

GREENFIELD



STAFF PHOTO/PAUL FRANZ

Kelly White, formerly of Greenfield, now from Texas, is back visiting with her husband Lee Terrazas and children Thiago, 2, and Luca, 1, waiting for the fireworks at the Independence Day celebration at Beacon Field on Sunday.

Here's to the red, white and blue

Community gathers for postponed Independence Day festivities

By ERIN-LEIGH HOFFMAN
Staff Writer

GREENFIELD — After being postponed from its original date due to inclement weather, the annual Independence Day celebration rang in America's belated birthday on Sunday.

Due to rain on Saturday, the event was postponed a day. People carrying tents, blankets and chairs flocked to Beacon Field a few hours after the 4 p.m. start time to claim their seats in time for the fireworks show at 9:35 p.m. Sunday's high of 92 degrees with lingering humidity meant many people waited for temperatures to begin to drop before settling in, Greenfield Recreation Director Christy Moore observed.

"I definitely think people are coming a little bit later," she said early into the festivities, which included music and food vendors. Many early attendees sought out shade along the sides of Beacon Field. "This field will be completely plastered with people in a couple hours."

The Recreation Department organizes the Independence Day celebration each year, which entails raising about \$20,000. Thanks in part to a Cornhole Tournament and indoor mini golf event, along with the support of various sponsors, the Recreation Department was about \$5,000 short of its goal a week before the event. By the start of Sunday's festivities, Moore said the goal had not been reached yet, but she expressed confidence that



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Greenfield Recreation Director Christy Moore presents Amy McMahan, owner of Mesa Verde, with the Fortin Family Award for her contributions to the community at the Independence Day celebration at Beacon Field on Sunday.

the full amount would be raised by the end of the night as volunteers continued to collect donations. She also encourages continued donations ahead of next year's Independence Day event.

Following mixed music, Steve

Ellis of AfterGlo took to the stage, with Dead Collective up next. Shortly after 7 p.m., Moore announced the winner of the Fortin Family Award, which pays tribute to Tina and Ken Fortin, a family that regularly volunteered for

Greenfield Recreation and the Friends of Greenfield Recreation across three decades. The award recognizes an individual or family who embodies selflessness and

SEE INDEPENDENCE A8

Greenfield community gathers for Independence Day celebration



Dead Collective performs at the Independence Day celebration at Beacon Field in Greenfield on Sunday.

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INDEPENDENCE FROM A1

commitment in their volunteer efforts.

This year's Fortin Family Award winner is Mesa Verde owner Amy McMahan, who said she was "honored" to receive the award for her volunteer work across the city.

"It's really humbling to get an award from the Recreation Department because they do so much," McMahan said. "So it's hard for me to feel like I deserve this award when the staff pulls off so much for the city, but I'm honored."

As Beacon Field began to fill with more people closer to sunset, food and merchandise vendors began to see customers line up compared to the early afternoon.

Troy Atherton, who owns TJ's Gourmet Popcorn of Palmer, noted that community events like the Independence Day celebration allow him to promote his business.

"It helps us bring in more revenue and bring more customers in for the future," Atherton said. He added that it means a lot for his business to be involved in a community event that "allows people to unite."

For some Greenfield residents, the Independence Day celebration is a summer tradi-



STAFF PHOTO/PAUL FRANZ

Food vendors rim Beacon Field for the Independence Day celebration on Sunday.

tion that signifies something larger than just the fireworks. Greenfield resident Abbi Cushing said she has attended the fireworks for more than 15 years. She feels it is a time for community and family.

"Spending time together in our community as a family is what it's all about," Cushing said, adding that the Saturday cancellation shifted weekend plans, "but I'm here, and I wouldn't miss it."

Donna Barrett, also of Greenfield, described this event and this time of year as being all about patriotism.

"My view is that it's all about

patriotism because of my generation," Barrett said. "It's celebrating democracy and independence, and spending time with family."

Following his performance, Ellis expressed his thoughts on the event as a performer and as a local resident.

"It doesn't matter whether you are the ultimate 'red, white and blue' or someone who just really enjoys the community aspect of it," Ellis said. "There's a place here for you."

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