

Festival to celebrate Saugatuck Center

Local merchants, residents, artisans and entertainers are getting ready to celebrate the Saugatuck neighborhood of Westport, at the first-ever Slice of Saugatuck Festival on Saturday.

Three dozen of the area's finest restaurants, shops and galleries will be opening their doors and inviting the community to come and sample their offerings at this inaugural event.

Billed as a free wine & food tasting and retail experience, attendees will be able to walk the streets of Saugatuck Center and taste their way from restaurant to restaurant, sample wines, visit galleries, hear music and participate without having to dig into their pockets. Attendees of this family-friendly celebration can kayak, learn to fly-fish, take tours, get their hair braided, watch an award-winning taekwon do black belt demonstration, receive discounts and more. The historic Saugatuck Fire House will be open for tours, fire safety demonstrations and kids of all ages will be able to board an antique fire truck.

Event organizer and Representative Town Meeting member Matthew

Mandell said the time is right to celebrate all the great things that are going on in the neighborhood.

"Saugatuck is going through a renaissance in terms of food, retail and pride," said Mandell. "The festival emphasizes all that Westport has and gives the many merchants of Saugatuck Center an opportunity to be seen by residents looking for things to do in their own community. There is no reason to look elsewhere any longer. We have it all right here."

Multiple acts will be performing throughout the festival.

The main stage, located on the plaza overlooking the Saugatuck River at the new Gault building on Riverside Avenue, will feature a performance by the band, "Parents with Angst." playing there rock & roll take on bringing up children in the 21st century. Event information will also be available on the plaza.

"Reclaiming this beautiful piece of waterfront property for the enjoyment of the entire community has always been a top priority for us," said Sam Gault of Hamilton Development, the real estate arm of Gault Energy

and Stone. "We've come full circle, welcoming folks back to a neighborhood that virtually disappeared with the construction of I-95.

The Village of Saugatuck is truly becoming the gem of Westport. It's wonderful to watch the area take shape."

The event will take place on Sept. 17 from noon - 3pm in Westport's Saugatuck Center, bounded by Riverside Avenue, Railroad Place and Saugatuck Avenue.

"The Slice of Saugatuck Festival is a celebration of the area's vibrancy and is a testament to the community spirit that unites the businesses and residents of the neighborhood," said Mandell.

"It will give people the chance to explore all the great things Saugatuck has to offer first hand, and I'm betting that people will be full before they finish the Slice."

There will be plenty of free parking at Railroad Parking #5 on Riverside Avenue. Maps of the event are available on-line and throughout the festival. To see a list of the merchants, activities and more go to: www.westportd1.com/saugatuck.

