



FLOAT APPLICATION

2027 BLOSSOMTIME FESTIVAL

121st GRAND FLORAL PARADE

May 8, 2027

“Blossomtime...Under the Big Top!”

Parade starts at 1:00 p.m. Main Street closes at 10:00 a.m.

Application Deadlines:

January 8, 2027- Blossomtime franchised community floats need to confirm by this date that you will or will not be having a float in the parade

March 2, 2027 - Deadline – Sections 1 thru 4 must be signed, completed & submitted to Blossomtime

March 26, 2027 - Final Parade Line-Up goes to print

May 1, 2026 – Marshaling/De-marshaling information will be sent to your main contact and float driver via email. We will only mail the participant car passes via USPS to your Primary Contact.

Section 1: FLOAT CATEGORY

- ☐ **Category A** Community float that:
- Has a franchise agreement with Blossomtime Festival
 - Decorates with the 2027 Blossomtime Festival “Theme” in mind
 - Has Riders
 - Chooses to participate in Judging for the purpose of an Award
- ☐ **Category B** A float participant that:
- Does not have a franchise agreement with the Blossomtime Festival
 - Non-affiliated or non-sponsored organizations must pay a participation fee upon approval of your entry:
 - Community organization
 - Service groups
 - Business or trade organizations who are not already sponsors (\$200)

- May or may not have Riders
- May or may not choose to participate in Judging for the purpose of an Award as indicated in check box below

☐

YES. Judge my Float. All judged floats **MUST** decorate with the Parade theme in mind, and adhere to all float guideline (See Judging Section 4 – 5B)

☐

NO. Don't Judge my Float.

The Blossomtime Grand Floral Parade does not sponsor or accept any float which displays or attempts to promote any "Issue Advertising". This includes Political candidates or those groups who support candidates, groups who support or oppose any question that would be the subject of a referendum, legislative, executive or judicial determination of a public question. We earnestly solicit your cooperation with these instructions and those of the Parade officials and marshals on duty on Parade day.

Section 2: FLOAT CONTACT INFO

** Required Field*

Please note that any information packets that require mailing via United States Postal Service will be sent to **Primary Contact Only**. We normally communicate with you via email or have forms available on our website www.blossomtimefestival.org

Name of Organization/Sponsor * _____

IS THIS YOUR FIRST TIME YOU OR YOUR ORGANIZATION IS BUILDING A FLOAT: YES NO

Primary Float Contact First * _____ Last * _____

Primary Contact Mailing Address *

- Street _____ City _____
- State _____ Zip _____

Primary Contact Phone # * _____ Primary Contact E-Mail * _____

Secondary Float Contact:

- Secondary Contact Name * First _____ Last _____
- Secondary Contact Phone # * _____ Secondary E-Mail * _____

Float Driver: ARE YOU A FIRST TIME FLOAT DRIVER YES NO

- Float Driver Name First * _____ Last * _____
- Float Driver Mailing Address * _____
- Float Driver Phone # * _____ Float Driver E-Mail * _____

** Required Field*

Section 3: Float Description & Theme

** Required Field*

Float Dimensions: Length: _____ Width: _____

Float Theme: * _____

Names and Titles of Riders on the Float (PLEASE INCLUDE PHONETIC SPELLING IF NEEDED): *

[illegible]

Phone: 269-982-8016 Fax: 269-982-8018 Email: parade@blossomtimefestival.org

Section 4: Rules, Requirements, Judging and Float Reservation Agreement *(Read and Sign is Required)*

1. ENTERING THE PARADE

- A. The deadline for entering your floats in the Grand Floral Parade is **March 2, 2027**. All entry forms must be in the Blossomtime Festival office by 5:00 p.m. on this date. Entry forms may be mailed, emailed: parade@blossomtimefestival.org , faxed 269-982-8018 or delivered in person. **No revisions or additions to your Media Info will be accepted after March 2, 2027.**

2. FLOAT SPECIFICATIONS

- A. Definition: A parade float is an elaborately decorated three-dimensional figure or scene. A float shall consist of a flat bed or tandem trailer with pneumatic tires to be propelled by an approved power unit and decorated with approved materials. To qualify as a float, the unit must be skirted and must be in good taste for a family event. Approval of all units will be at the discretion of Blossomtime Inc.

B. Size specifications:

- 1) Length: **22.0 feet minimum**, No maximum length limit. No exceptions will be allowed. The 16 feet width maximum is due to curb spacing, roundabouts and wheels that support outriggers. (*Maximum width & height: refer to requirements below*). Dimensions include float, tow vehicle and tandem units. Single units must not exceed a length that would prohibit the unit from making a right angle/90 degree turn from one street to another with a maximum float width of 16 feet. Multiple units must track behind each other to negotiate the same turn.

- 2) Width: 6 feet minimum 16 feet maximum

- 3) Height: No minimum 16 feet maximum

Be aware staging areas are not always 16 feet accessible

- 4) Float bed ground clearance: 1 foot minimum 4 feet maximum

- C. Framework and Outer Finish: Steel, aluminum or wood under chicken wire, netting or plastic sprayed canvas. Outer finish should be: festooning/twist, fringe, petal paper, foil, paper mache,

live or artificial flowers, natural materials, fabric or jeweled fabric, grass matting, wallboard letters, pennant or flag decorations. Petal paper is the preferred covering of choice. The entire float is to be completely covered. Materials should be fire resistant as outlined in section 7 F.

D. Float Tongue: Subject to the width restriction in section 2 B. Either wheeled or suspended are permissible. Float may be multiple units but each unit is to be an integral part of the whole using the same theme. Wheels should be completely concealed. **Overhangs must clear CURBS, ROUNDABOUTS and ISLANDS.**

E. Animation is highly desirable but not mandatory.

F. CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP:

- 1) If a float secures a corporate sponsorship (single sponsor), the distinctive company signature or trademark may be put on the **side** of the float (**near the rear** of the float). The logo is not to exceed 26" and must be in proportion to the lettering on the float and constructed of the same materials as the lettering. The sponsor's name MUST BE SECONDARY to the float theme and community name.
- 2) Floats are not to be commercial in any nature. The theme of the float and the primary character of the float must be obvious.
- 3) Lettering may be made of cut out wallboard or other substantial materials. Paint, foil, glitter or floral material must be used to cover the lettering. No oil cloth or other painted bill board type lettering will be permitted. Maximum letter height is up to 16". Width is to be proportionate.

G. COMMERCIAL SPONSORSHIP (multiple donors/sponsors):

The Blossomtime Festival acknowledges that community floats may be built with donations and contributions. To this extent the Festival will permit the recognition of donors and contributors for a community float.

- 1) In the marshaling area a community may set up a donor and/or contributor board listing the names of its sponsors and donors. It should be placed on an easel along side the float on the morning of the Parade. This board may later be **attached and displayed on the back of your float.**

You may list your donors and sponsors on a sponsorship board ONLY. Each float has the option of one of the following depending on the space on the back of your float:

a. Two identical 2 ft. x 3 ft. sponsor/donor boards (list same donor/sponsor on each board).

OR

b. One large 3 ft. x 4 ft. sponsor/donor board (list all your donors and sponsors).

These boards are to be constructed so that they can be attached to the LOWER 1/3 of the back of your float to acknowledge your sponsors/donors. These boards are not to be hand written but made to look professional. The use of computer generated list of names, lettering, or a professionally made sign may be made. The sign is not to take away from the theme or design of the float. It should appear to be part of

the float and blend in as well with color and concept of the float. This sign should not overshadow or take precedence over the float itself. If the donor/sponsor board is larger than 2 ft x 3 ft OR 3 ft x 4 ft you are in violation of the rules and it will be removed.

SPONSOR/DONOR NAMES PRINTED ON AN INDIVIDUAL SHEET OF PAPER THAT IS STAPLED TO THE BACK OF THE FLOAT IS NOT ALLOWED.

- 2) Lettering may be made of cut out wallboard or other substantial materials. Paint, foil, glitter or floral material may be used to cover the lettering. No oil cloth or other painted bill board type lettering will be permitted. Maximum letter height is up to 16 inches. Width is to be proportionate.
- 3) Identification on the float will be limited to the community name (Miss Hometown) and will conform to all the size requirements of maximum letter height of 16 inches, width to be proportionate. Floats may display the COMMUNITY OR FESTIVAL name and logo on both sides of the float or on both sides of the tow unit. Do not display on both the float and the tow vehicle.

3. INSURANCE

Entries that are supplied by professional float builders will not be accepted until the builder files a certificate of insurance with the Blossomtime Festival office with the following limits:
\$100,000/\$300,000 Liability \$10,000/\$50,000 Property Damage

4. VARIANCES

Any variance from the rules must be applied for in writing by the float builder and may not be considered granted until permission is received in writing from Blossomtime Festival Inc. Such variances must be submitted with your application.

5. FESTIVAL AND COMMUNITY ROYALTY GUIDELINES

THIS SECTION APPLIES TO ALL ROYALTY REGARDLESS OF BEING A FRANCHISED COMMUNITY OF THE BLOSSOMTIME FESTIVAL OR NOT.

- A. All Royalty **MUST** ride on a float, they may **NOT** ride in a convertible or other vehicle. The only exception would be someone with a state or national title with approval from the Blossomtime board of directors.
- B. If you plan on representing a missing title holder on your float, you may only do that with an official head shot, we will not allow full body pictures or cardboard cut outs of any title holder.
- C. **ONLY** the current Miss Blossomtime and court may wear white gowns on the float. Out of respect for the Blossomtime Court, we ask that no Queens or Kings wear white. Due to the fact that the Miss/Mr. Blossomtime float is not judged, this is a factor the Festival uses to help showcase them during the parade.

6. JUDGING INFORMATION

- A. All floats being judged MUST be in their designated marshaling area by **8:45 a.m.** on Parade day. Plan accordingly so that you arrive in the assembly area with sufficient time to set up your float and be ready by **8:45 a.m.** The decision of the judges will be **FINAL**.

Float judging begins at 9:00 a.m. and takes place until 11:00 a.m. If you have travel or mechanical difficulty getting to the assembly area before 7 am please communicate that to a Blossomtime Official, CALL CELL PHONE 269-930-0946 (Anna).

ANY FLOAT NOT SET UP AT 9:00 a.m. AND NOT READY FOR THE JUDGES WILL NOT PARTICIPATE in the FLOAT JUDGING.

A large white banner will designate winning floats. Banner carriers will be furnished by the winning community and will precede your unit in the Parade. **The banner carriers and float walkers will adhere to a dress code as follows:**

Women: May wear a costume to align with the float theme or a coordinating shirt by color or supporting the community or theme of the float with white pants or black pants. **NO JEANS AND NO LEGGINS/TIGHTS**

Men: May wear a costume to align with the float theme or a coordinating shirt by color or supporting the community theme of the float with Khaki or black pants **NO JEANS**

- B. Floats not conforming to the **2027 theme** will not be eligible for judging but may enter the Parade if all other rules and regulations are met.

C. Only floats 22.0 feet or longer are eligible for judging

- D. FLOAT JUDGING POINT SYSTEM: When the judges evaluate your float they will be looking at the following 5 areas: Theme, Use of Color/Color Harmony, Beauty, Animation and Floral Display.

- E. No float entry participant or representative is permitted to present any of the float judges or Blossomtime representatives with a gift, token or food item in appreciation, nor may you speak to the judges to explain any part of the float. Any float violating this rule will forfeit any parade awards won.

These 5 categories will be scored from 1-20, 1 being the lowest and 20 being the highest. Each judge will score each float and category individually. The combined scores of the three judges for each float will determine the total overall score for the float. These scores will be used to determine the 9 float awards. Should you not have animation or floral display your score will be zero for that particular category.

There will be “extra credit” points available for floats incorporating their tow unit into the overall presentation of their float and incorporating the 5 categories of 1) theme, 2) use of color/color harmony, 3) beauty, 4) animation and 5) floral display. These points will add into final results.

7. DRIVER TRAINING

- A. It is mandatory that float builders acquaint their drivers with the operation of the tow vehicle prior to the start of the Parade.
- B. Each float must have their driver present in the marshaling area at all times.
- C. All drivers must have a valid driver's license and be at least 18 years of age.
- D. There will be a mandatory float driver's meeting at **11:30 a.m.** at the corner of State and Pearl Street, in St. Joseph. **A driver not attending this meeting may be grounds for having that float denied participation in the Parade.**

8. SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

THE FOLLOWING SAFETY REQUIREMENTS MUST BE FULLY ADHERED TO

- A. Handholds or other means of support must be provided for all personnel riding the float regardless of position, standing or sitting.
- B. Personnel locations on the float must be reinforced to adequately support the additional weight.
- C. Connections between tow vehicle and float and between the float and its float tongue must be approved safety couplings (i.e. solid tie or straight tongue). Safety chains must be used between tow vehicle and the float.

It is recommended that all float tongues should be the ball and hitch type (a ring on the end to fit over the ball with a locking mechanism). This would allow the float to be hooked up to an emergency tow that has a 2" ball on the back in the event of tow vehicle failure.

If the tongue of a float bed is not of the ball and hitch type, then the tongue must be able to be hooked up to a tow truck in the event of tow vehicle failure.

- D. At least one 1A-10BC dry chemical or larger fire extinguisher must be placed within the reach of the float driver in the tow unit. A second fire extinguisher must be placed on your float if you are using a gasoline powered generator or battery operated equipment. The second fire extinguisher must be a minimum size of 2A-20BC. Both units must be within its required service dates and fully operational. (Check CO extinguisher for proper clarification).
- E. **SMOKING ON OR NEAR FLOATS IS PROHIBITED.**

- F. Float inspection by the St. Joseph Fire Department will take place at 9:00 a.m. on Parade day.
ALL FLOATS MUST BE INSPECTED. No float will be allowed to enter the Parade route without being inspected. Float materials and costumes that are near any combustible areas MUST be made of flame-proof material or be sprayed with flame proofing fluid. (Flame-proofing solution: 7 oz. borax, 3 oz. powdered boric acid and 2 quarts hot water). Fire officials may ask you to remove highly combustible decorations from your float.

It is mandatory that the float driver and float chairman are to remain with the float during the entire inspection.

- G. All lug nuts on wheels must be checked before leaving the float construction site and assembly area. You are required to have a can of **"FIX-A-FLAT"** and a hand pump available in the event you have a flat tire. This shall allow you to seal a leak, go through the Parade route and return home.
- H. Provisions must be made for rapid entry and exit for your driver from the tow vehicles. Driver space must have adequate **ventilation** and **visibility** for proper control of the float and comfort of the driver. Driver space must be free of engine heat and fumes.
- I. Float decorations must be adequately protected from the power unit engine and tail pipe. **Exhaust** must be vented through a leak free, fire proof pipe, extending to a point **outside the drivers' enclosure**. It must extend in a direction away from the gasoline fill pipe
- J. Gasoline tanks should be filled immediately prior to the Parade. Gasoline containers are not allowed on the float or tow vehicle.
- K. All electric circuits must be properly fused.
- L. Gasoline powered generators are to be located in the extreme rear of the float where it can be controlled from the ground by your float personnel. This requirement is **PER THE CITY FIRE MARSHAL**.
- M. Generator and assembly must be separated from the float frame by a heat shield.
- N. The entire generator assembly must be completely enclosed by housing for newer models or a screened enclosure that would prohibit the entry of any foreign objects.
- O. All gasoline powered generator plants must be in sound mechanical condition having no leaks or other malfunctions causing a fire hazard.

9. FLOAT SUPERVISION

Float Riders

All float entries from Blossomtime Communities, other Communities and Festivals are allowed to have their royalty and court ride on the float. The float must adhere to all safety rules and pass safety inspection in order for the riders to be allowed on the float. For those float entries from commercial, business related, trade, charitable, nonprofits, for profits, clubs. Lodges, fraternal organizations,

Industrial, associations, and religious **NO ONE IS PERMITTED TO RIDE THE FLOAT WITHOUT APPROVAL FROM THE PARADE COMMITTEE.** The float also must adhere to all safety rules and pass safety inspection in order for the riders to be allowed on the float. Each float entrant shall be responsible for the supervision of their unit before, during and after the Parade. Each entrant must provide 2 adult float walkers (18 years of age or older) to accompany the float along the Parade route.

No more than 2 walkers are permitted to walk with the float, you may have up to 3 walkers if your float wins an award. Two (2) walkers will carry the banner, one (1) will walk behind the float as normal. **Both float walkers are required to walk BEHIND the float to assist float personnel during the Parade.** The float walkers are encouraged to dress in keeping with the theme of the unit or in an appropriate uniform. **No other walkers are permitted. Float walkers are not to wear blue jeans, leggings or shorts, and are encouraged to wear the same thing (ex: white shorts, royal blue polo shirt).** Please remember the Parade is televised and dress/costume and overall appearance is very important. The total number of float walkers is two.

10. TOW VEHICLES - Also Refer To 12 B

- A. The ideal vehicle for a tow vehicle is a garden tractor or a gator without roll bars. A simple frame can be built around your vehicle and then the construction of the design for your tow unit can take shape. If you use a vehicle with roll bars, the roll bars must either be removed or enclosed by a frame to be part of the tow vehicle and do not look like rolls bars. **Covered or uncovered roll bars "as is" are unacceptable as part of your tow vehicle.**
- B. The use of a truck and farm tractors is PERMITTED. **TRUCKS MAY BE NO MORE 80 INCHES IN HEIGHT AND 90 INCHES WIDE INCLUDING MIRRORS. TRUCKS MAY NOT HAVE A LIFT OF ANY KIND.** Truck must be no more than 5 years old, in parade ready, TV quality condition (clean, shined, no rust, no damage) with a stock muffler (no loud mufflers). Remember the tow vehicle is an extension of your float and it should not overpower or be bigger than your float.
- C. **If your tow vehicle is not in compliance with the tow vehicle rule, the Parade Official has the right to remove the tow vehicle and have your float pulled by a vehicle provided by the Blossomtime Festival if available.**
- D. It is permissible to build your float over a self-propelled unit as long as the size and all of the safety requirements are met (see item 7). Garden tractors should have sufficient power to tow your float. Brakes need to be sufficient to stop your unit and be in proportion to the size and weight of your float.
- E. ONE DRIVER and ONE RIDER are allowed in a tow vehicle. Only a driver is allowed for a tractor. A rider must ride in front passenger seat and must not distract from the float and its riders.

No loose coverings will be allowed, i.e. tarp, plastic, plastic trash bags, plastic table clothes, etc. If you arrive on parade day and tape material over your tow vehicle you risk the chance of being out of compliance and forfeit your spot in the parade line-up.

11. GIVE-A-WAYS AND AUTOGRAPHS

- A. The Parade Committee will not allow ANYTHING to be dispersed from a float, tow vehicle or from unit walkers. Failure to comply will jeopardize your eligibility to participate in future Parades. **ABSOLUTELY NO CANDY MAY BE THROWN OR PASSED OUT.**
- B. Autographs are strictly prohibited during the Parade.

12. CONDUCT DURING THE PARADE

- A. Once your unit has crossed the starting point it must maintain a **75 feet** spacing interval between units. The original interval between units will be controlled by the official starter. **Drivers must drive in a straight line at all times, no zig-zagging.**
- B. The entire Parade route will be monitored by Parade marshals who will be equipped with radios should you have problems.
- C. **AT NO TIME WILL ANY UNIT BE ALLOWED TO STOP AND PERFORM**

PLEASE DO NOT STOP FOR THE TV CAMERAS. Interviews with float personnel must be conducted while the unit is moving. Please inform your driver, float walkers of this rule. Instruct those riding on your float not to get off the unit at any time along the Parade route.

Units That Do Not Follow This Procedure Will Be Asked to Pull Out of the Parade!

- D. Units are reminded they are a part of the Parade until they cross the release point at Sixth and Wall Streets in Benton Harbor.
- E. The use of alcohol by float drivers or Parade participants is strictly prohibited. Those not complying will be asked to leave the Parade.

13. AUTOMOBILES

- A. A decorated car is not considered a float.
- B. The use of convertibles will be restricted to those carrying dignitaries, costumed characters and invited guests of the Festival.

WEATHER POLICY: The parade will proceed, rain or shine. However, in case of severe weather (thunder and lightning), the parade officials will institute a 20 MINUTE DELAY. Each instance of thunder or lightning will reset the 20 minute clock. There must be a complete 20 minutes without thunder or

lightening for the event to continue. If the weather does not look to be clearing after multiple delays, the parade organizer will make the decision to cancel. Please plan on being at your post as scheduled.

RESERVATION STATEMENT

All entries are subject to approval by the Blossomtime Parade Committee.

Please review and copy the **Mandatory Fire and Safety Check List** for your records. This is available on our website www.blossomtimefestival.org

Exception to any rule contained herein requires approval of the Blossomtime Parade Committee. Violation of any rule contained herein may result in the immediate removal of a unit prior to or during the parade and render the unit ineligible to participate in future parades.

In consideration of the acceptance of our Float entry in the 2025 Blossomtime Grand Floral Parade, we hereby release the Blossomtime Festival from any and all liability, as well as, any and all injuries or damage whatsoever arising from our participation in the aforementioned parade.

I have read and agree to the above Reservation Statement. * ☐ YES * *Required Field*

Signature

Date

PLEASE RETURN SIGNED AND DATED APPLICATIONS TO:

Blossomtime Festival ~ 2330 S. Cleveland ~ St. Joseph, MI 49085 M-F 9 to 5

Phone: 269-982-8016 Fax: 269-982-8018 Email: parade@blossomtimefestival.org

Visit our Website for a parade application www.blossomtimefestival.org