

# FESTIVAL HAS THE BLUES

By **MIKE BARRIS**  
*Special to the Press*

**G**etting hit by a downpour at some point over the weekend has become a tradition at the Red Bank Jazz & Blues Festival, the 22nd annual edition of which begins Friday. But a rain of financial trouble is threatening its very survival.

With costs soaring, corporate sponsorships declining and economic pressures squeezing the nonprofit Jersey Shore Jazz & Blues Foundation, the free three-day music treat by the Navesink could be cut back or even canceled next year, co-chairman Dennis Eschbach said.

The festival has been promoted for years as the largest free event of its kind in the Northeast; this year, it fea-

tures more than 40 acts on three stages.

Due to the severity of the financial crunch, visitors to the Marine Park site will be urged to make a donation to help cover the festival's costs — a step that has never been taken before.

"We're known for our good music and good sound," Eschbach said in an interview. But "we're nonprofit and we can't afford to go into debt running a free festival."

The festival's tab is roughly \$200,000 — which the foundation covers solely

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## **RED BANK JAZZ & BLUES FESTIVAL**

Marine Park, Red Bank ■ Featuring 40-plus acts on three stages ■ 5-10 p.m. Friday, noon-10 p.m. Saturday; noon-6 p.m. June 1

**Greg Piccolo (top) and Matt O'Ree (left) are among the musicians performing at this year's Red Bank Jazz & Blues Festival.**

JERSEY SHORE JAZZ & BLUES FOUNDATION

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