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**NEWSLETTER / NEWS RELEASE
From the Office of the Mayor**

For more information contact:
Mark Bretz, Bretz Public Relations
314-838-9371 or mark@bretzpr.com

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‘THE WORLD OF ENTERTAINMENT’ SERVES AS THEME OF 2016 VALLEY OF FLOWERS FESTIVAL AND DRAWS BIG CROWDS TO FUN EVENTS AS WELL

Thousands of people turned out May 6 through 8, 2016 to take part in the 54th annual Valley of Flowers Festival in Florissant. The return of Nino the Clown and his Zoppe Italian Family Circus, free events for children, a variety of fabulous foods, fun carnival rides and booths and mostly beautiful weather all combined for a wonderful weekend for the traditional first spring festival in the metropolitan St. Louis area.

This year’s event had as its theme “The World of Entertainment,” and featured Florissant Civic Center Theatre director Gary Gaydos as grand marshal of the Valley of Flowers Festival parade on Sunday, May 8. The parade, which started at the Eagan Civic Center and concluded at Knights of Columbus Park, culminated in the crowning of the 2016 Valley of Flowers Queen Katie Wissler who was sponsored by Winschel Carpet Service. First-Runner Up was Ally Frey and the Queen’s Maids were Rebecca Bazan, Tory Turpin and Jennifer Welch.

The festival was held at the James J. Eagan Civic Center, the Knights of Columbus Park and other locations in Florissant. Families with young children enjoyed the free Children’s Celebration of Performing Arts on the grounds of the Eagan Civic Center, where Nino the Clown and his Old World-style circus performed to capacity crowds at four one-hour shows held Friday and Saturday in the traveling troupe’s 500-seat big top set up adjacent to the food court.

Other performers at the Children’s Celebration included Babaloo Music and Fun, Doktor Kaboom! interactive, one-man science variety show and RW Magic as well as the Kincaid Karacter Puppets, the Muttville Comics dog act and the Bubble Bus. Following the Children’s Celebration patrons enjoyed the music of Los Patrones presented by the Hispanic Festival Inc.

“The Valley of Flowers Festival in Florissant traditionally offers three days of fun-filled activities for families and children of all ages,” said Florissant Mayor Thomas Schneider. “This year’s theme of ‘The World of Entertainment’ allowed us to honor our grand marshal, Gary Gaydos. Gary and his Eagan Civic Center Theatre staff work very hard every year to bring in talented performers who entertain our enthusiastic audiences with their wide variety of acts.”

Gaydos said that the Florissant Civic Center Theatre was able to bring Nino to the festival with a festival grant from the Missouri Arts Council as well as financial assistance from the Regional Arts Commission, the City of Florissant, the Florissant Fine Arts Council, the Valley of Flowers Festival Committee and donations from many local area businesses.

Mayor Schneider thanked “the team effort of all city employees, the hard work of our employees behind the scenes that makes Florissant a better place to live.”

Family-only rules that were instituted originally for the 2012 festival by Mayor Schneider with input from Florissant Police Chief Colonel Tim Lowery and his Command Staff, the Knights of Columbus, the Valley of Flowers Festival committee and local businesses also contributed to the positive impact of the event.

“The Valley of Flowers Festival is known as a family event,” said Chief Lowery. “We had no problems, no fights and no disturbances at either the Knights of Columbus park grounds or the Eagan Civic Center. The rules and regulations implemented in 2012 have helped ensure safety and security at all of our festival locations.”

Chief Lowery said that the City of Florissant had 12 uniformed officers, plus a captain and a sergeant, on site at the Knights fairground, plus one Parks Department police and 2 uniformed officers at Eagan Center.

The City of Florissant presents its Festival performing arts events with financial support from the Regional Arts Commission and the Missouri Arts Council. For information on the Valley of Flowers Festival, visit www.florissantvalleyofflowers.com or call 314-837-0033.

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