

Roaming Around Reidsville

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Whew! The Fall Jubilee is over, and even with rain in the morning, we feel it was a pretty successful event! Now we are gearing up for the holidays! It is hard to believe Christmas is just around the corner.

For those familiar with Reidsville's holiday happenings, several occur in November and the traditional start of the holiday season begins with Thanksgiving and continues through Christmas and New Year's. We get a little sad in October because the end of the month means the end of Market Square's season, including the Farmer's Market on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. We have to wait until May of next year to get the wonderful homegrown vegetables, homemade goodies and more that can be found at the downtown market. We are excited to report that grant funding has returned for next year's market for those that use an EBT card. Your purchase dollars will be matched thanks to a grant from RAFI for the next three years!! More info to follow on that program later. And of course, we will miss the special events and concerts held at Market Square, but they will return in 2019!

But, luckily, the downtown doesn't just go dark after October. The Reidsville Downtown Corporation (RDC) and City partner to usher in the holidays with "The Magic of Christmas." The City's annual Christmas Tree Lighting Celebration & Downtown Open House will be held this year on Friday, November 16, from 6-9 p.m. The event centers around Mural Park located at the corner of Scales Street and Gilmer Street, but Scales is blocked off from Morehead down to Williams Street. The beautiful tree at Mural Park is lit at 6:15 p.m. and Santa arrives at 6:30 p.m. to take photos with young and old alike.

The last several years the chance to sled in downtown Reidsville has been added to the festivities. Gilmer Street between Scales and Martin Luther King Drive turns into a manmade "snow hill" with two sledding lanes. Participants can ride down the short hill on plastic snow sleds. This has become a popular attraction for the kids and certainly gets one ready for the winter season!

And in keeping with the holidays, there will be hot chocolate and marshmallow roasting just like the song says. Participating merchants will be open and offering special promotions and refreshments. It is just the perfect way to kick off the holiday season.

The tree lighting reminds us that the Reidsville Christmas Parade is just around the corner as well. Many people think the City of Reidsville sponsors the parade. I don't know the full history behind it, but for many years the parade was coordinated by the Reidsville Chamber of Commerce. In 2006, the local television station, WGSR-TV, Star 47.1 (Cable 5), took it over because the station didn't want this community event to be lost. That first year, the television station turned it into a nighttime parade after receiving several requests, according to Parade Co-Coordinator Debbie Moore. Moore, along Matt

Smith, also of WGSR-TV, have been planning and coordinating the parade for the past 13 years. The dates have changed over the years too. Traditionally it was held the Saturday after the tree lighting. Two years ago the television station opted to move the parade to the Thanksgiving Day weekend. This year the Christmas Parade will be held the Sunday before Thanksgiving. Mayor Jay Donecker, on behalf of the Reidsville Downtown Corporation and Reidsville Chamber of Commerce, requested the television station find a different date because the Saturday of Thanksgiving weekend is "Small Business Saturday." The logistics of having merchants open on this day but closing the street for the parade were problematic at best.

To accommodate the request, Moore explains that the only other date available to get floats, etc. for the parade was a Sunday. Several nearby cities, such as Burlington, NC and Martinsville, Va., already hold their parades on the Saturday before Thanksgiving. Many towns, like nearby Danville, Virginia, do have their parade on a Sunday, but this will be new to Reidsville. "We will see how it works out and then reassess as we need to," said Moore. The parade also will return to the daytime hours not only due to safety concerns associated with nighttime parades but also to accommodate churchgoers' schedules.

As a former pastor himself, Matt Smith knows how important it is not to interfere with church services on Sunday. He said he chose 4 p.m. for the start of the parade because it allows many to go to morning worship, get that big Sunday lunch under their belts and then get ready for the parade whether you are planning to participate or just watch. And some might still be able to make evening worship services as well.

Coordinating this annual parade is a lot of hard work, but it is a labor of love for Smith and Moore. "This is our gift to our local community," Smith stressed, "and we enjoy doing it."

Therefore, the 2018 Reidsville Christmas Parade will be held beginning at 4 p.m. on Sunday, November 18 – the Sunday before Thanksgiving Day. This year's theme is "Bells Will Be Ringing". Traditionally the parade averages about 75 to 100 entries, according to Moore, and they hope that this year is no exception. One big mystery still remains at least at the time this article was written. Who will be the Grand Marshal? That is still to be announced, but we know who will be at the end of the parade as usual, Santa Claus!

Are you interested in being a parade entry? You can email reidsvilleparades@gmail.com and an application will be sent to you. Applications are also available at WGSR-TV on Gilmer Street in downtown Reidsville and at the Reidsville Chamber of Commerce office at 140 South Scales Street. The deadline for entries is November 9, according to Smith. So, everyone needs to get those entries in soon!

The final holiday happening offered by the City of Reidsville that I'm aware of (for now) is the Holiday Market Event held at the City-owned Penn House, located at 324 Maple Avenue. Sponsored by Running Pine Herb Farm & Friends, the market is open free to the public. It will feature a variety of arts and crafts, including wooden bowls, wreaths, fiber art, jewelry and more. There will also be baked goods, jams and jellies as well. Get some of that Christmas shopping done early on Saturday, December 1, from

9 a.m. until 3 p.m. while listening to music provided by Veronica Jones. All done against the beautiful backdrop of the Penn House decorated for the holidays! You won't want to miss it! If you want more details, you can call the Penn House at 336-349-1099.

While activities tend to wind down during the winter, holiday happenings aren't the only things going on in Reidsville. Check out these upcoming events and activities.

Final Fish-Off for Big Lunker Monthly Winners November 3.

The 12 monthly tournament winners will return to Lake Reidsville on November 3rd for this contest. The one who comes away with the biggest fish wins! You can learn more about this event by calling 336-349-4738.

Loose Leaf Pickup Begins November 5.

This isn't an event, but it's something great for Reidsville residents to know. The Reidsville Public Services Department will begin weekly curbside loose leaf pick-up on November 5th. Please place your loose leaves in your yard near the curb or edge of pavement (away from storm drains or parked cars) by 7:00 a.m. on your regular loose leaf collection day. Please separate leaves from brush and other waste in order that separate pickups can be made for each. The schedule may vary when volume is extremely heavy and for holidays. This service will end the week of January 7th – 10th. After your collection day that week, you must bag your leaves to be collected by the Solid Waste Department. If you have questions about this service, please call 349-1070 from 7:00 – 3:30 Monday through Friday.

Small Business Saturday on Saturday, November 24.

And finally, the Reidsville Chamber of Commerce is coordinating activities for "Small Business Saturday" held on Saturday, November 24. Everyone is invited to "Shop Small" and support your local small businesses! You can visit the Reidsville Chamber of Commerce & Visitor Center at 140 S. Scales Street beginning at 9 a.m. The first 75 people in line get a bag full of coupons and goodies. Participants will be entered in to win some fabulous prizes. Check out what your local shops have to offer. There are great Christmas gifts and other gifts waiting to be purchased so "Make a Big Impact, Shop Small" on Small Business Saturday. What helps the local economy, helps us all!