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## CROWD CONTROL KINGS

### *New Orleans Excels at Handling Massive Events and Large Crowds*

**New Orleans, LA** — New Orleans shines in its ability to peacefully manage large events and the enormous crowds they attract. In fact, other cities often send representatives to New Orleans to study the crowd control strategies and techniques developed here.

Mardi Gras is the city's single biggest event, bringing as many as one million revelers to the streets annually. Since the holiday has been celebrated in New Orleans for centuries, both citizens and the police are experienced in making the festivities run smoothly. "New Orleans has a history of openness," says Sgt. Joe Narcisse, public information officer for the New Orleans Police Department (NOPD). "The public understands what to expect, and first-time visitors take cues from the regulars. On our end, we make sure we're well prepared and properly equipped."

"Another reason Mardi Gras is successful is because the entire city buys into it," continues Sgt. Narcisse. "The fire department, the streets department, the visitors bureau, hotels, the press, and more—all these different entities play their parts and work together."

With New Orleans being so adept at coordinating Mardi Gras, it naturally follows that the city skillfully handles the crowds at large sporting and music events as well. The city has hosted nine Super Bowls since the '70s and four Final Fours since the '80s in addition to numerous high-profile bowl games over the decades. The newly renovated Superdome can hold upwards of 70,000 spectators, and every large football or basketball event brings tens of thousands of extra fans who come to celebrate in the French Quarter and throughout the city.

The Jazz and Heritage Festival is the New Orleans' largest music event, attracting hundreds of thousands of music fans every year. The French Quarter Festival, the Essence Music Festival, and the Voodoo Music Experience also draw large crowds annually.

Several other U.S. cities have tried to stage their own versions of Mardi Gras but were not successful. Mardi Gras events in Philadelphia, Austin, Fresno, and Seattle were discontinued or scaled back because of public disturbances in 2001.

Meanwhile, other cities turn to New Orleans to learn about handling large crowds. Sgt. Narcisse says police departments frequently visit the NOPD during Mardi Gras to learn from the "parade professionals." In addition, he comments on the many local businesses that manufacture crowd control supplies like barriers. "That market was sparked here. A lot of other cities have picked up on our resources."

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