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Falls City joins the party

By Jolene Guzman
The Itemizer-Observer

FALLS CITY — Falls City will have an Independence Day celebration after all, except it will be on July 2 instead of the traditional date of July 3.

The Boondocks co-owner Laura Britton jumped in at the last minute to coordinate a parade and community potluck starting at noon.

"The city needed someone to step up to do it, and no one was stepping up, so I decided to do it," Britton said.

The parade will follow the same route as in previous years and will disperse at North Main and Bridge streets.

The Boondocks has applications available for those who want to participate in the parade.

At 1 p.m., Falls City residents are invited to a potluck at Fay Wilson Park, aka Lower Park, along the Little Luckiamute River.

The Boondocks and the city of Falls City are providing hot dogs, hamburgers and cotton candy. Residents are asked to bring a dish to share.

The grill master for the afternoon is Falls City Mayor Terry Ungricht.

At 2 p.m., Britton will present a trophy to the best in show parade entry.

Falls City's annual Third of July activities were canceled this year, as the fire department didn't have the funds to put on the fireworks show.

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JOLENE GUZMAN/Itemizer-Observer

Using fireworks inappropriately can lead to increase risks of fire or injuries.

SAFETY FIRST

Follow instructions on fireworks to avoid injury, fire

By Jolene Guzman
The Itemizer-Observer

DALLAS — Mateasa Bathky saw it happen right outside the TNT fireworks stand in the Anytime Fitness parking lot off East Ellendale in Dallas.

Customers decided to put on a fireworks show in the parking lot, thinking it was a big and safe enough area.

It would have been, except for one detail: the dry grass bordering the parking lot. A spark from one of the fountain fireworks flew into the grass and lit it on fire.

"All it took was a tiny spark, even though they were 10 feet away from the grass," she said.

"Fountain" fireworks — those that send a cascade of colorful sparks in the air — estimate the height and distance the sparks will travel on the box. Bathky advises

Did you know?

- In 2015, there were 227 reported fireworks-related fires in Oregon, resulting in 28 injuries and more than \$423,000 in property damage.
- During 2011 through 2015, there were 924 reported fireworks-related fires in Oregon resulting in one death, 161 civilian injuries, and more than \$2.7 million in property damage.

For more information: www.oregon.gov/OSP/SFM/pages/licensing_fireworks_home.aspx#Educational_Materials.

— Source: Oregon State Fire Marshal's Office

people to leave a little extra room just to be safe.

"They always go higher than it says," she said.

Bathky's story is a good reminder of how easily a July Fourth tradition can turn from fun to flammable.

She said people should read directions on fireworks carefully and not be tempted to improvise.

Bathky said more than a few customers have as-

sumed the stick on "rocket" fireworks is a handle, like that on sparklers.

"It (the directions) clearly says 'stick in the ground,'" she said. "But people say, 'There's a giant stick. It must be for me to hold.'"

No, it isn't, Bathky said, and if used that way, the result would be painful as the rocket fires sparks from the top and bottom.

Bathky added it's good to

keep a source of water around in case something does go awry.

The Oregon State Fire Marshal's Office (OSFM) agrees, and offers an easy-to-remember four-step fireworks safety checklist, "The Four B's."

- Be prepared before lighting fireworks: Keep water available by using a garden hose or bucket.

- Be safe when lighting fireworks: Keep children and pets away from fireworks.

- Be responsible after lighting fireworks: Never relight a dud. Wait 15 to 20 minutes then soak it in a bucket of water before disposal.

- Be aware: Use only legal fireworks and use them only in legal places.

OSFM officials also warn people to keep their celebrations legal.

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IN YOUR TOWN

DALLAS
New business offers music lessons.
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City council, school board to discuss future of Wagner Library.
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INDEPENDENCE
Chamber Ambassador program provides fun networking.
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Monmouth Fitness has new ownership and same feel.
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SPORTS
Central junior dies in swimming accident.
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POLK COUNTY
County remains on watch list for state.
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Dallas puts out fire quickly

Itemizer-Observer staff report
DALLAS — Dallas Fire extinguished a house fire on Monday morning in less than 15 minutes.

Responders received a call at 9:59 a.m. on reports of a fire in the 1500 block of Hill Street.

All occupants in the house evacuated prior to firefighters' arrival.

Once on scene, responders extinguished the small kitchen fire, and the occupants were able to return home.

The cause was a suspected cooking fire, according to April Welsh of the Dallas Fire Department.

"We would urge people to just be careful of the placement of items in your kitchen next to your stove top and to make sure burners are turned off," Welsh said.

Working smoke detectors are also key in being alerted to a fire and a person's ability to evacuate safely, Welsh said.

"This home's smoke detectors were active," she said. "They did their job and alerted people. Checking smoke detectors on a regular basis and replacing the batteries as needed is important. Working smoke detectors save lives."

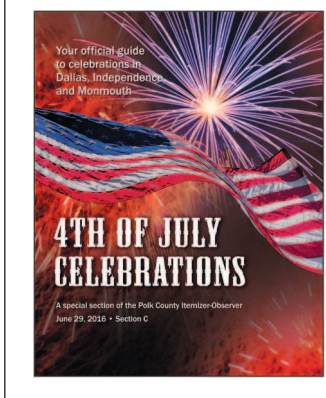
Get ready for a birthday bash, America

By Emily Mentzer
The Itemizer-Observer

POLK COUNTY — The smell of freshly spun cotton candy, roasting corn, sunscreen and sulfur can only mean one thing: It's time to celebrate America's birthday, and nobody does it better than Polk County.

Whether you prefer a more laid-back atmosphere or the excitement of adrenaline-rushing carnival rides, one of our cities will have something for you.

Celebrations kick off Friday night in Independence Riverview Park with a showing of "Jurassic World." Many food trucks also will be open Friday night, so grab a blanket and get ready to enjoy a



Inside ... See Section C

For a complete schedule of all the Fourth of July celebrations in Dallas, Independence and Monmouth.

Alcohol, fireworks and pets are not allowed in Independence Riverview Park during Western Days. Please leave those things home.

dinosaur movie of epic proportions — picnic optional.

Don't forget to brave the carnival rides on Friday for only \$1.

Saturday, festivities continue in Independence with the annual Hometown Celebration, a time set aside for

locals to come out and enjoy the parks — and an evening fireworks display — without fighting the crowds of tens of thousands that gather there for the Fourth.

Monmouth's new Art in the Park festivities open at noon, with a Community Art Show

at its new home in the fire hall across from Main Street Park on Warren Street, and arts and crafts for children.

Three bands will take the new stage at the amphitheater at Main Street Park throughout the day on Saturday, all locals.

Sunday, you'll have a choice between Monmouth and Independence. With the cities so close together, it isn't difficult to explore all they have to offer. Church services will open the festivals in both locales, followed by concerts and activities.

In Monmouth, the Willamette Valley Concert Band will play its patriotic concert Sunday night. In Independence, the band Romance will fill the air with

Latino beats.

The evening wraps up in Independence with a showing of "McFarland, USA."

Fortunately, Falls City residents pulled together at the last minute and will host a parade on Saturday.

Monday, something is going on in Dallas, Independence and Monmouth.

From the Polk County Firefighters Breakfast in Independence, to the Mini Marathon in Monmouth, followed by the children's parade and the start of the Monmouth Independence Rotary Grand Parade — which finishes at Riverview Park — the morning is packed full with events.

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THE NEXT 7 DAYS PLANNING FOR YOUR WEEK

wed	thu	fri	sat	sun	mon	tue
Looking to tap into your artistic side? Check out Painting, Canvas and Cocktails at The Boondocks in Falls City. 7 p.m. \$30.	Find your latest treasure at the Polk County Bounty Market on the Academy Building lawn. 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Free.	Let the Fourth of July fun begin! Check out a free showing of "Jurassic World" at Riverview Park. 9:30 p.m. Free.	Looking to avoid the Independence Day crowds? Check out the Hometown Celebration fireworks display. 10 p.m.	The Willamette Valley Concert Band performs at the amphitheater in Monmouth for a fun patriotic concert. 6:30 p.m. Free.	Happy birthday, America! Dallas, Independence and Monmouth all offer Fourth of July festivities all day long. See Section C.	Feeling generous? You can donate blood at the American Red Cross blood drive at Western Oregon. 10 a.m.-3 p.m.
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