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Great pumpkins visit Circleville

Extra weigh-in joins rides, entertainment, parades for one of state's largest festivals

By Dustin Egan
The Gazette Staff

CIRCLEVILLE — Billed for years as The Greatest Free Show on Earth, the 106th Annual Circleville Pumpkin Show is set to fill the downtown streets once again with its traditional sounds, sights and smells of festival food, plenty of live music, a countless number of parades and, of course, 1,000-pound plus pumpkins.

The festivities begin Tuesday and continue through Oct. 20.

The Circleville Pumpkin Show is the sixth-largest festival in the United States, with an annual attendance of more than 300,000. Anyone traveling on U.S. 23 during the event can attest to its popularity, as it's not uncommon to see traffic backed up along the exit ramps and down the far right lanes of the highway trying to get into the downtown area.

Tuesday begins with the pumpkin, watermelon and long gourd weigh-in hosted by the Southern Ohio Giant Pumpkin Growers Association, followed by an evening preview of concessions,

rides and performances by the Pumpkin Show Band and nationally known country rockers McGuffey Lane.

Tuesday's SOGPG event, which previously took place annually at Lowe's in Chillicothe, is a separate event from the Pumpkin Show's traditional giant pumpkin weigh-in, which begins at 9:15 a.m. Wednesday. Both events will be at Court and Main streets in Circleville. Specimens weighed at Wednesday's event are for the festival's traditional display at the downtown location.

Tuesday's SOGPG event begins at 9 a.m. and is a registered weigh-in for the Great Pumpkin Commonwealth competition.

Tony Vanderpool, a Frankfort resident and founding member of SOGPG, said he expects at least a half dozen large pumpkins for Tuesday's weigh-in, some coming from Pennsylvania and West Virginia. He said 10 or more specimens from the Circleville area, each weighing at least 1,000 pounds, will compete for the first-place prize at the

CIRCLEVILLE PUMPKIN SHOW HIGHLIGHTS

For a full schedule and history of the festival, visit pumpkinshow.com. More information about the Southern Ohio Giant Pumpkin Growers is available at sogpg.com.

WEDNESDAY

» The festival's opening ceremony begins at 9 a.m. Wednesday at Court and Main streets.

» Gus the Squash Carver will perform a giant pumpkin sculpting demonstration at noon at the Circleville-Pickaway Visitors Pavilion, where the Circleville Pumpkin Show Band will perform from 6 to 7 p.m.

» The Little Miss Pumpkin Show Parade will march through the festival beginning at 3:30 p.m., and the Miss Pumpkin Show Parade kicks off at 8 p.m.

THURSDAY

» Dr. Liggett will share his art of growing giant pumpkins during a presentation from 11 to 11:45 a.m. at the Circleville-Pickaway Visitors Pavilion. The

Wednesday event. The three heaviest pumpkins from Tuesday's SOGPG weigh-in will be displayed near the Pumpkin Show's prize-winning pumpkins from Wednesday's competition. SOGPG members will be present at the display throughout the week, selling seeds from giant pumpkins and providing lit-

erature to help first-time growers get started growing their own specimens for next year's weigh-ins.

» Fun Bunch Cloggers will perform from 2 to 2:45 p.m. at the same location, followed by a 5 p.m. performance from the Circleville High School jazz band, and students from the Graham School of Irish Dancing will take the stage from 6 to 6:45 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. and classic rock from Mother Hubbard from 7 to 10:30 p.m.

» Kory Adams will perform his style of pop music from 1 to 1:30 p.m. at the Pickaway-Franklin Street Stage, where the Logan Elm High School band will perform at 6:15 p.m., followed by the Westfall High School band 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.

» The Circleville-Pickaway Visitors Pavilion will host performances from the Roundtown Ringers Chime Choir at 11 a.m., the Graham School of Irish Dancing at noon, a tribute to the late musician Ted Lewis by the Van Wierster's Famous Jazz Quintet at 1 p.m., the Pickaway Brass at 5 p.m. and the Adelphi Community Band performs at 7 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., a symphonic strings demonstration at 1 p.m., a performance from the Teays River Cloggers at 5 p.m. and the Pumpkin Show Band will entertain at 6 p.m.

» Performances on the Main Street Stage include live music from the Harvest Kings at 2 p.m., easy listening and country music from Mothman at 4:30 p.m., country music from Simba Jordan at 6:30 p.m. and classic rock from Chillicothe's own Joker's Wild at 9 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 be-

gins 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 Graham School of Irish Dancing at noon, a tribute to the late musician Ted Lewis by the Van Wierster's Famous Jazz Quintet at 1 p.m., the Pickaway Brass at 5 p.m. and the Adelphi Community Band performs at 7 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 youth and adults 16 and older can demonstrate their best hog-calling during a contest from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. The Gospel Harmony Boys, a southern gospel quartet will take the stage from 7 to 8 p.m.

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

2011 Pumpkin Show with a pumpkin weighing 1,436 pounds. His 1,636-pound monstrosity won the 2009 weigh-off and is the heaviest entry in the festival's history. The world-record heaviest pumpkin tipped the scales at 2,009 pounds and was grown this year by Ron Wallace in Green, R.I.

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mathew5554

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