

Falls City Third of July festival called off

Lack of volunteers, donations means 20-year-old Independence Day tradition takes a break

By Jolene Guzman
The Itemizer-Observer

FALLS CITY — July 3, the day Falls City has traditionally celebrated Independence Day, may not be as festive this year.

At least one part of the town's celebration has been canceled already.

"The fireworks will not be happening this year," said Councilor Jenn Drill at a recent Falls City City Council meeting. "The fire department, Chief (Bob) Young, has decided that they will not be taking place this year here in Falls City. Maybe next year, but that is not a done deal."

The fire department has struggled in recent years to cover the cost of putting on the show as donations have dropped off and prices have increased.

Young said that was the deciding factor in the decision to cancel this year's show.

"The biggest problem is it is going to cost us close to



JOLENE GUZMAN/Itemizer-Observer file

Falls City annual Third of July celebrations have been called off this year for lack of volunteers and donations. The Falls City Fire Department cannot fund the fireworks.

\$11,000 to \$12,000," Young said, noting that would pay for the show, insurance and security. "We are down to \$6,000 in our savings. We

couldn't even pay for this year's show."

Young said the choice was between keeping the fireworks tradition going

and completing necessary training and dealing with an increased call load.

"There are lots of issues, and this isn't fitting in any-

more," he said. "It's nobody's fault, and it was mainly a financial decision. We just can't afford it anymore."

Young said he hasn't ruled out the show coming back, but that would require stronger support from the community.

In the last few years, donations haven't topped \$3,000.

"I wish we could've kept it going," Young said. "We've been doing it for 20 years. It's a great show."

Falls City Mayor Terry Ungricht said no one has stepped forward to take over other parts of the celebration, the parade and hometown carnival that takes place earlier in the day leading up to the fireworks show.

While it's not impossible to put on a festival at the last minute — it was done last year — he said planning would be difficult.

Ungricht added with the city staff being so short-handed, the city needs another person or organization to take over.

School: Sept. is the goal

Continued from Page 16A

"It's the law," she said. "We have to do certain things. I get it, but it doesn't make it any less frustrating, though."

Last week, at Ainsworth's suggestion, school board members met with its engineers, and county public works, building, community development departments to sort out the remaining issues.

Christensen said the meeting was a good step forward.

The new plot plan, the fourth, will be completed this week, and Christensen wants to schedule another group meeting to have every-one sign off.

He wants to have the site ready to open the school's 10th year in its new home.

Wollenweber said that goal is realistic only if the county signs off on plans soon.

"If they don't approve the plans in the next week, there won't be enough time," she said.

MEMORIAL DAY EVENTS

Itemizer-Observer staff report

Polk County will celebrate Memorial Day with a number of events Monday. Community members are welcome to attend any of the ceremonies scheduled in honor of Memorial Day.

DALLAS

Dallas American Legion Post No. 20 and American Legion Auxiliary Unit No. 20 hosts the "Avenue of Flags" ceremony at Dallas Cemetery, 2065 Fairview Ave., at 11 a.m. on Monday. About 700 flags will line the corridors of the cemetery in honor of those who served.

The guest speaker for the event is House District 20 Rep. Paul Evans. Dallas Mayor Brian Dalton will provide a welcome speech and American Legion Post No. 20 Dave Christian will read the list of the fallen added this year.

Dennis Johnson, the event coordinator, said it's tentative and weather-dependent, but a fly-over is scheduled to take place during the Avenue of Flag ceremony.

Boy Scout Troop 228 will raise the flag, and the Dallas High School choir will perform "America the Beautiful." American Legion Auxiliary Unit chaplain will give the invocation and American Legion Post chaplain will offer the benediction.

"It's going to be about an hour-long program," Johnson said. More volunteers are needed to help post the flags at the cemetery on Thursday, starting at 9:30 a.m.

For more information or to volunteer, contact Johnson at 503-623-3727 or email: drdblj@q.com.

INDEPENDENCE

The 23rd annual Memorial Day Aviator Memorial Tribute will be from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Monday at the Independence State Airport, 4905 Airport Road, Independence.

The tribute honors aviators who have taken their last flight. The event begins with a fly-over. House District 20 Rep. Paul Evans will provide a quick welcome.

Boy Scout Troop 38 will lower the flags to half-staff and later will lead the Pledge of Allegiance. Steven Springer will sing the national anthem.

Invocation will be by Rev. Michael Parks from First Baptist Church. Matthew Mass, state airports manager, will speak.



JOLENE GUZMAN/Itemizer-Observer file

Volunteers set up Avenue of Flags in Dallas Cemetery.

Kathleen Disney, assistant director of vocational services for Goodwill and a former naval aviator, will provide the tribute to pilots.

The Civil Air Patrol Cadets will place the Pilot Memorial Wreath, provided by Oregon Pines Chapter 99's.

Congressman Kurt Shrader, Deputy Cmdr. Paul Gilman and Civil Air Patrol Cadets will present flags to survivors.

Robert "Scooter" Reid IV will present Taps.

The event will close with a Missing Man Formation fly-over performed by Dennis Krummel, flight leader, Scott Savage, Denny Jackson and Gary Brown.

A picnic lunch offered by the Boy Scouts of America will follow from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. for a suggested donation of \$5. Ice cream sandwiches will be available from Oregon Pines Chapter 99's.

From 11:30 a.m. until 3 p.m., aircraft will be on display.

Parking is at the Marquis Spa parking lot. Shuttle service is provided.

GRAND RONDE

The 14th annual Grand Ronde Memorial Day observance will start Monday at 1 p.m. at the West Valley Veterans Me-

morial on the Grand Ronde Tribal Campus, 9615 Grand Ronde Road, between highways 18 and 22, west of Spirit Mountain Casino.

Purple Heart recipient U.S. Army Sgt. Joel Dulashanti will be the keynote speaker at this year's ceremony.

The West Valley Veterans Memorial features four black columns representing the major branches of the Armed Forces: Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines.

The names of tribal and nontribal residents from the West Valley area communities of Sheridan, Willamina and Grand Ronde who have served in the military are etched into the columns each year.

This year, 11 new names will be added — including two World War I veterans — and those veterans will be honored on Memorial Day. The 2015 additions will bring the total number of names to 2,325.

For more information: 971-241-3313.

MONMOUTH

Western Oregon University Veteran Success Center and WOU Students Veterans of America will host a Memorial Day Banquet at 5 p.m. on Tuesday at Werner University Center, 345 Monmouth Ave. N., Monmouth.

The groups are hosting a formal dinner to recognize the sacrifice of those who served.

The three-course dinner will serve chicken bruschetta, a potato side, salad and bread, and a dessert. Vegetarian options are available by request.

Each ticket comes with two drink tickets for either wine from Redgate Vineyard or Ankeny Vineyard, or an American Amber Ale from Rogue Ales & Spirits beer. Water and lemonade also will be served.

Rep. Paul Evans is the guest speaker for the evening. There will be a ceremony for both the colors and a remembrance of the fallen. Western Oregon University jazz band students will perform. Taps will play to conclude the ceremony. Tickets will be \$5 and can be purchased in the Veteran Success Center on campus.

RSVPs are required. Contact Andrew Holbert @ Holberta@wou.edu or 502-838-9246.



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