

Holyoke celebrates 125th birthday

Written by Darci Tomky

The City of Holyoke celebrated its 125th birthday in style last weekend with an elaborate schedule of events in honor of the city's quasiquicentennial anniversary!

The June 14-16 party was one for the history books with the local community, former residents, family and friends all turning out for the special festivities.

Phillips County Courthouse square in Holyoke was buzzing with activity starting Friday night with a pie and ice cream social. Two hundred pieces of pie were served up while event-goers enjoyed the bluegrass sounds of Prairie Mountain from Otis.

Holyoke Volunteer Fire Department's pancake breakfast at the Vets Hall kicked off Saturday's activities, with the day promising to hold great, sunny weather and a great time with family and friends. They served approximately 235 people for breakfast.

The rest of the day was filled with plenty of things to see and do at the courthouse. Andrea McCallum and Penny Dockins helped emcee the event, with Casey Blake taking the mic for the car show.



Winners of the vintage clothing contest are pictured from left, Marie Mailander, Delvin Claymon and Brenda Brandt. All three were rewarded by being named grand marshals in

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the parade. See pages 10-11 for more pictures from the 125th celebration! —Enterprise photo

The lawn was filled with cars as part of Holyoke Chamber of Commerce's Dandelion Daze event. The Show & Shine allowed car enthusiasts time to check out all their favorite rides. Car show awards, sponsored by S&W Auto Supply, recognized the top 15 cars, top gun and people's choice.

Vendors and crafters were also on hand to provide food and other items for purchase. Anniversary mementos including key chains, coins and belt buckles by the City of Holyoke and a special edition and keepsake calendar by The Holyoke Enterprise commemorated the 125th anniversary.

A vintage wagon was available for photos by Photography by C Lee, and the Redden family provided horse-drawn carriage rides.

"Building Holyoke: 125 Years of History as Seen through its Architecture" was a presentation at the Peerless Theatre by Abbey Christman and Diana Krogmeier, revealing the results of a study done on Holyoke last summer.

If some people stood out in the crowd, it's probably because their clothing was a blast from the past. A number of people could be spotted around town in their vintage clothing on Saturday.

Marie Mailander, Brenda Brandt and Delvin Claymon took top honors in the vintage clothing contest, complete with bonnets, lace-up boots and pitchfork, parasol or fan in hand.

Just like past anniversary celebrations in Holyoke, men competed for the best facial hair in the beard contest. Rob Hinnegan won the overall beard award as well as best groomed honors. Vince Scruby took home the longest beard award, and Dominic Krogmeier's beard was named the scroungiest.

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Winners of the vintage clothing and beard contests served as grand marshals in the quasiquicentennial parade Saturday afternoon. Entrants each picked a decade to represent as they made their way south on Interocean Avenue for the vintage-era parade, sponsored by Ardie's Beauty Barr and Holyoke Chamber.



Holyoke Mayor Orville Tonsing, at right, helps lead the quasiquicentennial celebration parade south on Interocean Avenue. The mayor is riding alongside Andy Scott, a former Holyoke resident and uncle of mayor pro-tem Kevin Scott, in a 1903 Oldsmobile. —Enterprise photo

Phillips County Museum was also open Saturday afternoon, featuring a quilt show and its transportation area including a Hupmobile and Model T. A historical scavenger hunt sponsored by Phillips County Historical Society sent participants all over the museum looking for clues to the questions.

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Around 340 people were served a hamburger barbecue at the courthouse lawn Saturday evening, sponsored by City of Holyoke with funding by the Struckmeyer family, Haynes Cattle Co., Creekside Charolais, 3K Cattle Co. and MV Equipment. The food, served by R&B Inc., provided a good chance for community members to fellowship and catch up after the day's activities.

Saturday was rounded out with around 60 people enjoying an old-fashioned barn dance, sponsored by Phillips County Arts Council at the Vieselmeyer Pioneer Seed shed on the south edge of town. Couples danced the night away to the sounds of the Frenchman Creek Ramblers.

Sunday afternoon at the Peerless Theatre, Phillips County Players restaged the melodrama which was first presented April 24, Holyoke's 125th birthday.

"Shawnee Lou, the Prairie's Purest Dressmaker" was a hit for the audience of close to 100 as the cast gave another great performance complete with appropriate boos and hisses from the audience.

Holyoke names and places were incorporated in the script for fun entertainment for the 125th-anniversary celebration.

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