

Ends 75 Consecutive Years: Alton Halloween Parade Is Cancelled Because Of COVID-19 Pandemic

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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ALTON - The East End Improvement Association (East End) on Friday announced the the 2020 Alton Halloween Parade has been cancelled due to COVID-19.

Steve Schwartz, the spokesperson for East End Improvement Association with the Alton Halloween Parade, said it was regret the organization had to cancel the fun, wonderful family tradition of the parade because of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

“After much deliberation, we felt that for the health of our community, it is the safest decision we could make,” Schwartz said. “It would be impossible for both the parade participants and visitors to adhere to the required health guidelines during this pandemic. We look forward to seeing everyone again next year.”

Schwartz said the Alton Halloween Parade has run continuously since about 1945, which would have been the 75th consecutive year this time. The Alton Halloween Parade is one of the oldest and most successful in the country. Schwartz explained that the parade started in 1916, but there were two or three years where it was cancelled during World War II. The Alton Halloween Parade historically has 80 to 90 groups participating, is loaded with floats, and attracts up to 25,000 visitors.

“Given everything happening with schools going virtual and the crowds we attract, it is pretty hard to abide by the health agencies' requirements,” Schwartz said. “We thought it would be difficult to get bands to participate. We also wanted to give people plenty of notice before they worked on their floats. It was a hard choice but the best we could come up with right now.”

The East End Improvement Association, dating back to the 1870s, is one of the oldest community organizations in the Riverbend area. The East End's community projects include sponsoring and organizing the Alton Halloween and Memorial Day Parades, the Alton Candidates Forum, and awarding two scholastic scholarships to graduating high school seniors. Members of the East End also participate with Pride, Inc.'s Bucket Brigade, Salvation Army Bell Ringing, partnering with the North Alton Godfrey Business Council on the Benjamin Godfrey Legacy Trail, and more.

“We hope everything is settled down by this time in 2021,” Schwartz said. “We still have plans to do the Halloween Parade in 2021.”