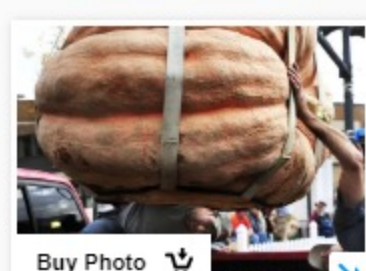


Pumpkin Show eyes record crowds

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(Photo: GAZETTE FILE PHOTO)

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CIRCLEVILLE – Shine up those walking shoes and work up an appetite if you're planning to head to Circleville this weekend.

Celebrating its 111th year, the Circleville Pumpkin Show is expecting a record number of attendees, ranging in the hundreds of thousands, to fill the streets of downtown today through Saturday.

All things pumpkin will be available to devour, along with the traditional festival food. From pumpkin burgers to pumpkin waffles, people travel for miles just to taste food that you can find only at this event.

The food, however, isn't the only reason why the so-called "Greatest Free Show On Earth" is such a big attraction. The giant pumpkin and squash display, fittingly located at the center of the festival, is always a spectacle to see. Plenty of merchandise vendors line the streets, along with a variety of games and amusement rides.

And festival parades? Well, the Circleville Pumpkin Show doesn't just have one, but a grand total of seven taking place throughout the festival's run.

Live music is another highlight contributing to the festival's longevity. Bands and individual musicians performing everything from country to gospel to rock will entertain at one of five stages set up throughout the streets.

Visitors should plan to walk a lot and understand that the Circleville Pumpkin Show covers nine blocks throughout the downtown area. Parking is available along the streets surrounding the festival, but there are also many civic groups selling parking spots in church parking lots, at Ted Lewis Park and in backyards near downtown.

The Pickaway County Community Action Organization, in cooperation with Amvets Post 2256, operates a shuttle service from the Amvets parking lot at 818 Tarlton Road (just south of Circleville) to the Pumpkin Show from 11 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. daily. The cost is \$5 per vehicle load and is one of the recommended options for attending the event and finding parking. The shuttle operates every 30 minutes or more often depending on need.

Motorists on U.S. 23 heading both northbound and southbound during the festival's run should also be aware that traffic sometimes backs up from the Circleville off-ramps on the right-hand lane of U.S. 23 at times, so drivers on U.S. 23 should approach Circleville with caution and be ready to move into the left-hand lane.

CIRCLEVILLE PUMPKIN SHOW HIGHLIGHTS

For a full schedule and history of the festival, visit pumpkinshow.com.

Today

- Robert Liggett, of Circleville, will share his art of growing giant pumpkins during a presentation from 11 to 11:45 a.m. at the Circleville-Pickaway Visitors Pavilion. Students from Charmion Performing Arts Center in Circleville will perform from 1 to 2:30 p.m. at the same location, where the Circleville High School jazz band will entertain from 5 to 5:45 p.m.

- The Main Street Stage will host a performance from the YMCA Dance Academy at 12:30 p.m., live music from the Sterling Bluegrass Boys at 2 p.m., an egg toss competition from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. and a performance from classic rock band Time Machine with guitar students from Studio One in Circleville.

- A youth magic show will take place from 1 to 1:15 p.m. at the Pickaway-Franklin Street Stage, where the Westfall High School band will perform at 7 p.m.

- Thursday's street parades include the Baby Parade from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. and the Parade of Bands from 8 to 9 p.m.

Friday

- Several activities are scheduled throughout the day at the Circleville-Pickaway Visitors Pavilion, including a visit from the Columbus Zoo from noon to 12:45 p.m., an additional performance from Charmion Performing Arts Center's students at 1 p.m., and the Pumpkin Show Community Band entertaining at 6 p.m.

- Performances on the Main Street Stage include live Christian and gospel music from Michelle Martin at noon, acoustic music from Paige Evans and Jed Combs at 2 p.m., easy listening and country music from Mothman at 4:30 p.m. and rock from Mother Hubbard at 6:30 p.m.

- The Pet Parade will entertain onlookers from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m., and the Parade of Fraternal & Civic Organizations is from 8 to 9 p.m.

Saturday

- The festival's final day begins with the Circleville Pumpkin Show Classic 5-Mile Run beginning at 9 a.m. at Circleville High School.

- The Circleville-Pickaway Visitors Pavilion will host performances from the Roundtown Ringers Chime Choir at 11 a.m., the Teays River Cloggers at 3 p.m., musician Paul Brown on fiddle and banjo at 2 p.m., the Pickaway Brass at 5 p.m. and the Adelphi Community Band at 6 p.m.

- Children 15 and younger can take part in a pumpkin pie eating contest slated from noon to 12:45 p.m. at the Main Street Stage, where the band, Simple Harvest, will perform at 1:15 p.m. Country music artist Nathan Boyce is on the stage at 3:15 p.m., where youth and adults 16 and older can demonstrate their best hog-calling during a contest from 5:30 to 5:30 p.m. The band, After Midnight, will rock the stage from 6:30 to 8 p.m., followed by a variety of country music performers from 9 to 10:30 p.m.

- The Kick It Up line dancing group will perform at 2:30 p.m. at the Pickaway-Franklin Street Stage, where the Kingston Kickers will entertain at 3:30 p.m.

- The Queen's Parade will travel the streets of Circleville at 8 p.m. to wrap up the festival.

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