

Town celebrates with music, fireworks

By Kathryn Burke
The Goodland Star-News

From fireworks to food, Goodland's Fourth of July Freedom Fest drew people to events all weekend..

The weekend kicked off with citywide sales on Friday, as merchants moved goods outdoors for passers by to see, and other promoted "sizzlin'" indoor specials.

On Saturday, bargain hunters were up early for citywide garage sales. Over 50 people with junk to sell signed up with the Goodland Area Chamber of Commerce and were placed on maps handed out to the buyers.

The First National Bank mud volleyball tournament started at 9 a.m. Teams showed up at the old highway department building, 1201 West U.S. 24, to jump in the goo.

At 10 a.m., the Freedom Pageant started at Gulick Park. Kids from 2 to 7 turned out dressed in stars and stripes. Each participant got a chance to sing, dance or just wave an American flag.

Winners were crowned Miss Sparkler and Mr. Firecracker for three age groups, 2 to 3, 4 to 5 and 6 to 7. Everyone got prizes, including flag-themed toys, pencils, balloons and trinkets.

Vendors were set up at the county fairgrounds by 4 p.m., with everything from T-shirts to sno cones on sale.

At 5 p.m., the gates opened for the Tracy Lawrence concert. Shad and the Minutemen opened the show at 6:30 p.m., Darian Gibson sang "Proud to Be an American" at 7:30 and Lawrence took the stage at 8.

On Sunday, the fun resumed with a parade down Main at 3 p.m. The theme this year was "Honoring Hometown Heroes." Floats of all shapes and sizes started at 17th and proceeded to the fairgrounds.

At 4 p.m., carnival rides opened at the fairgrounds. The rides were 50 cents each and kids flocked to the ferris wheel, scrambler, octopus and more.

Dinner was served by the Chamber from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. Hot dogs, hamburgers, corn, beans, crab legs, drinks and goodies were served up by volunteers.

Organizers waited for things to dry up after a quick rain before starting the fireworks.

Around 10 p.m., the bright lights and loud bangs filled the sky. Ooohs and aaaahs could be heard while red, white, blue, purple and green lit up Goodland's sky.

Monday, many people around town celebrated the Fourth on their own, setting off fireworks at home to cap the holiday.



Clockwise from top: A young man rode a horse in the parade "Honoring Hometown Heroes" down Main Avenue on Sunday. High School Principal Harvey Swagger helped serve up hot dogs at the Goodland Area Chamber of Commerce diner. Motorcycles and four-wheelers rolled north in the parade on Main. A group of girls held on tight as the ferris wheel turned high above the fairgrounds.

Photos by Kathryn Burke and Tom Betz
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