



10 11TH STREET • P.O. BOX 388 • ELKINS, WV 26241 • OFFICE: (304) 636-1824 • WWW.FORESTFESTIVAL.COM

Dear Parade Participant:

Plans are currently underway for the 88th Mountain State Forest Festival scheduled for September 26 - October 4, 2026, in Elkins, West Virginia. The MSFF is one of the state's oldest and grandest festivals, hosting approximately 100,000 festival patrons and visitors annually. This year's theme is **"Autumn in Color."**

Our Grand Feature Parade is an approximately 2.5-mile, 2-hour parade featuring many bands, floats, special units, and dignitaries. The Grand Feature Parade will take place on Saturday, October 3, 2026.

This is your official invitation to participate in the 2026 Grand Feature Parade. **Line-up will begin at 10:00 a.m.** Check-in is in the tent area of the Southern States parking lot on South Davis Avenue. Please review the Grand Feature Parade Rules and Regulations for details. The Antique/Classic Car Parade is set to begin at 1:00 p.m., followed by the Industrial Truck/Equipment Parade at 1:15 p.m., and the Grand Feature Parade step-off at 1:30 p.m.

Please find the following attachments to complete your application.

- Grand Feature Parade Application
- Grand Feature Parade Rules & Regulations
- Mountain State Forest Festival General Rules & Regulations.

Please complete the application and sign and date all three forms. You may mail the documents to the Mountain State Forest Festival Office OR attach an image of the documents in an email to grandfeatureparademsff@gmail.com no later than **Friday, September 18, 2026**. We encourage early registration.

The MSFF Grand Feature Parade Committee will notify you upon acceptance of your application. Line-up details will be published on or before Friday, October 3 at www.forestfestival.com. Printed line-up details will be in The Inter-Mountain newspaper on or before Saturday, October 4. If you arrive on parade day to participate, your entry will be welcomed and added to the end of the final division, but it will not be published in the line-up. Thank you for understanding the importance of pre-registration.

Sincerely,
Tamara Bailey
Amanda Carter
Derek Wetsch
2026 Assistant Directors

****Please direct all parade inquiries to grandfeatureparademsff@gmail.com, not to the Forest Festival office****

____ Division (for admin only)



**2026 Mountain State Forest Festival
Grand Feature Parade Float Application**

____ Location (for admin only)

APPLICATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BY FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2026

Please check one:

____ Parade Participation Only (will not be judged and will not be eligible for prizes)

____ Parade and Competitive Entry (will be judged and will be eligible for prizes)

***Name of Float Sponsor/Award Recipient:** _____

***Address** _____
Street City State Zip

***Sponsoring Group's Background Information and Organizational Purpose:** _____

***Name of Person in Charge/Float Award Recipient:** _____

***Telephone Numbers:** Cell _____ Home _____ Work _____

***Email Address (required and write legibly):** _____

Construction Classification (see rules for clarity):

____ Professional Float (Name of Professional Float Builder): _____

OR

____ Amateur Float:

***Description and Theme of Your Float (Photo or sketch should accompany the application):**

***The float will contain music:** Yes or No

***Type of Towing Vehicle:** (Sponsor is required to provide pull vehicle and driver)

____ Motorized ____ Non-Motorized ____ Horse Drawn ____ Self Propelled Driver Information

Name of Driver: _____ **Driver's License #:** _____

***This will be verified at parade check-in. Be sure the driver brings their license.**

Name of Liability Insurance Company: _____

Policy Number: _____

*Any pulling vehicle loaned by an automobile dealership not covered by automobile liability insurance provided by the dealership must be covered by automobile liability insurance provided by the driver or the float sponsor.

Please complete and return to:

Grand Feature Parade Assistant Directors
Mountain State Forest Festival
PO Box 388
Elkins, WV 26241
OR email: grandfeatureparademsff@gmail.com

You will be notified of your acceptance.

Release: By signing this form, I release the Mountain State Forest Festival from all personal injury or property damage that I may incur because of my participation in the Mountain State Forest Festival.

***SIGNATURE** _____

***DATE** _____



Mountain State Forest Festival Grand Feature Parade Float Rules & Regulations

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

A. Any group or individual can build or obtain a float from any source and enter it in the Grand Feature Parade, if issued an invitation and if all rules and regulations herein are met.

B. Those potential float sponsors not receiving an invitation through our regular mailing may request an invitation by contacting: Grand Feature Parade Chair Mountain State Forest Festival PO Box 388 Elkins, WV 26241 Phone: 304-636-1824 www.forestfestival.com

C. Floats may be entered in the parade as participants only or they may be entered as a competitive float (these floats will be considered for judging and eligible for prize money and recognition-see criteria below). The parade float application for participation or competition must be completed and returned to the parade committee chair by Friday, September 18, 2026. Notification of acceptance will be made after review of the application. Verbal float entries will not be accepted.

1. Amateur floats are purchased and constructed by a business or organization. Float materials can be purchased at

- Anderson's School Spirit: <https://www.andersons.com/school-spirit/parade-float-supplies>
- Parade Float Stuff: <https://www.paradefloatstuff.com/#shop>
- Float kits from Anderson's School Spirit: <https://www.andersons.com/school-spirit/parade-float-supplies/float-kits>

2. A professional float is rented or purchased from a professional business. Please see Shaw Parades in Maryland (www.shawparades.com) to review their portfolio and rental options. Their floats have been featured at major parades throughout the East Coast.

D. It is suggested that you attempt to build a float that reflects the annual theme of the festival, as listed in the letter of invitation for the Grand Feature Parade. Judging criteria includes points for executing the theme of that year's Mountain State Forest Festival.

E. No political or controversial issues may be represented or alluded to in any way on any float.

F. No individual running for political office may ride or be represented in any way on any float.

G. All vehicles used to pull a float must be properly insured. This information is on the float application.

H. All floats must be in their line-up position by 10:00 AM on parade day.

I. All float entrants must obey the instruction of parade officials in order to provide event movement of the parade as a whole. These officials will be properly identified and have authority to disqualify or eject entrants from the parade.

J. A distance of 40 to 60 feet must be maintained between any two entries. Larger gaps than 60 feet will disrupt the flow of the parade.

K. Floats are not allowed to stop during the parade.

L. In case of mechanical difficulties, the float must be moved to the right side and out of the parade flow as quickly as possible, so a gap will not be created in the parade.

M. Float riders must remain on the float through the entire parade. Exception: Appointed Jesters in the Court of Queen Silvia.

N. Failure to comply with the rules and regulations may result in competitive disqualification, ejection from the parade, and removal from future invitation lists.

O. The Mountain State Forest Festival reserves the right to screen and reject or approve all entries. The entertainment and enjoyment of parade viewers is of the utmost importance and the quality of each unit is very important.

II. STRUCTURE

A. Decorated automobiles, trucks, station wagons, boat trailers, scooters or motor bikes are not considered floats and will not be accepted to participate in the parade. Log trucks, representing the lumber industry, are an exception to this rule and are addressed on the Grand Feature Parade application for the Honor Division.

B. Float Dimensions (please follow these rules to ensure the safety of parade observers and participants)

1. Maximum of 40 feet in length, excluding the towing vehicle.
2. Maximum of 12 feet in width.
3. Maximum of 12 feet in height.
4. The rigid part of the float structure must have at least 12 inches in ground clearance.
5. A builder or sponsor may request, in writing, an exception to these measurements, by explaining the function and need for excessive dimensions. Large floats should not cause any delay in their movement through the parade.

C. ANY FLOAT CONSIDERED UNSAFE WILL NOT BE ALLOWED IN THE PARADE.

III. SAFETY

- A. Plans for distribution of product, novelty items, or informational fliers, will be submitted for approval by the parade committee. If approved, items will be distributed from the sides (NOT THROWN) off the float during parade route to ensure crowd safety. Candy MAY NOT be thrown from the float.
- B. THE USE OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES BY DRIVERS, AS WELL AS RIDERS, BEFORE AND DURING THE PARADE, ARE PROHIBITED.
- C. If any children under the age of 12 are riding on a parade float, AT LEAST ONE ADULT MUST accompany float driver in towing vehicle throughout the parade. Children under 12 must ride a float and are not allowed to walk, march, or tumble.
- D. Safety devices must be incorporated into the float for each rider, whether seated or standing.

IV. PULLING VEHICLES

- A. Floats must be pulled by cars, pick-up trucks or 4-wheel drive vehicles (washed on parade day).
- B. Advertising WILL NOT BE ALLOWED on pulling vehicles. Only company name will be permitted.
- C. No dealership promotional signs will be allowed except for official vehicles or drivers for float entries.
- D. PLEASE NOTE: The Mountain State Forest Festival will not provide pulling vehicles or drivers for float entries.
- E. All drivers pulling floats MUST be at least 18 years of age or older.
- F. **END OF PARADE INSTRUCTIONS:** Please continue beyond the end of the parade route (the parade route ends at the courthouse). **DO NOT STOP**, disembark, or disassemble your float at the end of the parade area. Proceed **PAST** Hardees to allow your riders to disembark. Floats may not park in this area, only use this space unloading riders. Thank you!

V. JUDGING

A. Eligibility for float judging is based on the following requirements:

1. Submission of the complete float application and signed rules and regulations.
2. A detailed description of the float. Include the names or titles/positions of the people who will be on the float.
Optional: drawing, sketch or photo of the float.

B. Classification: Professional or Amateur

1. A professional float is rented or purchased from a commercial professional float builder.
2. An amateur float is one in which the sponsoring group designs, builds, and decorates their own float.

C. Parade Adjudication:

Originality: 20 Points

Use of Color: 15 Points

Spectator Appeal: 30 Points

Excellence of Design: 20 Points

Execution of Festival Theme: 15 Points

- D. Judging Times and Locations: Judging will begin at 10:30 AM. Judges will begin with Division I, and they will work their way through Division II, then Division III, and finally Division IV. Each division takes approximately 15 minutes. Please have your group at the float by 10:30, as judging times can vary. All float riders must be in costume and on their float to be eligible for judging. If music is an integral part of your float presentation, then please have it playing. You may not decorate your float during the judging process. If your float is not ready, then it will not be judged, no exceptions.

Estimated judging times (dependent on the number of entries, so please be ready at 10:30)

Division I: 10:30-10:45

Division II: 10:45-11:00

Division III: 11:00-11:15

Division IV: 11:15-11:30

E. Floats will not be judged during the parade.

F. Floats will be judged by impartial judges working independently.

G. The decisions of the float judges are final.

H. The official list of awards will be completed for announcement by the parade emcees. They will also be published at www.forestfestival.com, Forest Festival social media, and the Elkins Inter-Mountain newspaper.

I. Awards: \$1,500 in total prize money for five (5) amateur awards.

1. Grand Silvia Awards (2 awards): This award goes to the organization sponsoring an **amateur** float that has earned the highest number of points in the amateur category. The winner will receive \$500 and an official Mountain State Forest Festival plaque. The Grand Silvia Award is also given to the organization sponsoring a **professional** float that has earned the highest number of points in the professional category. The winner of the Grand Silvia Award for the professional float category will receive an official Mountain State Forest Festival plaque.

2. Director General's Awards (1 award): This award goes to the organization sponsoring an **amateur** float that has earned the second highest number of points in the amateur category behind the Grand Silvia Award. The winner will receive \$400 and an official Mountain State Forest Festival plaque.

3. President's Awards (1 award): This award goes to the organization sponsoring an **amateur** float that has earned the third highest number of points in the amateur category behind the Director General's Award. The winner will receive \$250 and an official Mountain State Forest Festival plaque.

4. Parade Marshal's Awards (1 award): This award goes to the organization sponsoring an **amateur** float that has earned the fourth highest number of points in the amateur category behind the President's Award. The winner will receive \$200 and an official Mountain State Forest Festival plaque.

5. Maids of Honor Awards (1 award): This award goes to the organization sponsoring an **amateur** float that has earned the fifth highest number of points in the amateur category behind the Parade Marshal's Award. The winner will receive \$150 and an official Mountain State Forest Festival plaque.

J. Distribution of Awards

1. Winning floats will have a placard placed on the float's towing vehicle driver and passenger side doors or on the float itself to acknowledge the award. These placards may be kept.
2. Each winner will receive a maple leaf plaque the day of the parade.
3. Check monetary prizes will be mailed to the address on the application. Monetary prizes will not be given the day of the parade. If no official recipient is listed as requested on the entry form the award will be forfeited.
4. If less than five (5) amateur floats compete, prize money will be given to the top four entrants, etc. (ie, if only four entrants, a Maid of Honor award for fifth place will not be awarded., etc.)

APPLICATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BY FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2026

***If you arrive on parade day to participate, your entry will be reviewed on-site. If it is accepted, you will be placed at the end of the final division, but it will not be published in the line-up. Thank you for your understanding of the importance of pre-registration. ***

*By signing below, I indicate I have read the Mountain State Forest Festival Grand Feature Parade Rules & Regulations, as well as the Grand Feature Parade Float Rules & Regulations and understand each as they apply and have made a copy for myself/organization/ business.

*SIGNATURE _____

*DATE _____



Mountain State Forest Festival Grand Feature Parade Rules & Regulations

1. Specialty units will be considered in the following categories:
 - ◆ Non-motorized (color-guard/drill team, clown, equestrian, unicycle, bicycle, special music group)
 - ◆ Motorized (convertible, other)
2. All applications must include:
 - ◆ Resume of related activities/events of the unit over the past three (3) years.
 - ◆ Photo of unit (if available)
 - ◆ Description of activity you will perform or present.
3. All paperwork for the Grand Feature Parade must be completed and mailed to the Mountain State Forest Festival Office at P.O. Box 388 Elkins, WV 26241 or emailed to; grandfeatureparademsff@gmail.com by September 18, 2026.
4. The **Antique Car Parade** will begin at **1:00 p.m.** (line-up is near Riverbend Park). The **Industrial Truck and Equipment Division** will follow at **1:15 p.m.** (line-up is along 11th Street). The **Grand Feature Parade** will begin at **1:30 p.m.** (line-up is along South Davis Avenue and side streets near and beyond Southern States).
5. **CHECK IN: Check-in is located at Southern States at 1200 South Davis Avenue.** Please follow the signage located on 11th Street and in the Industrial Park for line-up instructions. One participant from each entry may report to the line-up area in the Southern States parking lot to check-in your unit. Check-in will begin at **10:00 a.m.** **Industrial Truck and Equipment Trucks go directly to the Truck Area on 11th St to check in; they do not need to report to Southern States to avoid traffic congestion. Antique cars should go directly to Riverbend line-up area for check-in.** All others, please check in with hosts near the tent in the Southern States parking lot.
6. In order that the length of the parade may be maintained at an acceptable rate, no more than two entries shall be allowed from any one organization without prior approval from the parade director.
7. Officers or representatives of any social, civic, or fraternal organization must have prior approval and no more than one unit of officers from any organization will be permitted.
8. **No individual running for any political office/position may walk/ride or be represented in any way in a special unit or other parade entry. If the person is currently elected or appointed, they may participate in their current title.**
9. There shall be no member of any marching unit less than **12 years of age.**
10. Plans for distributing products, novelty items, candy, or informational flyers must be submitted for approval by the parade directors. If approved, items must be distributed from outside the vehicle or float; **you may not throw anything from a vehicle or float.** Please see rule # 20 for consequences.

11. Industrial vehicles representing traditional forest products will be permitted to participate in the Industrial Trucks and Equipment Division. An application is required.
12. Units must maintain a distance of 40 to 60 feet between parade units. Please adhere to these lengths so as to avoid gaps in the parade.
13. **All parade units must obey the instruction of parade officials to provide even movement of the parade as a whole.** These officials will be properly identified and have the authority to disqualify or eject entrants from the parade.
14. Participants of any unit are prohibited from walking or marching back through the line of march after disbanding.
15. Animal units agree to have appropriate debris removal personnel accompanying their own unit throughout the entire parade route, disposing of debris in an appropriate manner.
16. The Mountain State Forest Festival will not provide any driver/vehicle nor signage for any participant in the parade unless the plan is made in advance of parade day. All drivers **must be 18 years old.**
17. **INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE END OF THE PARADE ROUTE:** Please continue beyond the Courthouse and **DO NOT STOP. Bands and floats should proceed to Hardees to regroup or to allow passengers to step off floats** unless otherwise directed by Grand Feature Parade Official. **THE PARADE DOES NOT END AT HIGH STREET AND PARTICIPANTS SHOULD NOT DISEMBARK IN THIS AREA.** Please follow the instructions of Parade Officials.
18. **The Mountain State Forest Festival reserves the right to screen and reject or approve entries.** The safety, entertainment and enjoyment of parade viewers is of the utmost importance, and the quality of each parade unit is very important.
19. The Mountain State Forest Festival will be following all local, state, and federal guidelines related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Submission of your application for the Grand Feature Parade is your agreement to follow any safety protocols required by the Mountain State Forest Festival.
20. Failure to comply with these rules and regulations may result in competitive disqualification, ejection from the parade, and removal from future invitation lists.

*** By signing below, I indicate I have read the Mountain State Forest Festival Grand Feature Parade Rules & Regulations and understand each as they apply and have made a copy for myself/organization/business.**

*SIGNATURE _____ *DATE _____