

Lake Race return prompts focus on transportation

In a little more than four months, The Strip in Lake Ozark will be alive with the sights and sounds of boat racing as the Offshore Powerboat Association will hold one of its races here June 3-5.

Plans are continuing to develop, but the OPA website shows Lake Ozark on its lengthy schedule of boat racing. One thing for sure, the race will be returning to Lake Ozark after a two-year absence. The race moved to the 7-mile two years ago after host-location Beaver’s at the Dam closed, and then the threat of COVID-19 forced organizers to cancel last year.

Now, Beaver’s has been sold and is expected to reopen this spring as Neon Taco. In addition, a local racing enthusiast and marine owner fronted funds to bring the OPA race here.

Parking and transportation issues have plagued special events such as Meet and Greet, car shows, parades, Hot Summer Nights. A lack of public



parking has been a concern among business owners for several years as more events have attracted more people.

No Special Event Application has been received by the City of Lake Ozark yet, but Mayor Gerry Murawski reported to the board of aldermen this week that a Lake Ozark restaurant owner has stepped forward with plans to help alleviate some of the problem during the boat race and give residents and visitors easier access to locations on The Strip. Two 14-person golf carts will shuttle people

back and forth from near Christ the King Lutheran Church to Bagnell Dam.

Mayor Murawski also reported that The Strip Express will be coming back for the boat race – and possibly other events on The Strip. At least for the race, the multi-passenger bus will transport passengers from The Strip area to lodging facilities in Lake Ozark and Osage Beach.

“We will be the only city at the lake to have a transportation system, although it’s unique,” the mayor said.