



Town of Stratford

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STRATFORD CANCELS ANNUAL GREAT PUMPKIN FESTIVAL DUE TO COVID-19 VIRTUAL PUMPKIN CARVING CONTEST ANNOUNCED

STRATFORD- Stratford's annual Great Pumpkin Festival, scheduled for Saturday, October 17th at Boothe Memorial Park, has been canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, however a virtual pumpkin carving contest is being planned to keep the Halloween spirit alive. Following CDC recommendations, the Town of Stratford is excited to announce a **Virtual Pumpkin Carving Contest**. The contest, sponsored by Celebrate Stratford and **Bridgeport Fittings**, will be held on the Celebrate Stratford Facebook page. Participants are encouraged to share photographs of their creations on the Facebook page. Judging categories will include most creative, spookiest, funniest and Best in Show. Winners will receive a gift card to a local Stratford restaurant and recognition on the Celebrate Stratford Facebook page, as well as other Town-sponsored social media platforms. Please upload your submission by October 28th. Winners will be announced on October 30th.

For more information, or to upload your submission, visit the Celebrate Stratford Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/celebratestratford>.

If you are not on Facebook but would like to participate in the contest, email a picture of your submission to info@CelebrateStratford.com.

The Great Pumpkin Festival is an event is run by the Commission which consists of volunteers and the volunteer non-profit groups that occupy the park.

"Though canceling The Great Pumpkin Festival was not an easy decision to make, the Boothe Park Commission along with the representative members of the non-profit organizations felt better to ere on the side of caution and not subject participants to activities that cannot comply with social distancing guidelines," shared **Mayor Laura R. Hoydick**.

The Great Pumpkin Festival, hosted by the Boothe Park Commission, traditionally includes horse-drawn hay rides, bounce houses, a roaming train ride and access to Boothe Memorial Park historic exhibits. Unfortunately these popular attractions are considered high-risk by the Center for Disease Control

(CDC), making social distancing nearly impossible. Additionally, members of the Boothe Park Commission voiced apprehension on volunteering at the event due to under-lying health issues and concern with contracting COVID-19.

Boothe Park Commission chairman, Councilman Jim Connor (R) - District 8, said, "The decision to cancel this year's Great Pumpkin Festival was made with thoughtful consideration. Keeping Stratford families, our commission members and volunteers safe is of utmost importance. We look forward to holding a great event, better than ever, next year."

The CDC recently issued a statement advising families to avoid traditional Halloween celebrations. More information on the CDC's stance on Halloween may be found here:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/holidays.html#halloween>

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