irish Fest hosts a sampler focused on the entertainment and culture of County Down, Northern Ireland, as a prelude to the 2010 festival, when Irish Fest will celebrate its 30th anniversary and feature a Northern Ireland Showcase.

“Participants will have the opportunity to experience a taste of all that County Down has to offer,” said Jane Anderson, executive director of Milwaukee Irish Fest. “Musicians, performers and lecturers will travel to Milwaukee from County Down, Northern Ireland to give attendees an authentic sampling of the region’s rich heritage, culture and traditions.”

The County Down sampler will include:

- The **Bangor Drama Club** will perform a play written especially for Irish Fest on the history of the region titled, *County Down: 10,000 Years in 30 Minutes...Or So* in the Theatre Tent daily.
- Dr. Tim Campbell, director of the **Saint Patrick Centre** in Downpatrick, Northern Ireland, will exhibit the Centre in the Cultural Pavilion, in addition to giving talks throughout the weekend on *The History of County Down* in the Hedge School. Dr. Campbell will also lead a discussion with the Young Ambassadors from the Milwaukee Chapter of the Friends of Saint Patrick, on their recent County Down experiences.
- The **Ulster Scots Agency** will bring lecturers, Alister McReynolds, who will speak on the Scots Irish legacy in Wisconsin, and Maynard Hanna, who will discuss the history and culture of the Scots Irish in County Down.
- Legendary singer/songwriter **Tommy Sands** and popular Ulster Scots folk band, **Risin' Stour**, will represent County Down with performances on the Celtic Roots Stage and other stages throughout the weekend.
- Displays from all of the administrative councils from the County will be present in the Cultural Village and Travel Ireland areas. **Chairman of Down District Council**, Colin McGrath, will be in attendance.
- Hand-painted apparel by Lorsha Design and art from sculptor Alice McDaniels, of the Regional College in Downpatrick, will be available for purchase in the **Moore Street Market**.
- The Northern Ireland Bureau will make its second appearance at the festival, featuring a photo exhibit of Northern Ireland in the **Cultural Pavilion**.

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For more information visit irishfest.com.

Milwaukee Irish Fest is the world's largest celebration of Irish music and culture, showcasing more than 100 entertainment acts annually at the four-day, 16-stage event at the Henry W. Maier Festival Park on Lake Michigan. Passionately committed to igniting a love of Irish culture in all people, Irish Fest teaches Ireland's music, dance, drama, sports, culture, children's activities, and genealogy at the festival and through year-long programming. For more information, visit irishfest.com.

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