



EMILY MENTZER/Itemizer-Observer

The Monmouth-Independence YMCA and White's Collision's patriotic float takes the eye of the judges, who awarded their efforts naming it the Most Patriotic.

The community celebrates America's birthday in red, white and blue

Photos by Lukas Eggen, Jolene Guzman and Emily Mentzer
The Itemizer-Observer

POLK COUNTY — Celebrations throughout the county were packed full with fun. Lots of water — from squirt guns to misters, garden hoses — were used to keep both spectators and participants cooled off during the unusually warm and dry Fourth of July.

Spirits stayed up in spite of the heat, with plenty of philanthropy going around, from Sojourn International giving away free hot dogs while raising money for a local church, to The Grove Community Church handing out free cold water.

Friday and Saturday night, the sky lit up from Falls City to Dallas to Independence, like a giant, sparkling candle on America's birthday cake.

For more photos: www.polkio.com.



LUKAS EGGEN/Itemizer-Observer

Diane Mee (center) of Lake House BBQ celebrates being named Grand Champion of Freedomfest's BBQ Throwdown in Dallas.



JOLENE GUZMAN/Itemizer-Observer

Georgie Dayton, left, of Falls City makes cotton candy during Falls City's July 3 celebrations Friday. Dayton was working in the Falls City Alliance booth, which also offered popular snow cones, during the festivities.



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People of all ages put on their best patriotic gear and participate in the Monmouth Independence Rotary Club Grand Parade.



LUKAS EGGEN/Itemizer-Observer

Britt Saxon takes off at the start of the Monmouth-Independence Mini-Marathon,



JOLENE GUZMAN/Itemizer-Observer

A Falls City Fire Department truck blasts the crowd with cold water during Falls City's July 3 parade on Main Street.

Freedomfest BBQ Throwdown Results

The following entries received awards in the Dallas Freedomfest BBQ Throwdown:

- **Pork:** UFF-DA-Q.
- **Brisket:** Duellin' J's.
- **Chicken:** UFF-DA-Q.
- **Ribs:** Jumptown BBQ.
- **Grand Champion:** Lake House BBQ.

Rotary Grand Parade Results for 2015

The following entries received awards in the 2015 Rotary Grand Parade. The Monmouth-Independence Rotary Club thanks all participants and volunteers who made this year's parade a wonderful success.

Listed below are the award categories:

- **Most Patriotic Awards:** YMCA/White's Collision entry and Cub and Boy Scout Troop 38.
- **Youth Entry:** first place, Central FFA; second place, Oregon Child Develop Coalition; third place, Central Martial Arts.
- **Youth Equestrian:** first place, PCL/Salt Creek Miniatures; second place, Princess Ponies.
- **Equestrian Entry:** first place, Polk County Posse; second place, Polk County Saddle-ites.
- **Best Float:** first place, IM Community Fiesta; second place, Salem Wood Reclamation/Salvage; third place (tie): Love Reins Ranch; Riverplace Apartments and Homes.
- **Most Effort in Preparation:** first place, OSU Polk County Master Gardeners; second place, Oregon Child Development Coalition; third place, Independence Cinema.
- **Highway Trucks:** first place, Les Schwab; second place, Van Dyke Trucking; third place, Monmouth Power and Light.
- **Farm Equipment:** first place, McCarthy Farms; second place, Dave and Lindy Withers.
- **Modern Vehicle:** first place, Red Thunderbird, driving Miss Marion-Polk County; second place, 2013 Juke for Cherry City; third place, Red Corvette — Larry Brown.
- **Antique Vehicle:** first place, 1915 Ford — Michael Henrich; second place, WWII Jeep — John Sanders; third place, WWII Jeep — Fred Waters.
- **Best Band:** Tie for first place: Central High School Band; WOU Drumline; second place, Wind Dancers; third place, Steve Cannistraci.
- **Commercial Entry:** first place, Central Martial Arts; second place: Love Reins; third place, Zamora Auto.
- **Special Interest Cars:** first place, 26 Ford Model T — Shane Sumptions; second place, 1937 Chevrolet Master — Dave and Arty Thiel; third place (tie): 1931 Model A — Chris and Cooke Feskens; 1934 3 — Window Coupe — Larry Brown.