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Weekend brings no major incidents for first responders

By Emily Mentzer
The Itemizer-Observer

POLK COUNTY — While the weekend was packed with live concerts, street performers, food trucks, beer and wine gardens, culminating in the big event — the Great American Eclipse — for law enforcement, it was mostly business as usual.

Sheriff Mark Garton credited that to the communication between agencies prior to the event.

“If we didn’t plan well enough, it could have gone really bad,” Garton said. “Everyone was really guessing in our planning stages. A good thing is all the different agencies — public safety, the hospital, vineyards, the farming community — we had meetings often for the last six to eight months.”

Dallas saw a few incidents, said Dallas Police Lt. Jerry Mott.

“We had one significant domestic violence incident involving a gun where the suspect fought police,” Mott said. “He had been drinking and carrying the gun concealed at the event downtown, but the actual call and arrest came after he drank some more at home.”

A couple people were warned about using marijuana in public. Others were encouraged to leave the event safely when they were intoxicated and becoming disorderly. A few people were arrested for driving under the influence of intoxicants, but Mott said those were not necessarily related to the Dallas Eclipse Celebration on the Square.

“We had an unconfirmed report of men urinating on a business across from a bar and exposing (themselves) to passing females,” Mott said. “No urine was present when officers arrived. No one exposing themselves, either.”

Some girls found a “significant amount of money” and turned it into police, Mott said.

“If the owner isn’t found, they will get to keep it,” he said.

At one point, officers left the event in downtown to look for a small child who went missing, Mott said.

“An officer found him sleeping in a closet at home,” he said.

Overall, Mott said the incidents encountered over the weekend were “not a lot of problems.”

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Background photos by ROGER HARNACK and JEFF MENTZER
Polk County Courthouse by DAVID ROSEN

For more Eclipse coverage, see Pages 6A and 7A.

Lifelong dream realized at Illahe Vineyards

Eclipse chasers find joy, delight in Great American Eclipse viewing party in Polk

By Jolene Guzman
The Itemizer-Observer

DALLAS — At about 9:25 a.m., Lisa Hoople looked up at the sun shortly after the Great American Eclipse began at Illahe Vineyards in Dallas.

“It’s starting to really shape up as the moon now,” she said.

Hoople, from Portland, watched the eclipse with her husband, James Hoople, and Carrie De Graaf, who visited them from Michigan just for this occasion.

They had planned ahead. They even made a dry run of their drive from Portland on all back roads to get to the vineyard in case of bad traffic. It took two hours, so they stayed for a wine tasting after route testing and made a connection with Illahe’s tasting room manager Kathy Greysmith. “She was pouring for us and we had a blast,” James Hoople said. “We fell in love with this place right then and there.”

Monday, the three of

them were ready to finally experience the event they had been looking forward to for so long.

James Hoople has been talking and thinking about it for two years. He considered it an item on his bucket list, and the day seemed almost spiritual for him.

De Graaf also had been planning for two years to view the eclipse in the path of totality. In her home state, the view would be only 75 to 80 percent.

Monday, she soaked up as much of it as she could. She leaned back in her chair with her solar glasses on and just watched.

“I’m comfortable and my head is in the right spot,” she said.

When the eclipse was at 75 percent, she said: “This is what it’s going to be like at home.”

Greysmith witnessed the 1979 eclipse, but could only experience it through a pinhole projector.

She squealed with glee when she put on a pair of

viewing glasses at the beginning of the eclipse.

Later, as totality approached, she emerged from the tasting room, glasses in hand saying for everyone to hear, “It’s going to happen!”

The air cooled — temperatures dropped 20 degrees by totality — as the sky got darker. People pointed to Venus as it emerged bright in the sky.

Totality brought a round of applause from watchers at the vineyard.

“It was everything they said it was going to be,” De Graaf said.

The experience brought James Hoople to tears, marveling at the rareness of the event and having been at the right place and time to see it.

“I have a very short bucket list, and seeing the eclipse was on it,” he said. “To see something like that, it took my breath away.”

After totality, Greysmith laughed at her reaction, saying: “I’m still a child at heart.”

Still, she said seeing the moon block out the



JOLENE GUZMAN/Itemizer-Observer

Kathy Greysmith, Illahe Vineyard’s tasting room manager, squeals with delight as she puts on her eclipse viewing glasses to witness the dance between sun and moon.

sun was momentous.

“I don’t have any words that are beyond what anybody else has said,” she said, pausing. “It’s beyond words. I was just so excited inside. A great event in my life-

time.”

Around 10:45 a.m., people began to make plans to head home, but Lisa Hoople and De Graaf were still watching the second half of the eclipse.

“It’s an eyebrow now,” De Graaf said describing the shape of the sun.

“Or a frown,” Lisa Hoople said.

“No. It’s an eyebrow,” De Graaf said. “There are no frowns today.”



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