



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 3, 2025

FOURTH OF JULY CELEBRATION PUTS MERRITTSTOWN ON THE MAP

Uniontown, PA – For most of the year, there isn't a lot going on in Merrittstown. The small community is located along Route 166, about three miles south of Brownsville, and when its few hundred people are looking for something to do, they often opt to visit Duda's Farm in Brownsville, Redstone Park, or Paradise Lakes in New Salem.

But on July 4, the Merrittstown community sticks close to home to enjoy an event it's become known for far beyond its borders – the annual Independence Day celebration.

"The neighborhood and community get extremely involved," organizer Holly Swift said.

In the morning, the street is closed for an opening ceremony beginning at 10:30 a.m., followed by the annual parade at 11:00 a.m., and at dusk – approximately 9:30 p.m. – the town lights up the sky with its fireworks display.

"Probably 2,500 to 3,000 people come," Swift said. "It's a nice, little event."

This year marks the 58th such celebration, though it was in danger of ending a few years ago when one organizer passed away and another was unable to continue.

"Nobody was going to do it," Swift said. "My husband said, 'Please do it so this tradition continues.'"

Swift said she's assisted by Suzanne Morris.

Swift's husband grew up in Merrittstown, and she recalled her first experience with the community's Fourth of July celebration.

"I'm from Uniontown. My first Fourth of July (in Merrittstown) was wild because I had no idea what was happening," she said, noting her in-laws live on the main road, where many people gather to watch the parade go past.

"There are, like, a thousand people on this road; everyone is decked out in their red, white and blue. It was like nothing I'd ever seen before," she recalled. "The kids were excited. The adults were just as excited. You were proud to live on that street that week."

Swift said not much else happens in Merrittstown, but the people themselves make it a good place in which to live.

"It's a close-knit family. Everyone looks out for everyone else. Everyone knows everyone's kids," she said. "We have a 97-year-old neighbor who lives beside us. Everyone looks out for Rose."

Prior to meeting her husband, Swift said, Merrittstown was a well-kept secret.

"Until I got married, I didn't know it existed," she said. "But I do love it. It's home."

To learn more about Fayette County, visit www.fayettecountypa.org.

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This communication is part of the Fayette County PR Initiative, which is funded through the Fayette County Local Share Account (LSA) and Hotel Tax Grants in cooperation with the Fayette County Board of Commissioners, Fayette Chamber of Commerce, The Redevelopment Authority of the County of Fayette, The Redstone Foundation and other partners. This funding has been designated for the continued promotion and marketing of Fayette County, PA.

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