



Alton Pride Festival Creates Unity, Draws Large Crowds On Belle Street

by Randy Manning
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ALTON - The Alton Pride Festival showed strong unity and drew large crowds with entertainment from noon to 9:30 p.m. Saturday on Belle Street in Alton. Bubby's and Sissy's on Belle was a catalyst for the event.

Michael Paynic, the owner of Bubby's and Sissy's, said this was the first Pride event and the turnout was "amazing."

"It is very overwhelming," he said while the band Porch Cafe was performing. "We had a wide variety of vendors and great food.

"We even have an amazing Kid Zone. We have a great board on Alton Pride and we have worked very hard the past nine months to pull this off. We started in 2019 and were going to have a festival in 2020, but the COVID Pandemic occurred. We started again about nine months ago and had to cram to get it all together.

"Ultimately we would like to provide a safe haven for youth or anyone not accepted by family and friends as a place to go. The City of Alton, the mayor, the police department, and the State of Illinois, have all been great to make this happen for us and keep everybody safe. It has been an amazing day."

There were a variety of drag queen shows and other performers throughout the day at the festival in what was a very well-planned and orchestrated event.



