

Balloon festival tickets on sale today

STAFF REPORT

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Continuing its growth as a global event, the 34th annual QuickChek New Jersey Festival of Ballooning in Association with PNC Bank will have a great deal of international flair as several new special-shaped balloons from several countries will take flight July 29 to 31.

But you don't have to go far to enjoy great savings as advance tickets go on sale at all 143 QuickChek markets throughout New Jersey, the Hudson Valley and Long Island starting today. Festival-goers can purchase advance tickets in stores and save 43 percent off the gate price.

Adding flavor to this Memorial Day sale, hungry buyers can also enjoy any 6-inch QuickChek sub for \$2.99.

"This summer is being brought to you by QuickChek," said Festival Executive Producer Howard Freeman. "And once again we're teaming up to offer our patrons great value. With our greatest ever lineup of special-shaped balloons and our incredible concert series, this year's festival is the place to be for summer fun."

"We are thrilled to

once again sponsor this great family festival and the biggest party of the summer," said QuickChek CEO Dean Durling, whose Whitehouse Station-based company is the exclusive retail outlet for the event, the largest hot air balloon and music festival in North America.

The three-day festival at Solberg Airport in Readington features the

spectacle of 100 sport and special-shaped hot air balloons from around the world taking to the skies over Hunterdon County countryside twice each day in mass ascensions.

New balloons include the QuickChek Farmer Pig, a 115-foot-tall, 440-pound balloon from São Paulo, Brazil; a pair of adorable 90-foot-tall penguins from the United Kingdom that kiss in mid-flight; an 85-foot-tall Pelican from Brazil; and the festival is unleashing a 75-foot-tall, 500-pound Brazilian piranha into the skies.

Returning favorites include the 5-story tall PNC American Flag balloon, the largest free-flying flag in the world; and the 110-foot-tall Unique Photo panda bear.

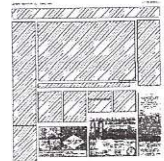
The festival's live concert series features '90s alt rockers Third

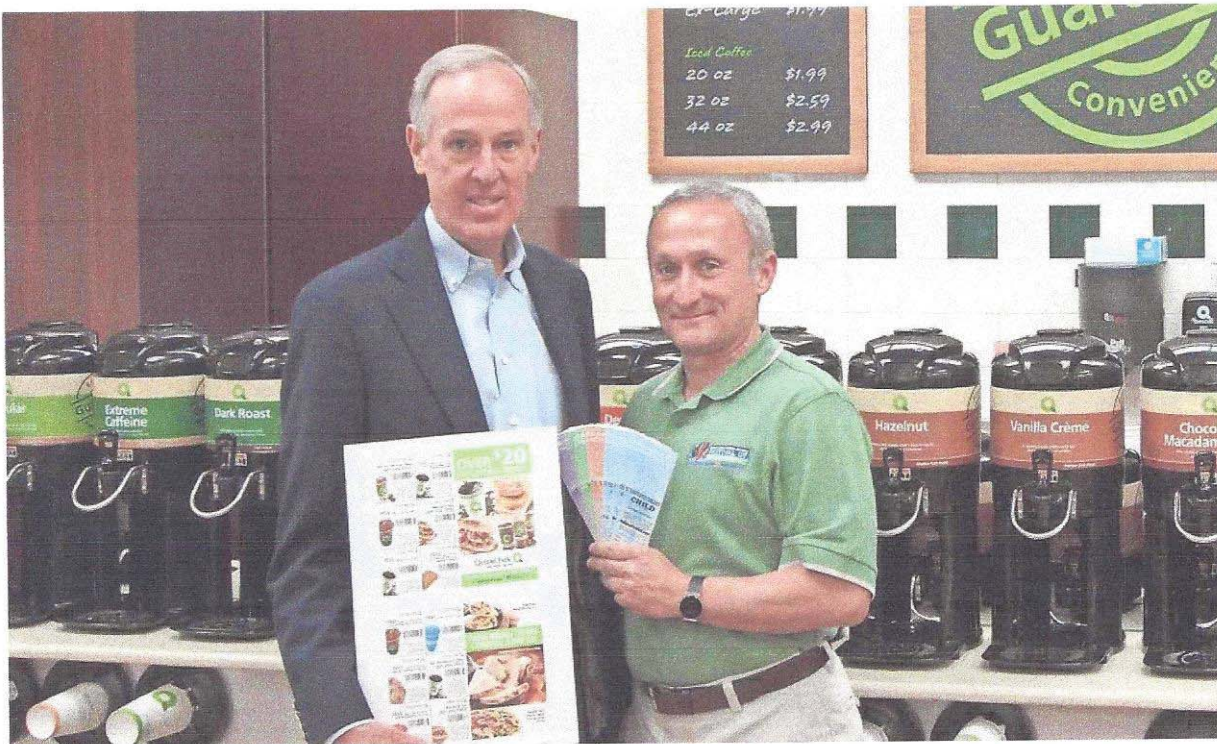
Eye Blind presented by PNC Bank on July 29; KC and The Sunshine Band presented by the New Jersey Lottery on July 30; The Girl and The Dreamcatcher featuring Disney's Dove Cameron & Ryan McCartan in the afternoon on July 30; and John Kay & Steppenwolf and Foghat performing on July 31.

Festival admission includes access to the daily mass hot air balloon ascensions; lawn seating for concerts; a fireworks extravaganza; a nighttime hot air balloon glow; death-defying aerial acts by Brian "The Human Fuse" Miser; children's amusement rides and entertainment in the Jeep Family Fun Center; exciting interactive exhibits; and access to hundreds of crafters and food vendors.

As part of the festival's and QuickChek's ongoing commitment to giving back to its communities, the event has raised more than \$2.55 million for local charities and nonprofit groups, including the Children's Miracle Network in the past 24 years.

To locate the nearest QuickChek store, visit www.quickchek.com; to learn more about this year's festival, visit www.balloonfestival.com





COURTESY OF QUICKCHEK

QuickChek CEO Dean Durling (left), with Festival Executive Producer Howard Freeman. This year's QuickChek New Jersey Festival of Ballooning is July 29 to 31 at Solberg Airport in Readington.