

# Christmas Wonderland cancelled due to wire-thieving Grinch

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer  
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**UPDATE: Alton Mayor Brant Walker said "Christmas Wonderland will go on as planned". Click here to read updated story.**

ALTON - For the first time in its history, the Christmas Wonderland at Rock Springs Park will not be in operation this holiday season. Christmas Wonderland Board President Al Cowgill said as much as 2,000 feet of copper wire was stolen from the site at Rock Springs Park over the past weekend. Valued at \$1,400, Cowgill said that theft

was "the straw that broke the camel's back," considering copper wire thefts have occurred in that area for the last three years, including three times each in the last two, with 2017's losses reaching around \$6,000.

Alton Police Public Information Officer Emily Hejna confirmed an unfinished report regarding the theft was being completed by officers at the Alton Police Department, adding she hopes it doesn't destroy the holiday tradition of Christmas Wonderland at Rock Springs Park.

Alton Mayor Brant Walker has told the Grandpa Gang - the group of volunteers who assemble the marvelous holiday spectacular every year - he would do anything to keep it going. Cowgill said Walker is slated to speak at their Tuesday board meeting. As of now, however, Cowgill has firmly stated this year will not see a Christmas Wonderland at Rock Springs Park. In the future, however, the event may continue. Cowgill said the Grandpa Gang is still wanting to do it in the future, but suggested the possibility of another location in the future without wires being above ground.

As of now, however, Cowgill said the Grandpa Gang is using their volunteer efforts to take down the decorations already standing in the park. Money raised from previous incarnations of the Wonderland have been donated across the Riverbend to various charities