



Contact:  
Becky Booker  
Public Relations & Marketing Manager  
205-562-3220 ext. 35  
[bbooker@tctpara.org](mailto:bbooker@tctpara.org)  
[www.tctpara.org](http://www.tctpara.org)

Source: Becky Booker, Christmas Parade Chairperson, 205-562-3220 ext. 35

### **PARA ANNOUNCES TWO NEW FEATURES WITH 2011 CHRISTMAS PARADE**

TUSCALOOSA, Ala. (November 21, 2011) – Although the Tuscaloosa County Park & Recreation Authority has been producing the West Alabama Christmas Parade for 35 years featuring floats, decorated vehicles, bands, horses and the arrival of Santa, there are two new features with the 2011 parade.

For the first time in parade history, a flag, honoring everyone affected by the April 27 tornado will be representative of the Grand Marshal, instead of an individual person(s). The selection committee comprised of representatives from various community organizations chose this method to honor everyone in the community.

Designed by Anthony Bratina of the Tuscaloosa News and sponsored by Walter Energy, the custom flag features three major design elements. Described as “beautiful and uplifting,” the elements include the number 52 to honor the memory of those we lost, a ribbon in remembrance of those who were affected and a red rose to honor everyone who responded, gave aid or volunteered to help,” said Becky Booker, parade chairperson.

“The selection committee considered several outstanding nominations,” said Booker. “There was an overwhelming sense of confident hope for recovery from the tornado that was paramount in everyone’s mind this year. There were literally thousands of individuals and groups who gave generously of their time and talents. The flag is symbolic and allows us to honor everyone.”

A second feature this year, (and previously announced on November 15), is a wristband ID for parade participants age “under 16” to wear during the parade. “PARA decided to take on this added safety measure after receiving the safety idea from the Tuscaloosa Police Department,” said Booker.

The wristbands are free of charge to parade entry participants and will be available for distribution at the Parade Entry Information Meeting on November 29 at 5:30 p.m. in the Belk Center located at 2101 Bowers Park Drive.

For parade entrants unable to attend the meeting, wristbands are available for pick up at Belk Center and the PARA Building administrative offices located at 614 Greensboro Avenue. Office hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday–Friday.

Gary Minor, PARA Executive Director, will flip the switch that turns on the lights on the Christmas tree on the lawn of the county courthouse. This is a tradition usually performed by the Grand Marshal immediately prior to the parade.

According to PARA officials, the wristbands will likely be a permanent addition to the parade while the commemorative flag feature is a one-time special arrangement.

The annual West Alabama Christmas Parade is the largest of its kind in the West Alabama area and is typically held on the first Monday in December. The downtown Tuscaloosa parade route will begin on Greensboro Avenue at 11th Street, travel north to University Blvd. turn east and end at the corner of University Blvd. and 19th Avenue.

Parade sponsorship and costume sponsorship is available by contacting Booker at [bbooker@tcpara.org](mailto:bbooker@tcpara.org) and 205-562-3220.

###