

West Valley View

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Cities bring out big fun for 100th birthday

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staff writer

Two Southwest Valley cities are joining forces to throw Arizona a big birthday bash.

On Feb. 14 Arizona will turn 100 years old. Cities across the state are preparing to celebrate on the birthday and beyond.

Avondale and Goodyear will present "A Tale of Two Cities Parade and Festival" said Pier Simeri, spokeswoman for Avondale.

The joint parade, the first of its kind for this area, will be Feb. 25. It starts at 10 a.m. and is expected to go on for one to two hours, Simeri said.



It begins at the intersection of Litchfield and Thomas roads and continues along Thomas to **Estrella Mountain Community College**, where the culminating event is the "Planes, Trains and Automobiles - 100 Years of Transportation" festival.

Avondale officials are no strangers to putting on a parade. The city has previously organized the Billy Moore Heritage Day parade but the event has been canceled in recent years because of budget cuts.

Both Goodyear and Avondale have independent centennial committees in place. When word got out that each city wanted to put on a parade, the two decided to combine forces, Simeri said.

"People all over the state are looking for ways to celebrate the centennial," she said. "We cut Billy Moore Days from our budget and we wanted to bring back a parade in one form or another. Instead of two parades, why not combine and have one?"

Parade entries are being accepted until Jan. 12. So far, participants include marching bands, antique cars, dance troupes, and **community** organizations, said Paula Ilardo, Goodyear's economic development director.

"We are having many of the same participants as have been in Avondale's previous parades but we think we will have more participants and hope to have floats and a big balloon or two," Ilardo said. "We would both like to see this parade become an annual event and grow each year with more floats and bands and entries."

It's a train, it's a plane ... it's a festival

Officials will honor Arizona's history on many levels, Ilardo said.

"We have asked the governor to be in our parade as the VIP dignitary. Both Goodyear and Avondale mayors will be the co-grand marshals of this inaugural parade," she said. "We are featuring vintage cars and hope to have centurions in the parade, and are seeking any group that highlights Arizona's

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history such as the Wild West Women, horse groups, etc. We will have the PIR pace car, floats, clown and dance troupes and the local high school marching bands."

Sharing the parade with Goodyear is also a tribute to the cities' close relationships with one another, Simeri said.

"Our histories are very much entwined. We share a common border," she said. "The name speaks for itself: Two cities, but we share a lot of history together. We share a rich heritage together."

Transportation is the central theme surrounding the festival, which is free to the public and lasts until 3 p.m.

In keeping with the theme, there will be bi-plane flyovers. Bouncers for children will be designed like trains and cars.

There will be a small train ride for children and the famous "Charlie Chopper" from the Vietnam era will be on display for photographs.

Even the band, called Power Drive, focuses on transportation, Ilardo said.

"We also wanted to incorporate the new wave of gourmet food trucks," Simeri said. "A few from Phoenix are coming to provide a variety of things to offer."

To learn more about the parade and festival, visit the websites www.avondale.org/events or goodyearaz.gov/parade.

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