Sun shines as crews prepare for Oktoberfest

BY CARLOS GALARZA-VEVE
THE JOURNAL

WALHALLA — A sunny, windy day did wonders to help dry out Sertoma Field on Wednesday after city officials feared torrential rain the day before would delay setting up carnival rides and booths for this weekend's Oktoberfest celebration.

Walhalla street department director James Moore and parks and recreation director John Galbreath were at Sertoma early Wednesday with crews who spread gravel and sand in areas still soggy from Tuesday's downpours.

"We're in good shape," Galbreath said. "The folks with the amusement rides agreed not to set up until the evening."

Galbreath was less optimistic during committee reports to city council Tuesday, when those in attendance could hear rain pelting city hall.

"I would have liked to have set up the tent at Sertoma when it was sunny on Monday, but I guess the company couldn't do it then," Galbreath told council. "I don't know when they'll set up the tent (Wednesday), but that's going to push us."

Fortunately, the company did not get started with the tent until noon Wednesday, which gave Moore and his workers time to manicure the field.

The tent, which covers an area of about half of a football field, will offer cover for the entertainment, picnic tables and beer sales during the three-day event, which will begin with opening ceremonies at 6 p.m. Friday at Sertoma Field.

Main Street will also have entertainment and booths with food and crafts for Oktoberfest beginning at 10 a.m. Friday and continuing at 9 a.m. Saturday.

Galbreath said city

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Crews with Classic Party Rentals get ready to put up a tent that is about half the size of a football field during setup for Oktoberfest at Sertoma Field on Wednesday.

OKTOBERFEST: Starts Friday in Walhalla

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workers did a good job getting Sertoma in shape.

"We put down stuff to help soak up the water that's actually standing in some low spots we still have," Galbreath said Wednesday. "That's helped disperse the water."

Galbreath said the Oktoberfest committee spent money on putting a layer of topsoil on parts of the field that also helped keep the ground from getting too soggy.

"The way the field is draining, it should be fine," Galbreath said. "It could be better, but I'm happy with the way it looks right now. If they hadn't bought that topsoil last year, we'd be in bad shape this morning. We've still got some low spots, and hopefully they'll buy more (topsoil) this year and we can get it in even better shape so we don't have to worry as much."

The forecast for Oktoberfest calls for mild temperatures and no rain.

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Palmetto Amusements employees were in Walhalla on Wednesday to set up carnival equipment in preparation for this weekend's Oktoberfest at Sertoma Field.