

Revelers ready to get the show on the road

Park Cities all set for another banner 4th of July parade, party

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By KRISTEN HOLLAND / The Dallas Morning News

Pasadena, Calif., has its Rose Bowl parade.

New York is known for the be-all, end-all of Thanksgiving Day parades.

In the Park Cities, it's the annual Fourth of July parade and celebration.

The community event may not have the national or even local reach that others do, but don't say that to organizers, participants or attendees. More than 10,000 people are expected to line the nearly 2-mile parade route Monday.

To them, the parade is an important tradition that's continually growing.

"We've got more vendors at Goar Park this year than we've ever had. We've got more entrants in the parade. It'll be bigger" than ever, said Dr. Roy Washburn, parade chairman for the Park Cities Rotary Club, which sponsors and manages the event.

Among the dignitaries scheduled to appear are U.S. Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison – the grand marshal – U.S. Rep. Pete Sessions, R-Dallas, and state Rep. Dan Branch, R-Dallas.

First organized after World War II, the parade has been one of the few events that Highland Park and University Park hold together. Some Park Cities residents have participated for decades, others only a few years.

Stacy Godo will be making his fourth appearance in the parade.

The vice president of Avon Cleaners is building two floats – one for Avon and another for the Dallas Children's Theater.

"Historically, we've done very patriotic themes, but this year is fashion," he said about Avon's float. "I think it'll be fun."

He isn't the only float decorator who's branching out this year.

Paul Vinyard, owner of Bubba's Cooks Country, also plans to try something new. As does Trish Stone, an Amherst Avenue resident who coordinates the float for the street's 3000 block.

"I almost hate to say something about it because I'm on a dead run to get it finished on time," Mr. Vinyard said.

"Back in 1970, there used to be a ski ride that went above the midway at the Texas State Fair. We bought five of those" gondolas and have mounted them on trailers, added some custom taillights and are decorating them for the parade, he said.

Mr. Vinyard plans to pull the royal blue gondolas behind a cranberry-colored 1947 Dodge truck he picked up about a year ago in The Colony.

Mrs. Stone and her husband, Brian, have a little more work to do. They're not going to start building their block's float until late this week, when they can get a flatbed truck.

"We're going to go splish, splash on Amherst," she said. "We're going to do a bathtub" with kids in their bathing suits and moms wearing shower caps and towels.

Mr. Godo said he spends at least a week preparing the floats, but the work is mostly fun.

"It's a good way for us to meet new people and touch our existing customers," Mr. Godo said.

While the parade is the highlight, Dr. Washburn said there's much more to the half-day event.

Entertainment and activities at Goar Park, where the parade ends, will include face painting and children's games.

And many families, businesses and churches, including Highland Park Presbyterian, will host parade-watching parties.

Pat Godo, Mr. Godo's mother and owner of Avon Cleaners, offered the simplest reason for spending the time and money to participate in the festivities.

"We've just always done Fourth of July," she said. "It's a great day."

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