

Event's name, attractions to change for West Chester's 'signature event'

By [Dave Greber](#), Staff Writer

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WEST CHESTER TWP. — New attractions and amenities could draw even more spectators to an already successful local music and food festival this summer.

Organizers of the former Union Centre Boulevard Bash — now named the Union Centre Boulevard Blast — have been busy recreating the event to become more of a regional draw, employing some best practices from similar showcases across the country.

The Blast will be Aug. 13-15.

Plans began to change for the festival early this year when the Union Centre Boulevard Merchants Association decided against having the Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber — which produces the annual Taste of Cincinnati and Oktoberfest Zinzinnati, among other events — run the festival as they have for the past six years.

Instead, the Merchants Association inked a deal with West Chester-based By Design, which will spearhead The Blast for the next three years.

“We told them (UCB merchants) if we were doing it, we would approach it differently,” said Festival Manager Hague Atkinson. “They liked the ideas that we had, so we now have it for the next three years.”

Among the first steps is establishing better communication with local businesses to participate in the event, Atkinson said.

“We are in constant communication with the merchants association,” he said. “For the first time in several years, they’re much more involved than in year’s past.”

While the festival’s footprint will remain largely the same — such as its location at The Square @ Union Centre, carnival rides, music, food and drink — the direction of The Blast will be directed at families, adults, teens and children with multiple activities happening at the same time, “sort of like what you’d see at a state fair,” Atkinson said.

“We have envisioned this event to be a regional destination festival where people will plan a trip to West Chester just to attend because it will have features that aren’t available anywhere else,” Atkinson said. “We’re trying to be different.”

Township Trustee Lee Wong said he appreciates the buy-in and the improved communication among planners and the local merchants association.

“The foundation has been set by the previous group,” he said. “This current group, they’re grabbing the torch and moving on. I’m optimistic it will do well. It’s something that will be community-oriented and run by the

people of West Chester. It's West Chester's signature event."

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