



Photo by Hunter Middleton

The annual Santa Claus parade travelled through Belleville last Sunday. Families gathered on both sides of the street early to secure their spot to watch the floats and organizations joining the parade this year. There was lots to look with many giving out treats and souvenirs to the children.

Santa Claus came to town

By Hunter Middleton

Sunday night brought a clear crisp night for spectators lining up along Bridge Street for the Belleville Santa Claus parade.

Many families arrived early to secure a spot, lining the street in lawn chairs, toboggans and blankets while waiting for the parade to start. Children played in the season's first snowfall delivered to the Belleville area over the last few days. The sounds of Christmas music and sirens started the parade off at 4:30 as the floats set off on the route travelling from Belleville fairgrounds to the Bay View Mall.

Sticking to tradition, the beginning

floats included postal workers collecting children's letters to Santa, followed by floats from the Rotary Club of Belleville, Gleaners Food Bank, and Belleville Professional Firefighters Christmas Toy Drive collecting food, toy, and money donations for various organizations in the Quinte area. Following behind were many brightly lit and heavily decorated floats from businesses across Belleville, with the largest floats coming from Procter and Gamble and Black Diamond followed by Whoville on wheels with multiple Grinches, Cindy Lou, and Max being the starring characters on the float. As well as floats were many different groups without floats and walking

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Elexicon Energy's Justin Henriquez

the entire route, including the Quinte Humane Society, Furball's Choice, and Besties Pet Spa and Cuisine. They were joined by many four-legged friends in colourful sweaters to match the human walking partner.

The parade had some new floats

this year including two well decorated bucket trucks from Elexicon Energy, which handed out candy and light sabers with the company logo on them. Lineperson Justin Henriquez who co-ordinated the addition of the trucks in the parade, said that with addition of many new workers to their office this year, many with younger families, that the idea was brought up to put in a float. With the company behind the idea, the decorating began. "I don't know, being like first timers at this, we just bought a bunch of lights, a bunch of decorations and kind of tried to make it half decent." With a positive experience for all Elexicon Energy will be back for next year. "We

were pretty happy with the turnout. The kids had a blast and it seemed like everyone did, for the most part," Henriquez commented.

Ending the parade was the big man himself, Santa Claus. People of all ages waved, clapped, and shouted "Merry Christmas" in response to Santa's greeting. Many children also found their second wind and were jumping with joy at his appearance. As the lights and music started to fade people started to pack and head to their respected homes some singing Christmas carols on the way to their cars.

The next scheduled Santa Claus parade will be held in Bloomfield on Nov. 25 starting at 6:30 p.m.

Downtown twinkles with Christmas market

By Kenzie Friesen

The streets of downtown Belleville have been lit up by Christmas lights on every corner for this year's Enchanted Holiday Market.

The downtown district was filled with food trucks, local markets, ice skating, live entertainment, visits from Santa, and more.

The market will be taking place every Thursday to Sunday from Nov. 17 until Dec. 18, and vendors and shoppers alike could not be more excited to be back in action, especially after a long two-year break due to the pandemic.

There were plenty of first-timers just as excited to be there as well, like Alison Rodrigues, owner of Peace of Crystal, who said she couldn't wait to get to the opening day and start setting up her own tent for the market. She sells hand-crafted crystal earrings, bracelets, rings, and artwork.

"Getting a tent here was actually so competitive... but a spot opened up last minute and I couldn't say no. I rushed here to make my tent with everything I had and ended up borrowing a lot of decorations from friends who were kind enough to help me out, and I'm just really happy to be here this year!" she describes happily at the end of a successful opening day.

The last time that the Downtown District held the market was in December of 2019. The event was wildly successful, and is still remembered



Photo by Kenzie Friesen

Alison Rebecca Rodrigues of Peace of Crystal is shown during the opening night of the Enchanted Holiday Market happening in Belleville's Downtown District. Rodrigues displays her handmade, one-of-a-kind crystal jewelry.

fondly as the year that Elton John impersonator, Elton Rhon, took over the stage in during the t and made

the crowd come alive while playing the most popular Elton John hits all-night long.

This only made the holiday season of 2020 more bleak, when the city wouldn't be able to relive that same

kind of excitement the following year due to COVID-19.

This year, however, Front Street was packed full of smiling faces with everyone strolling down the festive street on opening night. The sidewalks filled by rows of different kinds of unique local shops, all fully decorated while proudly their merchandise.

Wooden huts for the shops were full of bright colours and lights, selling everything imaginable - from palm readings, clothing, hand-made blankets, candles to baked goods and home décor.

Every other shop was also lit up with bright lights and decorations in every window as they have also extended their hours to cater to late night Christmas shoppers roaming the market. Along with the side market, stone fire pits set up and available to the public in the streets to relax and warm up in front of during shopping and snacking breaks.

"I didn't even think Belleville could look like this... it really looks like something out of a Hallmark movie," says Bryce Miller, who was huddled in front of the warm fire pit with friends, enjoying a cup of warm hot chocolate on a very chilly Thursday evening.

Whether it's the horse-drawn carriages, tasty holiday treats, LED swing lights, live music, or the sweet scent of hot chocolate in the air, Belleville's holiday market will definitely leave you and your family enchanted this holiday season.