By Peter Covino
Lifestyles Editor

From barbecue to Florida themed desserts, this years Kowtown Festival will offer something for every taste.

Kissimmee Main Street presents the 2013 Kowtown Festival, which also is a celebration of the city's 130th birthday, Saturday, March 16, at Toho Square.

"We expect 3,000 to 5,000 people to show for up for the festival," said Kayla Burton, event coordinator for Kissimmee Main Street.

This year's highlights include the second edition of the Kowtown Barbecue Competition, which will feature competitors from all over Central Florida. They will compete in four meat categories (chicken, pork, ribs and brisket) as well as a barbecue sauce category and baked beans category.

Entry fee for all four meat categories is $200. The public is invited to vote for the Sedano's People's Choice Award category where participants can taste and vote for their favorite barbecue. Taster tickets will be available for purchase at the information table.

Burton said it wasn't too late to enter the competition, which features $5,000 in cash and prizes. The dessert competition is a new addition to the event.

Kissimmee Main Street is looking for some desserts with a Florida theme. The Florida theme is a tie-in with the 500th anniversary of the discovery of Florida by Spanish explorers.

There aren't too many rules for the dessert contest, Burton said, except all entries must have a

Florida theme.

The entry fee is $10 per dessert and contestants must provide 20 servings of dessert.

The first-place winner gets $50. Second and third place receive ribbons.

After the judging is finished, tasting tickets will be available for purchase to the public.

The submission time for desserts is 1:30 p.m. at the Toho Square information booth.

For more information about either the dessert or barbecue competition, call Kissimmee Main Street at 407-846-4643 or go to www.kissimmeemainstreet.com for entry forms.

Other events at the festival include the hot dog eating contest sponsored by Willy's Wieners. Contestants will race to see who can finish the most hotdogs in two minutes. Two-time champion, Craig Holland will be back to compete. Sign-up for the contest is at Willy's Wieners located in downtown Kissimmee.

The public is invited to vote for the Sedano's People's Choice Award category where participants can taste and vote for their favorite barbecue. Taster tickets will be available for purchase at the information table.

Yuengling Lager will be available for purchase throughout the event as well as VIP Area tickets for $15, which features Yuengling specialty beer and a private seating section in the shade next to the stage, where guests can meet the bands.

Central Florida bands Haywire and the Greg Warren Band will perform throughout the day.

The festivities begin at 11 a.m.

The public is invited to sing “Happy Birthday to You” to Kissimmee at 2 p.m. and receive a complimentary piece of birthday cake courtesy of the Yum Yum Cupcake Truck.

Other event highlights include craft and food vendors and a kid’s zone.

Free street parking is available as well as the city and county parking lots.