

'Santa's Chocolate Express' offers wide variety of homemade chocolate, family fun over weekend

by Leanne Guthrie, Reporter
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GRAFTON - Saturday, Dec. 1, was Grafton's annual chocolate festival. The event offered a ride on "Santa's Chocolate Express" through scenic Grafton, with many opportunities to sample a variety of homemade chocolates.

Attendees got the chance to check out many of downtown Grafton's unique shops, all brightly decorated for Christmas. Each stop on the express came with more chocolate to try from the charming downtown shops. An appearance from Santa, Mrs. Claus, and carolers offered exciting highlights to the festival.

Participants of the event checked in at the Loading Dock ice rink. There they collected their holiday bags already filled with some chocolates to take home. Guests were then shuttled through the decorated streets of Grafton and stopped at seven shops for chocolate sampling. Some opted to walk through Grafton to enjoy the weather and get a closer look at many of the Grafton shops.

Participants of all ages enjoyed the many festive activities offered throughout the day. Everyone's favorite part, of course, is the chocolate. "It's my first year here," said Steve Laury, from St. Louis, said: "It's been great getting to try all the chocolate and check out the town".

A variety of chocolate treats were offered for sampling including, fudges, truffles, and peppermint bark. After getting their fill of chocolates many participants headed to Grove Memorial Park for a chance to meet and get photos with Santa and Mrs. Claus. Hot chocolate was also offered at the park.

Dan Bechtold, owner of Knotty by Nature, a store offering a variety of specialty woodcuts and locally crafted wood products, participated in the event. “We’ve participated ever since we opened and we enjoy it every year,” he said of the chocolate festival. Dan has lived in the area for more than 20 years and has always enjoyed the event. “We make the chocolate,” Dan said when asked about the delicious treats offered at his shop for those attending the festival.

The chocolate festival was definitely a success, as many of the participating shops had run out of chocolate by the end of the event. Many who attended the festival stopped to skate at the Loading Dock ice rink after enjoying the event. The event organizers encourage you to attend the event next year and make this a new Christmas tradition in your family.



