



Parade Organization Tips

A parade can be a colorful and exciting addition to an event and can attract out-of-town people to Tombstone. With forethought, your parade can be an exciting blend of music, marching units, cars, festival queens, and more... However, without organization, the event could be a disappointing combination of music groups spaced too closely, unattractive entries, animals accidentally placed too close to loud vehicles that could frighten them, and so on. Organization will reduce this sort of mistake. Below are some parade organizational tips:

1. Choose a parade chairperson and a small committee that has the authority to make and carry out parade policy and procedures. You need to recruit a committee to handle the myriad aspects of a parade, from concept to clean-up. Make sure everyone has a particular job to do and is aware of the basics. A high level of enthusiasm and the ability to carry out responsibilities are extremely important for committee members
2. It's best to realize you've got to give yourself sufficient lead time (preferably 6 months to a year). Also realize that it's better to err on the side of having too many people to help you rather than too few.
3. Decide on a parade budget. Some possible costs include VIP travel or lunch, postage, photocopying costs, long distance phone calls, and paying for a band or banners.
4. Select the parade starting time and route. Before obtaining needed permits, have a theme, plan, dates, times, route... Town permits are needed because you'll be using public streets, putting up barriers...Apply to The City of Tombstone for your permit. Be sure to coordinate your local police department of parade details.
5. Decide on parade guidelines.
6. Encourage everyone and every unit that is going to march to pre-register. This way you can be sure to let people know where to line up. And this will also allow you to separate animals and motorized vehicles and take in consideration any other safety concerns. Our streets are narrow - there is not much room to maneuver or turn around. Mark the streets with washable spray painted entry number corrals. If you decide to set an entry deadline, leave enough time between the deadline and parade day to create the lineup order and then mail out lineup information to the participants. Advertise the deadline in newspapers, social media, and on radio stations' community calendars.
7. Ask potential participants to complete an entry form that includes their name and/or the organization's name, contact person's name, complete mailing address email address, and telephone number. Also ask what the entry type of entry they have (vehicle, animal, horse drawn, walking). One way to do this is to offer a list of possible entry types like queen (car or float), antique car, float, marching unit, horses (how many?), marching band, car, musical and other. Also ask for a brief description of the entry. Include the deadline on the entry form along with the names and numbers of people to call if the entrants have questions. It is a good idea to also include the parade guidelines on this sheet.

8. Keep track of entries by recording each one on a 3 x 5 card so all entries can be organized alphabetically. Include all the information that was on the entry form.
9. Set up the lineup. This is very important so take time to do it right. One method is to cut pieces of business card size paper. Write the name of each entry on a piece of paper. Use a highlighter to mark the musical entries. On a large table lay out all of the cards so you can quickly look them over and begin lining up your mock parade.

More Specific Tips:

- Start with a big opening, something spectacular, your showiest band with police cars and sirens and banners telling what parade it is.
- Don't place similar entries next to each other.
- Spread out musical entries evenly.
- Put marching groups that include small children close to the front so they don't have so far to walk.
- Keep noisy entries away from animal entries.
- Put horses at the end and make sure there's someone to follow directly behind them to clean up messes. Marching units don't like to follow horses.
- Place fire trucks at the end so they can leave quickly in an emergency.
- Look over the mock parade lineup and visualize the parade. Does it "look" right?
- Design the parade route so that it circles back to the starting point. This allows participants to return to their awaiting vehicles, prevents participants who have completed the route from flowing back through the parade while still in progress, and allows you to establish one central command post.
- If you want to make the parade more special, providing boutonnieres and corsages to the day's V.I.P.'s.
- Contact groups like the Shriner's; they often have very entertaining parade units. They do accept donations.
- Invite other local festival queens to participate.
- If the parade is to last 50-60 minutes, it should have 60-70 entries including 5-7 musical groups.
- Send out lineup information to entrants that includes their lineup number and when and where to lineup.
- On parade day, have extra people to help lineup the parade. If possible, have the lineup crew wear identifying clothing such as Red shirts...Make sure each parade volunteer has a copy of the lineup order and have the volunteers spread out on the lineup route to direct entrants. Each parade volunteers along the route should have a walkie-talkie - this can help keep things moving smoothly, and the walkie-talkies come in handy in case of an emergency.
- A videotape of the parade is a great way to analyze areas that need improvement.
- After the parade meet with the committee to discuss what went well and what needed improvement and re-set parade policy for the future year. With one parade under your belt, next year's event will be even better.
- After the parade, send thank you notes to participants and crew. Remember, the more fun you have with the parade, the more fun your spectators will have.