

2016 PARADE REPORT

Another perfect weather day contributed to a wonderful parade and events. The parade had 46 units, 2 more than last year, this being an election year! The craft area had 15 booths, the most ever. I believe we had record crowds also, a very pleasant surprise given the 4th was attached to the weekend. Our Kids Zone and the craft area were swamped. We ran out of candy and tickets, and by noon we had run out of sugar floss for cotton candy, all of which we had more of than last year. Most of the 500 prepared bags for the parade were also handed out, a far greater number than last year. The only disappointing thing about the parade was the huge lacking of animals, just 1 horse, 1 pony, 1 steer and 1 cow. The bonus in this parade was the Durand AMVETS of Post 2273. They had seen the parade last year with our lack of military presence so this year they volunteered to perform the opening flag ceremony and to lead the parade and will do so again next year.

As expected, the free pony rides drew a large group of kids with a constant stream of riders. The pony ride vendor likes the set up and plans to return again next year. The Kids Zone was more popular than ever. An addition there was a large tarp filled with stuffed animals donated by the Brockways' who, in past years, had handed them out in the parade, but can no longer do that. We will present that again next year as it was a big hit and there are plenty of animals left over. This year in the saw dust (wood chips, really) we had "jewels", rings, and plastic coins with an organza draw string bag to put the treasures into instead of using candy as before. It was well liked and next year we will need more.

The biggest and most exciting success story of this year's events was our silent auction benefiting New Echelon, Long Term Care Solutions, VA medical foster homes. It brought in \$492.25, over 2 ½ times more than last year! Awesome describes that! They had an entry in the parade, also, featuring 6 veterans from several past wars and conflicts.

We provided a Porta-John at the check in area, which we paid a discounted price for. It also became apparent that a handicap unit would be appreciated. This will be provided in the common area replacing the unit near the post office. At check in Brenda Meek's color coded system worked very well again, making line up a much smoother process. It was suggested, however, that the area reserved for tractors be returned to the grassy area alongside Lott Elevator, allowing the public to check them out before the parade.

Monetary donations totaled \$600, down by \$300 from last year, which in turn was down by \$500 from previous years! We thank Arrow Storage, Hunter's Ridge Golf, Armstrong Masonry, Lott Elevator and Neil Woodward for their continued support. We also received the usual prize donations from Howell Western Wear and the Fowlerville Fair Board.

Volunteers are harder to come by as they are typically the same ones year after year. We need more. But all in all, it was another good day in Cohoctah.