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Chiefland Christmas Festival brings holiday spirit and a glittery parade to town



Layla McLeod flies high in a special harness that allows her to jump 15 feet in the air and do somersaults.

Story and Photos
by Terry Witt
Senior Reporter
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at 1:17 p.m.

CHIEFLAND -- Hundreds of people gathered in chilly temperatures Saturday night (Dec. 10) to watch colorful floats drive slowly southbound on U.S. Highway 19 as the parade part of the 13th Annual Christmas Festival.



Colin Meadows, 3, was comfortable with Santa and Mrs. Claus in their special sleigh at the Chiefland Christmas Festival.

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Cousins Shaquille Pollock, 2, and Tailyn Matthis spend a few moments with Santa and Mrs. Claus.



Mason Fink, 4, is decked out as Spider Man as he waits for his turn on a ride.

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The inflatable slide proved to be a magnet for young children wanting to have some fun.



A pink 1939 two-door Ford Tudor with a 350 engine was among the antique cars on display.

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The Chiefland Chamber of Commerce hosted the festival at Southeast Second Avenue and U.S. Highway 19 in Chiefland all day.

The Christmas Festival this year took place at the Chiefland Trailhead Park on the west side of the highway, rather than at the traditional location on the west side, which is Train Depot Park. Both the festival and the parade were enjoyed by many children, teens and people of every generation.

The new location gave the festival more elbow room for vendors and parking, and it gave relief to Chiefland Police Department staff and other volunteers who formerly had to escort people across the highway. This field previously was used mostly for parking only.

During the daylight part of the fun, festival visitors were bathed in brilliant sunlight and cooled by a stiff north wind. Santa Claus and Mrs. Claus arrived in a sleigh and posed for photographs with small children.

Chamber Executive Director Kate Figueroa said the six-acre field on the west side of U.S. 19 in downtown Chiefland provided more space for all festival activities. She said people complimented the Chamber on the spacious new location.

Activities at the field included a karaoke competition, a car show by the Tri-County Cruisers Car Club, a rock-climbing wall, a bungee jump, pony rides and a free Christmas show by the Suwannee Valley Players.

The lighted parade started at 6 p.m.

The cool temperatures didn't chill the holiday spirits of parade watchers who huddled in heavy coats along the highway to get a close look at the bright line of floats stretching for a mile.

Chiefland High School's Marching Band elected to ride on a trailer rather than march the parade route. The band didn't appear to be affected by numb fingers and lips.

The temperature at parade time was 58 degrees with a 7 m.p.h. wind – chilly by Florida standards.

A good time was had by all.

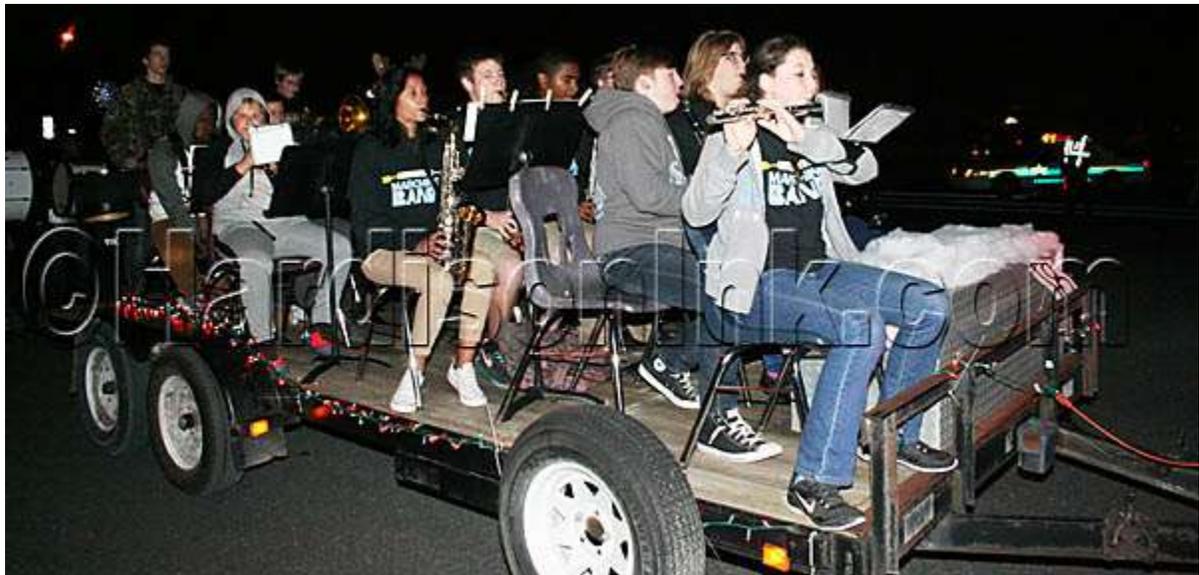


Hardeetown Baptist Church presented a dazzling float filled with oversized Christmas presents.

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Chiefland City Commissioners (from left) Teresa Barron, Don Lawrence and Chris Jones ride on a float along the parade route.



The Chiefland High School Marching Band performed aboard a trailer.

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A float by AmVets Post 42 of Chiefland honors all military veterans as it makes its way along the parade route. Ten years ago, veteran paratrooper Kary Colson was among the people who worked together to make this float become a reality. It has been in many parades since then.



Members of Chiefland Cub Scout Pack 514 enjoying the ride along the parade route.

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Whispering Winds Charter School carries a group of its students on the school float.



Riding in a small wagon, this youngster uses Mom power to cruise along the parade route behind the Chiefland Baptist Church float.

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Levy County Commissioner Rock Meeks walks in the parade.

Inglis Christmas Parade



In this photo by Peter Weiss of Yankeetown, viewers can see one of the many floats in the Inglis Christmas Parade. Here is the float from First Baptist Church of Inglis. This event was on the same day as the festival and parade in Chiefland -- Saturday (Dec. 3). Both of these Levy County cities provided a fun place for residents and visitors to enjoy themselves. Published Dec. 11, 2016 at 1:27 p.m.

Photo by Peter Weiss