

Parade preparations: Last year's champion prepared to wow again

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
October 25 2016 7:20 AM



WOOD RIVER - Last year's **Alton Halloween Parade** float champion, **Sherry Gilleland** of **Dream Home Reality**, promises this year will astound even more than the last.

"The pressure is on to keep first place," she said. "We have big things in store for this year."

Gilleland said this year's float will remain a secret until Thursday evening, when it debuts in the **East Alton Halloween Parade**. Gilleland has won first prize for her floats in both the East Alton and Wood River parades in the past, but 2015 was the first year her crew has taken first place in Alton.

"We've placed in other years, but never first," she said.

This year's float is nearly completed. Gilleland said more than 500 hours of labor has been put into it by her and her husband **Brad Gilleland**. She said it should be completed Thursday, hopefully as many as three hours before its debut in **East Alton**.



"Everybody gets to see what we're doing Thursday," she said. "People don't realize how much time and money are in these. It's sad, because after the last parade, we dismantled it all."

Last year's winning float was a recreation of an iconic scene from the **Flintstones**. The Gillelands' float featured a Flintstones car built by Brad Gilleland from large logs. The float featured favorite characters from the series including: Fred, Wilma and Pebbles Flintstone and Barney, Betty and Bam-Bam Rubble. In front of the car was a projector screen playing a movie, and cavemen sat on logs around the car.

"It was really cool," Sherry Gilleland said. "We wanted to save it, but it was too heavy and we left town for a week and a half after the last Alton parade. Everybody wanted it, but they couldn't come pick it up."

The Gillelands defeated long-time Alton Halloween Parade float champion and all-time favorite, **Dr. Bruce Vest** by taking first place in 2015. This year, Sherry Gilleland said she was ready to do it again.

"He's always been our competition," she said.