

\*\*\*For Immediate Release\*\*\*

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## 53rd Annual Independence Day Festival & Fireworks



California Center for the Arts, Escondido  
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**Escondido, CA – June 15, 2016** – Escondido’s annual Independence Day Festival & Fireworks has become a North County tradition, and for good reason. Each year, 25,000 festival-goers converge on the California Center for the Arts, Escondido (The Center) at Grape Day Park for the holiday festivities. The event is back for its 53rd year on Monday, July 4, 2016 with rockin’ live music, tasty treats, and games for all.

The day will commence with a special presentation by Escondido’s American Legion Post 149, VFW Post 1513, and DAV Chapter 70. This program honoring our nation’s veterans has begun the day’s festivities for many years. Once again, the Center’s National Anthem Singing Competition will discover a local singer whose rendition of “The Star-Spangled Banner” will be kicking off the day’s events.

Taking the stage after the American Legion is rockin’ live Latin music by the Manny Cepeda Orchestra Quartet. Next up is Hawaiin music by Ke’Ahi, and a hula performance by Halau Hula O Makalani Na Piliialoha. Lastly, The Jonathan Lee Band will offer a unique mixture of country and classic rock. After key words from the Center’s Executive Director Jerry VanLeeuwen and Escondido Mayor Sam Abed, the

crowd will be treated to the music of Camp Pendleton's finest musicians, the 1st Marine Division Band, who will lead us into a dazzling fireworks display.

Throughout the festival, a wealth of other activities will be going on around the Center's campus. The event's Fun & Games area will be located behind the Center's Museum. Free arts and crafts, face painting, and more—coordinated by the Center's Education Department—will take place from 4:00-8:00pm. Additionally, Escondido Recreation will be holding a number of contests in the same area. Their Watermelon Eating Contest, always a crowd favorite, is open to children, teens, and adults, and will take place from 5:30-6:30pm. Festival-goers can also visit the Escondido History Center, which will be free and open to the public from 4:00-7:00pm on July 4th. The YMCA Baton Twirlers, will take to the Depot Stage closer to dark (7:30-8:00pm) to showcase their amazing talents and flaming batons. As always, a number of food vendors will be offering tasty treats for purchase throughout the day.

As a special treat this year, the Center's Museum will be open from 4:00-8:00pm with FREE admission to our two current exhibitions: My Hero: Contemporary Art & Superhero Action and Unlocking Wonderland: The Exhibit. As part of this exciting exhibition, the Center will be hosting meet-and-greets with Alice, the Mad Hatter, Captain America, and Wonder Woman in our Fun & Games area from 4:30-8:00pm.

This event, with all of its music, art, and activities would not be possible without the generosity of its sponsors. The Linden Root Dickinson Foundation and the City of Escondido contributed to the success of this community celebration. The festival takes place on Monday, July 4, 2016 from 4:00-9:30PM. Please visit [artcenter.org](http://artcenter.org) for the full event schedule and details.

#### **About The California Center for the Arts, Escondido**

With a mission of bringing people together to discover, create and celebrate both the visual and performing arts, The Center is the cultural center of North San Diego County. The Center's unique campus includes a 1,523-seat concert hall, a 404-seat theater, a contemporary art museum, art and dance studios, and a full-service conference center with meeting and banquet facilities. The Center also runs an extensive education program and produces free community events, such as the Jazz Jam Sessions, Holiday Tree Lighting, Día de los Muertos, Independence Day, and First Wednesdays performances.

The Center is located at 340 N. Escondido Blvd. in Escondido. The Ticket Office can be reached at (800) 988-4253. Tickets can also be purchased online. To learn more, including performance dates, times and ticket information, visit [artcenter.org](http://artcenter.org).

Connect with the Center on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/theCCAIE](http://www.facebook.com/theCCAIE) or follow @theCCAIE on Twitter.

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