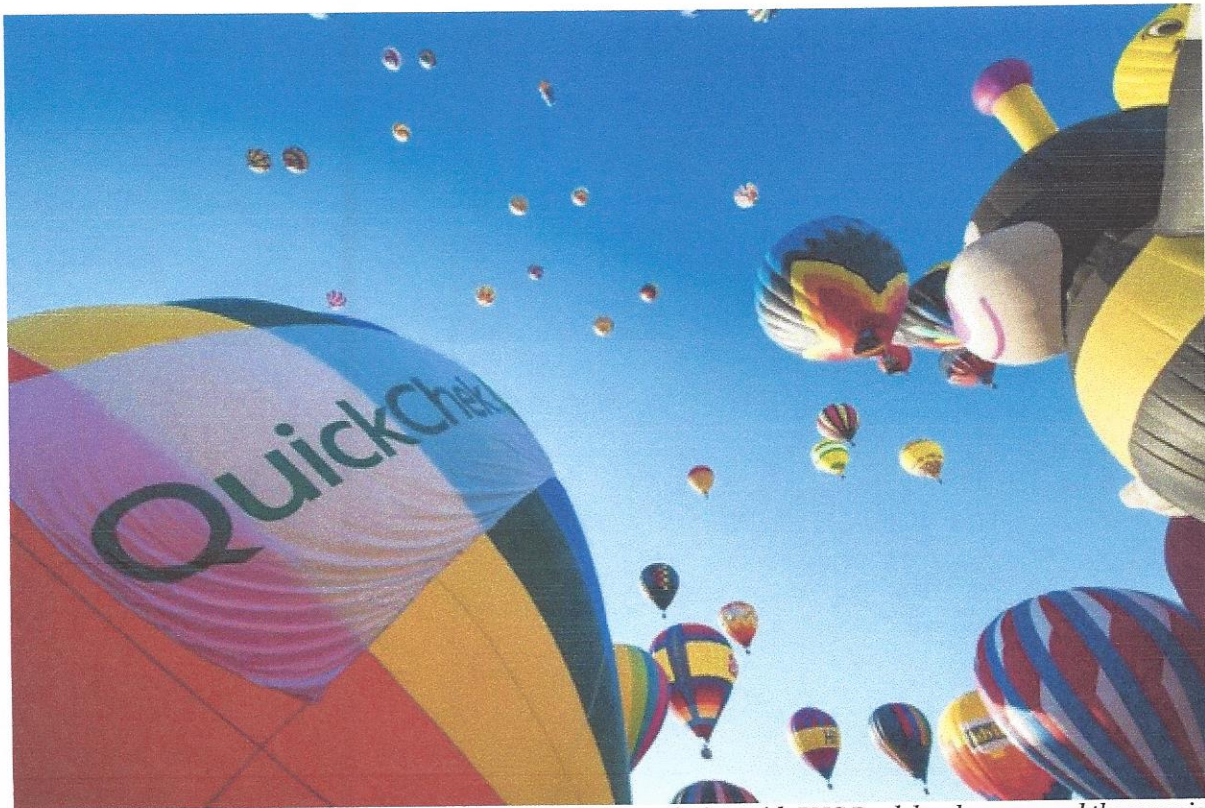


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## 36th annual QuickChek N.J. Festival of Ballooning slated for July 27-29



*The 36th annual QuickChek New Jersey Festival of Ballooning in association with PNC Bank has been named the premier family entertainment attraction in New Jersey. From twice a day mass ascensions of 100 hot air balloons to concerts to children's amusement rides, there's plenty to see and do. The three-day Festival, July 27-28-29, 2018 at Solberg Airport in Readington in Hunterdon County, features the rare opportunity to see the awe-inspiring spectacle of 100 sport and special shaped hot air balloons from around the world taking to the skies twice each day in mass ascensions over the scenic Central New Jersey countryside. (Courtesy photo)*

### By Community Bulletin

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Pop star Andy Grammer and the legendary Creedence Clearwater Revisited head the list of performers who will take the Progressive Stage at the largest event of its kind in the country.

Honored by the USA TODAY Network, the Festival offers 39 hours of affordable family entertainment including balloons taking off in the early morning and again in the early evening; a live concert series; a fireworks display; a nighttime balloon glow where the balloons are inflated and lit up like giant lanterns; death-defying stunts by human cannonball David "The Bullet" Smith; children's amusement rides and age-appropriate entertainment; exciting interactive exhibits and hundreds of crafters and food vendors.

"Whether you come every year, you've been in here in the past or have never come out before, this is the year you should be here," said Festival Executive Producer Howard Freeman. "We're very proud to present our greatest lineup of special shaped balloons and a great concert lineup with music for all ages. There is something for everyone and we're looking forward to launching the biggest party of the summer."

Perhaps no special shape balloon better represents the Festival than the new 120-foot-tall QuickChek Saxophone which represents the Festival's position as the largest summertime hot air balloon and music festival in North America.

New special shaped balloons also include the 85-foot-tall Queen's Guard balloon from England as the Festival pays tribute to the recent royal wedding; a 115-foot-tall bright blue puppy; a 75-foot-tall yellow bird and 75-foot-tall Rocket the Flying Squirrel cartoon character balloons.

2018 marks several milestones: the 225<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first manned hot air balloon flight in America in 1793; the 235<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first manned balloon flight in the world in 1783; and a 105-foot-tall Elvis special shaped balloon in honor of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the king of rock & roll's 1968 TV Comeback Special.

The Festival will once again honor America with the 5-story tall PNC American Flag balloon; created following 9/11, it is the world's largest free-flying American flag and has become an annual crowd favorite.

Other special shaped balloons include the 110-foot-tall Unique Photo panda, the 105-foot-tall Bimbo Bakeries bear, and an 80-foot-tall Pepsi football.

Best-selling children's recording artist Laurie Berkner performs in concert Friday, July 27 at 1:30 p.m. with Andy Grammer playing Friday night at 8:00 p.m. followed by a fireworks display.

Lifhouse performs Saturday night, July 28 at 8:00 p.m. in conjunction with the nighttime hot air balloon glow. Creedence Clearwater Revisited performs Sunday, July 29 at 3:00 p.m.

More than 1,500 people will take a ride in a balloon at the Festival; you can too!

Advance tickets are available at all QuickChek stores, by calling 1-800-HOT-AIR9 or online at [www.balloonfestival.com](http://www.balloonfestival.com).