

HISPANIC

\$2.00

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COAST TO COAST

ILLINOIS

CHICAGO'S PAN-AMERICAN FESTIVAL

Chicago- An estimated crowd of 300,000 will turn out for Chicago's 5th annual Pan American Festival on August 4-6 at the city's Navy Pier. The summer celebration features the food, music and folklore of Hispanics living in the Chicago area.

The festival began as a way to bridge the gap between the different ethnic groups that make up Chicago's Hispanic population.

"The main reason I created the Pan American Festival was to get all the different Hispanic ethnic groups united in Chicago," says Henry Cardenas, president of Cardenas, Fernandez and Associates, Inc., the firm that promotes the event. "There had been Puerto Rican and Mexican festivals before, but never one that united the Hispanic masses. The festival is a way to get Hispanics together in a neutral part of the city."

"This is a quality festival," says Jesse G. Wilson, Executive Vice President of San Jose and Associates, Inc., a Chicago-based Spanish-language advertising agency whose clients participate in the festival. "The number of people who attend has increased over the years." The first Pan American Festival in 1985 attracted some 85,000 people, he said.

The wide variety of Hispanic musical talent at the festival provides something



Thousands gather each year at the Pan American Festival in Chicago.

for everyone's musical taste — from *Samba* to *Rancharro* to *Merengue* to Pop Soloists. The groups and individuals performing include: Luis Miguel, Eddie Santiago, Celia Cruz, La Sonora Dinamita, Los Angeles Negros, Menudo, Wilfrido Vargas, Lupita D' Alessio, Oscar D'Leon and Ana Gabriel.

Selected non-profit organizations, such as the Network for Youth Services, El Valor, Logan Square YMCA and Second-Generation Organization for Youth, participate in the festival to earn income. This opportunity allows the youths to gain job experience through the individual booth's they run, Cardenas says.

Some of the sponsors of the festival include Anheuser-Busch, Coca Cola of Chicago, WIND *La Tremenda*, Johnson Wax, The Chicago White Sox, AT&T, Budweiser and WOJO *Radio Ambiente*.

The success of Chicago's Pan American festival has led Cardenas, Fernandez and Associates, Inc., to develop Pan American festivals in other cities with large Hispanic populations, like Miami and New York. There will be a Pan American festival in Bay Side Park in Miami in November and most probably, a festival in New York in October, Cardenas says.

Ginie Lynch