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# Kings Island schedules first official gay-pride day

Associated Press

CINCINNATI — The gay community in Cincinnati has been holding unofficial gay-pride days at Paramount's Kings Island for 13 years. Now, the amusement park has made it official.

The Gay and Lesbian Community Center of Greater Cincinnati has arranged for exclusive access to the park from 5 to 11 p.m. Sept. 19.

"Kings Island approached the community center and offered us the opportunity to do this," said Eric Hunter, spokesman for the center. "It's the same opportunity they offer Procter & Gamble or Cincinnati Milacron or anybody else."

Hunter said the event has been advertised in gay publications throughout the Midwest and he expects 3,000 to 5,000 people to attend.

Kings Island always has had a policy of no discrimination, spokeswoman Lauren Green-Caldwell said.

"We offer equal admission to anybody who buys a ticket. . . . Likewise, we offer our facilities to groups in an equal manner," she said.

There are six other such group events this year, all in September or October.

The unofficial gay-pride events at Kings Island have been controversial.

Some conservative or religious groups have objected that the park, which caters to families, would allow such an event. They have complained that the general community should be warned when such a day is planned.

Hunter said the community center might hold an official gay-pride day every year, and that it might replace the unofficial June event.