

Mayor Walker: ‘The Grinch will not steal Christmas in Alton’

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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ALTON - Alton Mayor Brant Walker responded quickly to a Riverbender.com story that said the Grandpa Gang will cancel Christmas Wonderland for this year because of wire thefts and said: “The Grinch will not steal Christmas in Alton.”

“We will meet with the Grandpa crew at 9 o’clock in the morning to make sure the Grinch will not take Christmas from our kids,” he said. “We just found out about it today and are meeting at 9 to assess the damage and see what manpower it takes to see the event go off again in Alton this year.”

Walker said it is very unfortunate this type of thing happens to put it in jeopardy.

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 Convention and Visitors Bureau Executive Director Brett Stawar agreed with Mayor Walker on Monday afternoon: "The board of Christmas Wonderland meets tomorrow with city officials to find a solution to this issue. Wonderland will happen, we've come too far to let it go."

Walker said he will come out of the 9 a.m. meeting with the Grandpa Gang with a plan to save Christmas Wonderland for this year.

“Again, the Grinch will not take Christmas from our kids,” he said.