

Rogersville 4th of July Celebration

Fund raising is underway for the Rogersville 4th of July Celebration. A big fireworks show is currently in the plans as organizers Dr. Blaine Jones and Mark DeWitte look to see what else can be arranged on short notice and in another year of the COVID pandemic. "Obviously, we are not going to have the huge Celebration everyone is accustomed to for several reasons" said Jones. "Number 1, it is such short notice, there is no way we could arrange a huge entertainer, sound and lights, etc. for that kind of show. Number 2, we are in the middle of a pandemic! Infection rates, hospitalization rates and death rates have all been trending down since the first of the year but they are now plateauing and with restrictions being eased, you can assume we will see another increase down the road. What that holds for July? Who knows. Number 3, Mark and I are not getting any younger – the events we planned were huge, took a large amount of time, planning and money. We are just not able to do that type event any longer".

"We have had several community minded folks step forward with ideas and offers to help out on the event, but again, we do not know what we will be able to do in July. We hope to have a meeting very soon for those that may be interested in helping fundraise or help with planning the event if we are able to do more than fireworks" said DeWitte. "We are working on contacting the appropriate health officials for guidance regarding possibly having a crowd and what restrictions there may be if we are able to go forward with such plans" Jones stated.

In the meantime, fundraising efforts are proceeding to plan a huge fireworks show for Saturday, July 3rd at approximately 9:30pm on "Fireworks Hill" in the Rogersville City Park. Dynamic Effects and Fireworks Company, located here in Hawkins County has agreed to provide the show again this year. Owners Bob and Julie Smith have been on board with the 4th of July Celebration for many years and were excited to hear that their services were needed again this year. "We hope to have enough funds to pull off one of our huge shows like in the past" Jones said, "it just depends on the donations as to how large we can go". Local Greeneville attorney and Hawkins County native, Crystal Jessee, jumpstarted the fundraising with a \$2000.00 challenge to all other attorneys practicing in Hawkins, Greene and other surrounding counties. "I grew up in Hawkins County and I remember what this Celebration meant to so many – young and old alike. I just felt led to try and do my part and challenge my colleagues, and anyone else for that matter, to raise money and keep a time honored tradition going in some way. I really appreciate those who have attempted to keep it going and I was excited to see Mark and Dr. Jones get back onboard for at least this year" Jessee stated.

Donations may be tax deductible as the Celebration is being organized under the Four Square, Inc. umbrella which is the 501c3 nonprofit organization Jones and DeWitte run here locally. Donations to help fund the Rogersville 4th of July Celebration fireworks and any other activities that may be arranged can be sent to the Rogersville 4th of July Celebration, P.O. Box 35, Rogersville, TN 37857. Anyone interested in being a major sponsor can contact Dr. Blaine Jones at 423-272-3150 or via email at docjones57@gmail.com