

Clemson discussing Halloween plans, Christmas parade expected to be normal

BY GREG OLIVER
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CLEMSON — While Christmas is more than three months away, Clemson officials are already planning to return the city's annual Christmas parade to its regular format.

Plans for Halloween events next month, however, are still under discussion.

"The Christmas parade should be a normal format Dec. 7, and I'm moving forward with a plan for that now," Clemson parks and recreation program director Lindsey Watley said. "Halloween, we're making a decision on whether we're going to run both events, but haven't made a decision yet."

Traditionally held the first Tuesday in December, last year's Christmas parade was canceled due to COVID-19. Instead, downtown businesses took part in a storefront decoration contest, with windows decorated and lined with clear lights, voted upon by the public, and a "Winter Wonderland" virtual parade with a montage of videos submitted by the public. Family kits were distributed in front of the Clemson Police Depot on College Avenue, where visitors



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Although Halloween plans are still in the works, Clemson officials expect the city's Christmas parade to return to normal after last year's changes due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

could take photos with an oversized snow globe with Santa Claus inside, among other activities.

Last year's Halloween festivities, rather than taking place on College Avenue, were moved to Nettles Park in the form of a drive-thru trunk-or-treat. Called "Street of Treats," those who drove into the park saw candy handed out to children holding their bags out car windows to accept candy as part of COVID-19 health and safety protocols.

Watley said any Halloween event this year would likely not take place the weekend of the holiday,

which includes a Clemson home football game on Oct. 30.

"We would be looking at one of those days in the week if it was going to be on College Avenue, and then Street of Treats, we could potentially do that on Halloween — it just depends on Patrick Square's plans, which we really haven't nailed down yet," Watley said. "If we move forward with Street of Treats, it would be a similar format as last year."

With COVID-19, and particularly its more transmissible delta variant that has led to a sharp increase in cases around the state and nation,

Watley recognized any plans could dramatically change.

"We were feeling like everything was going to be great as we finished up (summer) camp," Watley said. "We were successful, and then all of a sudden, the beginning of school just turned around (with in-person learning temporarily transitioning to virtual as the number of positive cases increased). So, you never know. It can be a matter of weeks, then your plans have to change. So we just have to be flexible and ready to go with plan B or plan C."