



The Eagle/Rudy Diaz

Santa and Mrs. Claus cruise through Prairie City and greet many with holiday cheers as Tací Phillbrook drives the duo Saturday at Christmas on the Prairie.

# Santa and Mrs. Claus cruise into Christmas on the Prairie

Adjusted event gets people out of the house and in the holiday spirit

By Rudy Diaz  
Blue Mountain Eagle

Bazaars, sales, scavenger hunts and a cruising Santa Claus spread cheer at Christmas on the Prairie Saturday.

Santa and Mrs. Claus cruised through Prairie City on their white convertible Mustang as a bright blue sky and scintillating sun shone the way. They waved to community members and passed out wristbands that said a person made the "Nice List."

Joanna White, a worker at Bar WB Western Wear, said she was happy kids were able to see Santa.

"Even though it was drive-by, they were thrilled that kids could see Santa Claus. For the children, it's a highlight for them," White said.

A Great Christmas Song Scavenger Hunt had people walking around Prairie City and looking for Christmas song lyrics hidden at 15 businesses. After finding the lyrics, people then matched the lyrics to the song it came from.

Prairie City residents Carla Wright and Arlene Lynch walked around town and talked to many business owners to locate the hidden lyrics.

"We've enjoyed the event because we've seen people we haven't seen for a long time," Wright said. "It's taken us two hours (to complete the scavenger hunt) because we stop and visit with people. We've been so isolated that this has been a joy."

There were also gifts at bazaars and stores the community could hunt for. Jolynn Swartzendruber, who was selling handcrafted items at



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Jolynn and Ted Swartzendruber were selling a variety of items made by the family at Christmas on the Prairie.



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Christmas lyrics were hidden at many different businesses for scavenger hunters to locate at Saturday's Christmas on the Prairie.

the bazaar in the community center with her husband, Ted, enjoyed seeing people getting together and the various items provided from each of the vendors.

"We're really happy to have the bazaar here, and there's been some people coming in and going," Swartzendruber said.

Judy Jacobs, owner of Roan Out West, said while it was a different Christmas on the Prairie this year, many people have come together to try their best in making the most out of the event this year, especially since many kids activities were cancelled because of COVID-19 restrictions.

Wanda Winegar, an event

organizer, said it was a good day.

"It's just fun having the people moving around to the stores and having Santa come, which was big for the kids," she said.



Contributed photo/Thomas Dekany

The Rude Logging entry in the 2018 Timber Truckers parade in John Day on Dec. 8 won first place in the timber category and second place in the people's choice as well as the sweepstakes award.

## Timber Truckers parade hauls in Christmas spirit

The parade will be on Dec. 12

By Rudy Diaz  
Blue Mountain Eagle

The Timber Truckers parade plans to haul in holiday cheer this year with the theme of "Grant County Strong" at 6 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 12, on Main Street in John Day.

Leslie Traylor, an organizer for the parade, said this year the event will see some differences due to COVID-19. The organizers of the Timber Truckers event did not solicit money from merchants for prizes due to the economic impact from the pandemic. There will also be no awards banquet following the parade at the Elks Lodge.

Even with the changes, Traylor said the parade got a good response from the community that is making the parade possible this year.

"I can't guarantee that we'll have as many (vehicles) as we have on a normal year, but it's like the fair parade was the same way," Traylor said. "We thought we would try it, and we had a great turnout for the fair parade. Hopefully we'll have a good turnout for Timber Truckers."

Traylor said Timber Truckers will continue the tradition, which began on Dec. 11, 1993, that signaled the start of the Christmas season.

She said there will be something for everybody at the parade including an appearance of the jolly guy



The Eagle/Richard Hanners

Horns blared and lights flashed as the 2018 Timber Truckers parade ran down Main Street in John Day on Dec. 8.

himself, Santa Claus.

Along with an abundance of lights, the parade this year gives the county a chance to be united during a special time of year, according to Traylor.

"We need something now, more than ever, to unite us as a community," Traylor said. "Christmas is that special time of year where you see the very best in people, and to have something to celebrate our community, that's why we decided to try to have a parade this year. People need it."

People interested in driving in the parade can register from 3-5:30 p.m. on the day of the event west of the Sinclair gas station on Highway 26 at the property formerly owned by Grant Western Lumber Company. There is no registration fee, but a donation box will be available.

While there are no prizes this year, registration will be important so numbers can be put on each vehicle. The Timber Truckers organizers are planning to try to stream the parade on Facebook and the numbers would help in identifying each vehicle.

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