

Edwardsville Lions Club tree sales off to bustling start on Thanksgiving weekend

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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EDWARDSVILLE - Lions Club International is a service organization that helps others in communities throughout the world.

Locally, the Edwardsville chapter is very active as shown each year by its annual Christmas tree sales program in front of the Shop 'N Save in Edwardsville. This year's Christmas tree sales program started this past Saturday and it was already a hit on this nice day for the day after Thanksgiving.

This year, the Lions Club had more than 500 trees available at the start. The Lions also received some excellent help on Friday from a local Boy Scout troop to kick off the selling season.

Darrell Gwinup is the tree chairman for the Lions and he has led the program for several years.

"Somebody put me in charge of this 10 years ago and the club has done this for over 40 years," he said. "It is a big tradition and well supported by the public for generations. We have third generation people coming to pick out their Christmas trees. It is one of the things that keeps us going because of the tradition. It is our biggest fundraiser for our year.

"A key factor about the Lions Club tree lot is it keeps the money within the community. We not only help the Edwardsville community with our programs, but we help fund the state program for hearing and diabetes awareness. The key element of the Christmas tree sales is we do it for the community."

Gwinup said once some of the trees are sold, they take a dozen or so trees to the Edwardsville Food Pantry so they can donate them to someone who have some needs.

The tree sales are open from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Thursday and from 2 p.m. to 8 p.m. on Friday. The lot is open from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday.

"We are proud of Boy Scout Troop 1031 of Edwardsville. Last year we got together. They have close to 40 boys. For those of us who have attained a certain amount of age, it is thrilling to see the energy these boys bring out here."

Neil Vollmer, the Scoutmaster and Lions Club member, said, "We are happy to join with the Lions and assist them as we can. It is a fun time for them. People are always in good mood selecting their tree. The Scouts are happy to help."

Tommy Hedge, another member, marked his first time on the lot. "It is unbelievable to see Darrell and some of the other members and the dedication these people have for the

club. The average age now is in their 60s and they still show up. One gentleman is on a cane it is a wonderful thing to see."

"As big as this is to the Lions Club, it is a tradition for families to come out to pick their Christmas tree," Gwinup concluded.





