Kalamazoo Holiday Parade

Information Sheet

Updated: November 11, 2026

The Parade:

Fox Motors is honored to be the presenter of the Kalamazoo Holiday Parade. The 64th annual parade is a long-standing tradition and has been part of the fabric of the community since Gilmore Department store started it in 1962. Featuring high school marching bands, giant balloons, floats, and businesses and organizations, this is one event that truly defines community. The Kalamazoo Holiday Parade attracts nearly 30,000 spectators, and over 3,000 people who create the line-up (entertainment). The Kalamazoo Holiday Parade is a Michigan nonprofit organization who has 501-c-3 fiscal status through the partnership of the Kalamazoo Experiential Learning Center (KELC Events). The parade would not be possible without the support of the City of Kalamazoo who joins Fox Motors and the many sponsors to make this tradition a reality each year. The Kalamazoo Holiday Parade, presented by Fox Motors depends on sponsorship dollars to pay for the balloons, marching bands, logistics, and the after-parade activities that make this event one of the official kick-off traditions of the Downtown holiday season.

Social Media Links:

www.kalamazooholidayparade.org | @maplehillholidayparade

Presenting Sponsors

- City of Kalamazoo
- Fox Motors

Cold Air Balloon Sponsors

- Consumers Credit Union
- Meijer
- SWT Excavating
- Greenleaf Hospitality Group
- Kabundant
- WWMT – Channel 3

Event Day Sponsors

- Kalamazoo Valley Museum
- Kalamazoo Valley Community College
- Downtown Kalamazoo Collective

WMU Marching Band Sponsors

- Jack FM – Midwest Communications

In-kind Sponsors

- Public Media Network
- Jack FM – Midwest Communication

Media Sponsor

- Public Media Network
- WWMT News Channel 3
- Jack FM – Midwest Communication

Marching Bands:

- *Western Michigan University Marching Band*
- *Loy Norrix High School Band*
- *Vicksburg High School Band*
- *Three Rivers High School Band*
- *Comstock/Parchment High School Band*
- *Kalamazoo Central High School Band*
- *Hackett Christian Prep High School Band*
- *Gull Lake High School Band*
- *Galesburg Augusta High School Band*

Cold Air Balloons

These Giant balloons from Starbound Entertainment amaze viewers each year as they sway to the beat of Western Michigan University's Bronco Marching Band along with 8 area high school bands. This year, Starbound and the Kalamazoo Holiday Parade are bringing 7 cold air balloons: Scooby Doo, Brainy Smurf, Twinkles the Snowman, The Green Nutcracker, Daniel Tiger with Blue Tigey, Gingersnap the Elf, and the Subaru Balloon. Bringing these balloons to the parade would not be possible without our amazing Cold Air Balloon Sponsors! Here are the sponsors with their selected balloons:

- Fox Motors: Subaru Balloon
- Consumers Energy: Twinkles the Snowman
- Meijer: Scooby Doo
- Greenleaf Hospitality Group: The Green Nutcracker
- Kabundant: Gingersnap the Elf
- SWT Excavating: Brainy Smurf
- WWMT: Daniel Tiger and Blue Tigey

After-Parade Activities – Immediately Following the Parade

The After-Parade activities as part of the Kalamazoo Holiday Parade, presented by Fox Motors, are designed to provide an opportunity for attendees to enjoy downtown and support retailers and restaurants in supporting local businesses. The Kalamazoo Mall is closed to traffic and becomes the hub for live entertainment, activity tents, shopping, restaurants, and even an emergency vehicle expo. Activities to enjoy are throughout downtown as businesses open their door and host specials for families. Please reference the following activities where retailers and stakeholders will offer programming and event day activities in addition to those who are participating in the Holiday Parade:

Visit with Santa & Mrs. Claus

On Parade Day, from 1 p.m. (or immediately following the parade) to 3 p.m., Santa and Mrs. Claus will visit at the Kalamazoo Valley Museum as well as outside the City Centre. Weather permitting, they might be on the Kalamazoo Mall after their visit at the Kalamazoo Valley Museum. Signage will direct the interaction and the event.

More Kalamazoo Valley Museum Activities

Enjoy free winter-themed activities after the Kalamazoo Holiday Parade at the Kalamazoo Valley Museum! Build a clay snowman from noon to 2 p.m. and watch the "Let It Snow" planetarium show at 11:30 a.m., 12:30 p.m. and 1:30 p.m. Note: The planetarium tickets are free and will be released on the day of at the museum's front desk.

Entertainment on the Kalamazoo Mall

The entertainment stage is located right in front of the City Centre. Live music will be on the stage with great music mixes and of course the best conversations that will outline all the great things to do.

First Responders Emergency Vehicle Expo

The Holiday Parade Expo offers a unique opportunity for children and families to interact with first responder vehicles such as police cruisers, fire trucks, ambulances, and more. This family-friendly event allows the community to learn about the important roles of first responders while enjoying the holiday festivities. Participants will be able to explore the vehicles, meet first responders, and engage in interactive demonstrations.

Retailer Events

Downtown retailers and restaurants join in the after parade activities by hosting programs that encourage our attendees to enjoy shopping and the ambiance of downtown. The following events are a bit of tradition. Although downtown stores are still working on how and where they are participating, here is our list of events and the businesses participating.

Winnie Wink (Willy Wonka) Bars

Several stores throughout downtown will be partnering with Cherri's Chocol'art to present Winnie Wink bars. These delicious bars are part of a giveaway where when you open the bar you just might find a gold ticket. Whether you win or not, the chocolate is super delicious. The mix of candy bars can be found at these locations.

2026 Participants

- Pop City Popcorn
- The Spirit of Kalamazoo
- Sit and Stay Winery
- Terrapin
- Earthly Delights at Amy Zane
- Bimbo's Pizza
- The Station Dancewear
- Uncle Buddy's Toy Stash
- Rocket Fizz Kalamazoo
- Spice & Tea Merchants

Restaurant Promotions

Many restaurants will be open after the parade. Here are the restaurants that have agreed to be open during the parade. Please note that this list will continue to grow until the week of the parade. A complete listing of participating businesses can participate in an exciting promotional opportunity, available for local restaurants this year at no cost. Local restaurants can participate to be highlighted and promoted.

Here are some restaurants that are super excited to welcome you on parade day and will be ready:

- The Grazing Table: 10 am – 3 pm
- Sit and Stay Winery: 10:30 am – 9 pm
- The Spirit of Kalamazoo: 10 am – 8 pm
- Pop City Popcorn: 10 am – 7 pm
- Bimbo's Pizza: 10 am – 9 pm

Elf on the Shelf

The Elf on the Shelf event is where families go to find their favorite elf. The businesses feature an "Elf on the Shelf" doll that is strategically placed in the store as part of an adventure to find. A game card passport is used by the participant where they need to visit the various locations on the passport, find the Elf, and then have the store "stamp" their location on the passport. Passports are turned in to win prizes and a gift basket.

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- Uncle Buddy's Toy Stash
- The Station Dancewear
- Bimbo's Pizza
- The Waiting Room
- Glass Art Kalamazoo

JUST THE FACTS
KALAMAZOO HOLIDAY PARADE, presented by Fox Motors

Parade Date:	Saturday, November 21, 2026
Parade Location:	Start and finish in downtown Kalamazoo – corner of Lovell and
Portage Streets Parade Route:	Closure from 10:30 a.m. to about 12:30 p.m. Portage/Lovell to Park Street, Park Street to Michigan Avenue, Michigan Avenue to Pitcher Street, Pitcher Street to Lovell Street, Lovell Street to Portage Street.
Staging Areas:	Closure starting at 9 a.m. on November 21 Portage Street from Pitcher to South Street Jasper Street from Lovell to Walnut Lovell Street from Portage to Jasper
Parking Requirements	Respectfully requesting that there is no parking along the parade route No parking signs are place prior to 8 a.m. along the parade route
Special Activities:	Closure starting at 10:30 a.m. until 3 p.m. After Parade Day activities on the Kalamazoo Mall between Michigan Avenue and South Street Public Media Network will be live streaming the parade
Applications:	Applications will be available starting August 1, 2026
Application Deadline:	October 31, 2026
Acceptance:	Acceptance of application is typically within days
Line-up Announcement:	November 9, 2026
Final instructions	November 16, 2026

Contact Information:

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Parade Units	Megan Zabinski – events@experientiallearningcenter.org
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Social Media:	@maplehillholidayparade (Facebook and Instagram) www.kalamazooholidayparade.org