

St. Francis Christmas Parade has 24 entries

By Karen Krien

The weather on Friday was a little nippy but that didn't keep people from coming to Main Street for the first Light Parade in St. Francis. And, the cool weather didn't keep people from climbing on floats and carts to participate in the Light Parade.

"The response was great! I heard nothing but good things about the parade," said Dawn Lucas, one of the Parade Committee.

Prior to the parade, there were 25 entries but two entries pulled out and while lining up, another showed up, making 24 parade entries. As the 6 o'clock whistle blew, the parade started down the street from the high school. Gary Cooper had been enlisted as the announcer and he introduced the evening with a poem.

The overhead lights on Main Street had been turned off for the evening which gave the float lights even more spender! There were no divisions, no winners declared and no prizes awarded — as each entry was a winner!

The Grinch was there along with Santa who brought up the rear of the parade riding in the fire truck which had its lights flashing and sirens sounding.

Some of the Good Samaritan Village residents, accompanied by staff, made up one float. There were children and toys on the Neitzel Insurance/Automotive float and the children were sharing their candy with those along the parade route and the elves were giving away balloons.

Stevens' Kansas Territorial float had people "rockin' around the Christmas tree." The courthouse employees had spent hours stringing over 5,000 lights on their float and the crowning touch was the snow princess dressed in sparkling white.

The bank employees had floats as did children and teens. The firemen had their Elf Train lit up and giving rides to children following the parade. Organizations and families also created floats and the outcome was beyond everyone's expectations.



It was great for the first year! There were 24 entries making the parade better than most. Top, Gavin Cooper, Zack Zwegardt and Cody Sherlock were reindeer on strike; clockwise: Renae Pilkington was the snow queen for the courthouse employees' float (there were over 5,000 lights on the float); Neitzel Insurance/Automotive float had children's toys including a jack-in-the-box which had Jeremiah Neitzel popping up; the Schlittenhart family made this cute float; Brooke Lucas had a talk with the Grinch (Rick Lucas); Bankwest had fashioned their float with a lit train; and finally, Scott Schultz was "Eddie" from *The National Lampoons Family Vacation* movie.

Herald staff photos by Karen Krien