

2024 Parade Information and Guidelines

Dear Okra Strut Parade Participants,

We wanted to get you important information about this year's Okra Strut parade for your planning purposes.

2024's Okra Strut is being held on the 28th of September 2024. We are very excited and can't wait to see everyone there.

The Parade staging area will again be at **Crossroads Intermediate School** at 6949 St Andrews Road Irmo, SC 29212. The Parade will depart at 9:00 am **SHARP** from Crossroads and again head down St Andrews Rd to the ending point on Lake Murray Boulevard. There will be a volunteer at the entrance to Crossroads with a list of names and your parade number in case you forget it.

GENERAL:

- Although costuming and manner of dress is left to each organization or entry, all participants must dress tastefully. Participants must keep in mind that this is a family-oriented event.
- The Okra Strut Commission reserves the right to prohibit participation in any entry deemed unsafe or in bad taste. The Commission also reserves the right to remove any entry or participant from the parade when the design, construction, operations, or other actions of that entry or its participants present a danger to spectators or participants. There will be no controversial signs that will cause any disruption. Decisions of the Commission and/or its delegates will be final.

- **ALL UNITS MUST FOLLOW INSTRUCTIONS OF PARADE OFFICIALS.**

STAGING AREA:

- Parade staging will begin at 6 am at Crossroads Intermediate School. All units must be in place by 8:45 am.
- Only vehicles that are registered and approved to appear in the parade ("Parade Vehicles") are permitted in the staging area. Once a vehicle enters the staging area, it is not permitted to leave until the parade has begun.

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- **Vehicles may drop off parade participants in the drive-through area in front of Crossroads Intermediate School. No parking is permitted in this area, drop-offs only.**

- Participants and others may park vehicles ("Non-Parade Vehicles") in designated Okra Strut parking lots (Irmo Professional Building, Irmo Elementary School, and Union United Methodist Church). Shuttle buses travel to and from the festival site at Moore Park (formerly the Irmo Community Park) and these parking areas.

- If your entry includes the use of music, either live or recorded, you *must* notify the festival in your application. Entries with amplified music will be spaced in the parade to lessen the overlap of sounds. If your application does not indicate the use of music, please contact the office or you may be forced to do without your music.

PARADE ROUTE:

- Each unit should include a sign or placard stating the name of the entry and sponsor.

- Children under the age of 14 must have adult supervision during the event.

- Small children walking in the parade must have approved transportation on hand, or someone willing and able to carry them should they tire.

- Only trained horses and experienced riders will be allowed to participate in the parade. Horses must be diapered, or owners must provide clean-up crews to follow the horses. Clean up during the parade as well as before and after for horses or other animals will be the responsibility of the owner and/or rider.

- **THE THROWING OF GUM, CANDY AND/OR OTHER MATERIAL IS STRICTLY PROHIBITED – NO EXCEPTIONS.** You may hand out candy and you are permitted to hand out material while walking with the parade if the material/candy is placed in someone's hand and not dropped on the ground.

- The judging stand is located near the corner of St. Andrews Road and Fork Road. Awards are given to Best Commercial/Business Unit, Best Non-Profit/Community Group Unit, and Best Marching Unit. **SMILE** and wave to the Judge!

- **DUE TO THE VOLUME OF UNITS IN THIS PARADE, ABSOLUTELY NO UNIT MAY STOP THE PARADE** for performances or any activity.

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• **NO WALKING VENDORS WILL BE PERMITTED ALONG THE PARADE ROUTE** unless previously approved by the Okra Strut Commission.

PARADE ENDING:

- The parade marches into Irmo Elementary School and disburses from there. Non-Parade Vehicles are not allowed into this area.
- Shuttle buses will be running to and from the festival site at Moore Park and Irmo Elementary School, as well as other designated Okra Strut parking lots. Shuttle buses drop off at Okra Man at the festival site (near the entrance); so you and your parade participant can "Meet Me at the Okra Man" after the parade.
- If you are not meeting your parade participant at the festival site, arrange to meet at a location within walking distance of Irmo Elementary School.

If you have any other questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to us. We look forward to seeing you at the 2024 Okra Strut Parade very soon.

Sincerely your,

Irmo Okra Strut Commissioners