

Pioneer Days coming to Weston after 2-year break

By Jeff Petersen
For Go! Magazine

WESTON — For 130 years, Weston has celebrated its roots at the base of the Blue Mountains with the annual Pioneer Days Picnic and Celebration.

This year's festivities will take place June 3-5 after a two-year break for COVID-19. The town of 650 residents will put out the welcome mat for visitors with promises of fun for all ages.

"At the awards banquet two weeks ago we had a very big turnout," said Greg Phillips, coordinator of Pioneer Days. "I think people are tired of masks and COVID-19 and ready to get out and celebrate. I expect we'll have a big turnout for this year's Pioneer Days."

Sponsored and coordinated by the Umatilla County Pioneers Association, the event kicks off



East Oregonian/File Photo
Children participate in a parade during the 2016 Umatilla County Pioneer Days Picnic. This year's event is June 3-5 in Weston.

Friday evening, June 3, with the queen coronation of Granela Thompson, a Weston native, professional musician, community leader and schoolteacher. Also introduced will be the parade grand marshal, Jesse Thompson, Granela's husband, a community leader in his own right who has been instrumental in grooming the Tollgate-area snowmobile trails for years. The Thompsons live on a

century farm and are prominent in the community, Phillips said.

That event will begin at 6 p.m. at the Weston Memorial Hall.

A full day of activities is planned for Saturday, June 4, most held at Charles Elliott Memorial Park. The day starts with a hearty Fireman's Breakfast served from 6-10 a.m.

Lineup for the Pioneer Days parade starts at 9 a.m. with the parade rolling out at 10 a.m. along Water Street. This year,

the children's and adults' parade will be wrapped into one, with the kids parade returning as a separate entity next year, Phillips said. An announcer's stand will be set up on the corner of Main and Water streets.

There won't be a car show this year, nor will there be a walking tour of Weston's historical buildings.

"After two years off for COVID, we wanted to pare the event down this year and really focus on the events we can offer," Phillips said.

Following the parade at 11 a.m., the Pioneer Picnic begins featuring a menu of barbecue beef, coleslaw, corn on the cob and soft drinks.

Vendor booths will feature such things as face painting, and art creators, including makers of wooden toys and demonstrations of old-time crafts, will be on hand. Concession stands will be set up with a variety of options, including

ice cream and snacks, and games for all ages such as a dunk tank and sack races will be played.

On the stage to entertain during the picnic will be the Coyote Howler String Band featuring Dan Emert.

"They are absolutely excellent," Phillips said. "We are very lucky to get them."

The day will conclude with an alumni dinner for all those who attended Weston Union High School or Weston-McEwen High School, starting at 6 p.m. at Weston Memorial Hall. The most senior graduate in the system, Duane Warner, who graduated from Weston Union High School in 1942, will receive special recognition at the event.

For those looking for bargains, yard sales will be happening throughout town from Friday through Sunday. You might even find an antique from the good old days.

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