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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JUNE 24, 2020

THE 58TH ANNUAL VALLEY OF FLOWERS TO BE HELD JULY 31ST – AUGUST 2ND

Spring would normally mark the festivity of the Valley of Flowers Festival. This year the event was cancelled due to the restrictions required to halt the spread of the COVID19 virus. **The slogan on signs around town say: “Together We Are Florissant Strong.” And the Valley of Flowers Festival celebrating the Saint Louis Zoo, will prove that the slogan is true.** In 2020 this Florissant family-oriented event, normally the North County’s “first festival of spring,” will be celebrated starting July 31st through August 2nd. Although the festival will be downsized without a carnival, it will still feature a variety of attractions highlighted by the Grand Parade! The Queen and her Court will have been crowned prior to the Festival.

The Valley of Flowers committee is working on procuring some familiar attractions as well as providing some different activities. The 2020 festival will still have some features like “Touch-A-Truck” to which everyone is accustomed, Brush Capades (there is a fee associated) where children can create their own masterpieces, also pony rides for the children on Friday and Saturday. The festival will introduce some new experiences including well-known local bands for evening entertainment. The Saint Louis Zoo will be highlighted in the Grand Parade.

This year the only venue for the three-day festivities on July 31, August 1 and 2, will be at the Duchesne Home Association Fairgrounds formally known as the Knights of Columbus Park. Enjoy browsing the work of the crafters, the magical stylings of RW Magic, and as always, the delicious food including the ever-popular funnel cakes. In the evenings there will be famous bands entertaining under the band shell.

On July 31st activities begin at 3:00 p.m. with many things for families to enjoy including food trucks, soda, water, beer, wine, and entertainment. The band **“Rough Ryders”** will perform from 7:00 p.m. until 9:00 p.m. There will be no charge for the performance. They play country favorites and rock favorites by Johnny Cash, Brad Paisley, Trace Adkins, Garth Brooks, Toby Keith, George Strait, Luke Bryan, Jason Aldean, Kenny Chesney, Eric Church, Florida Georgia Line, Miranda Lambert, Randy Houser, Little Big Town, Cole Swindell to Name a few.

On August 1st, the festivities begin at 11:00 a.m. featuring the “Touch A Truck.” You can put your imagination in gear and go! This is your chance to get behind the wheel of some of your favorite big trucks. The event features police and fire vehicles, a school bus, construction vehicles and more! Children can climb, take photos and explore the vehicles on display. Families will be able to continue to enjoy the entertainment, food and drinks on the Fairgrounds.

The day will conclude with the band **“Power Play”** performing from 7:00 p.m. until 9:00 p.m. One of St. Louis' hottest bands Power Play generates energy and excitement everywhere they perform. Their music spans many genres including Jazz, Classic Rock, R&B, Funk, Reggae, Motown, Top 40, Swing, Soul, Latin and Pop – Power Play does it all! And there is no charge to enjoy the music.

The Grand Parade on August 2nd is a highlight of the weekend. This year's parade theme is **“The Valley of Flowers Celebrates The Saint Louis Zoo”**. It will feature mobile units departing from the James J. Eagan Center at 1:45 p.m. Decorated vehicles and floats will proceed west on Parker Road to New Florissant Road where youth and walking units, as well as the marching bands will merge. The complete parade will then travel south on New Florissant prior to turning west on rue St. Francois past the official parade reviewing stands, then left on St. Ferdinand, proceeding then to Washington Street and concluding at the Duchesne Home Association Fairgrounds. When the parade concludes at the Fairgrounds, awards will be presented to the various winning parade units and their sponsors.

Please arrive early to get good seats along the parade route for one of the largest and most colorful parades in the St. Louis Metro area; then join us at the Home Association Pavilion for the exciting award ceremonies! Then from 3:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m. enjoy entertainment, food and beverages at the Duchesne Home Association Fairgrounds.

The 2020 Parade Marshall is Dr. Jeffrey P. Bonner

Dr. Jeffrey Bonner, Ph.D., is the Dana Brown President and CEO. In April 2002, Dr. Bonner was appointed President and CEO of the Saint Louis Zoo. In 2009, his position was endowed by the Dana Brown Charitable Trust. He has chaired the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA), the Amphibian Ark, the International Species Information System, and the Madagascar Fauna and Flora Group. He has served on the board of the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA) and currently serves on several boards, including the Conservation Breeding Specialist Group, BioSTL, Higher Education Channel TV, Forest Park Forever and St. Louis Regional Chamber of Growth Association (RCGA). He is a member of The Explorers Club, the Academy of Science and the AZA. Dr. Bonner received his doctorate from Columbia University in New York. He is a Burgess Fellow, Traveling Fellow, Fulbright Scholar, President's Fellow and a recipient of the National Research Service Award. Dr. Bonner is the author of numerous articles and books, including "Sailing with Noah, Stories from the World of Zoos." The Festival is proud to have Dr. Bonner as the Parade Marshall for the 2020 Grand Parade.

Please visit the Valley of Flowers website (www.florissantvallyofflowers.com) and their Facebook page for more updates as the committee finalizes the participants in the Festival.

Remember **“Together We Are Florissant Strong”** and come enjoy some family-time together to celebrate.