



# 2026 MULE DAY

APRIL 9-11  
COLUMBIA, TN

**RED, WHITE, &  
MULE**



Father of the  
American Mule  
*Page 13*



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**2026**



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# Welcome to Mule Day 2026

I WOULD LIKE TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO WELCOME EVERYONE to the 2026 Mule Day Festivities! It's hard to believe we revived Mule Day 53 years ago in 1974. Even harder to believe is that we still have some of the same members from the 1974 Mule Day Committee still serving on today's committee.

This year we will still have all our regular shows with the addition of a new class in the Mule Pulling called the "Farm Class". We think this class will add to the Mule Pulling and will be a real crowd pleaser. Another addition will be to the Riding Mule Show, called the "Mule Scramble". This addition will provide excitement as well as fun to the Riding Mule Show.

As always, our goal is to offer a family friendly event with a variety of entertaining, fun ways to exhibit the skills and abilities of the mule. Also, we will have numerous vendors to show off a wide range of products from collectables and handmade treasures to delicious foods of all kinds.

This year there will be one change to the schedule. Mule Day has dropped Sunday, reducing the event to three days, beginning on Thursday and ending Saturday evening. Campers are encouraged to stay and visit with friends on Sunday if they choose or enjoy a relaxing day visiting Columbia and Maury County. Also, remember the dates this year will be April 9th, 10th, and 11th, 2026. We hope you plan to come early in the week to camp to enjoy a fun packed three days of mules, mules, and more mules!

I was asked one Mule Day past, what I like most about Mule Day. After a short pause I said it would be to see and visit with our Mule Day friends, both old and new. Maybe I only get to



see most of them only once a year but I look forward to seeing and visiting with them each and every year to reminisce about old memories and enjoy making new ones.

The Mule Day office opens on January 5th. If you have any questions, please give us a call at 931-381-9557 or email us at: [info@muleday.com](mailto:info@muleday.com). Office hours in January, Monday thru

Wednesday, 9am-3pm. In February, Monday thru Thursday. March thru Mule Day, Monday thru Friday.

I look forward to seeing you at Mule Day!

*Harvey Spann  
Mule Day Committee Chairman  
President, Maury County Bridle and Saddle Club*

**About the photo:** Jim and Pearl, owned by Harvey Spann, coming out of a tunnel along the scenic Natchez Trace Parkway in Lawrence County, Tennessee about seven years ago.



# 2025 King Mule *Mandy*

*2025 Grand Champion “KING MULE”, named Mandy  
owned by Rufus Reese and Jeff Wilson both from Gallatin, Tennessee  
receives the crown and KING MULE Buckle from 2025 Mule Day  
Queen, Colby Fritz and the Queen’s Court*

# Welcome Visitors



## Mule Day Welcome on Behalf of the City of Columbia

On behalf of all of us at the city of Columbia, it is my honor to welcome you to Columbia and to Mule Day, one of the most unique and cherished annual traditions in the United States! This celebration has been a defining part of our community for generations, reflecting the spirit, history, and deeply rooted heritage connecting the generations through the years that make Columbia such a special place to call home and to visit during this festive season.

Whether this is your very first Mule Day or, like me, you've been attending for as long as you can remember, I'm confident Mule Day 2026 will offer memories you'll treasure for years to come. We are thrilled to welcome over 100,000 guests from all 50 states and from countries around the world. Mule Day has grown from a local idea into an internationally recognized celebration of community, culture, and tradition.

I want to recognize the Bridle & Saddle Club, the dedicated group who make Mule Day come to life year after year, and thank the countless volunteers and generous sponsors who make Mule Day a success. Their commitment ensures that this treasured tradition continues to thrive.

As you enjoy the weekend's events, I encourage you to stop by the Columbia Welcome Center. Our friendly staff are ready to help you plan your visit, offer recommendations tailored to your interests, and share insights into local attractions, history, and upcoming events. It's the perfect starting point for making the most of your time in Columbia.

We hope you'll take time to explore everything Columbia has to offer. Wander through our historic downtown district, filled with locally owned shops, restaurants, and beautifully preserved architecture. Visit our vibrant Arts District, where creativity and community come together in galleries, studios, and public art. Spend time in our parks and green spaces, where families gather and visitors can connect with the natural beauty of Middle Tennessee. And don't miss the chance to tour the ancestral home of the 11th U.S. President James K. Polk, a remarkable piece of American history located right here in our city.

Enjoy the festivities, make lasting memories, and know that you are a vital part of what makes our city a wonderful place to live, work, and celebrate.

With best regards,  
Chaz Molder  
City Mayor, Columbia



## Welcome to a Special Maury County Mule Day

A heartfelt welcome to our Red, White, and Mule Day in Maury County honoring 250 years of America and the mule's role in making America great!

It is my honor to welcome you to Mule Day 2026, a celebration that continues to reflect the strength, resilience, and heritage of our community.

Each year, we gather to honor an animal that quite literally carried America forward. Today, we not only celebrate the mule, but the history, hard work, and shared traditions woven into its story.

For centuries, the mule has been known as the "engine of early America." From plowing the first family farms to hauling supplies across rugged terrain, mules helped build roads, towns, and livelihoods long before modern machinery took over.

The mule's reputation for endurance, resilience and sure-footed reliability made them indispensable partners to farmers, soldiers, and pioneers alike.

In many ways, the story of the mule mirrors the story of our county—steadfast, hardworking, adaptable, and proudly rooted in tradition.

Mule Day is more than an event; it is a testament to the spirit that binds us. It's a time for families to gather, for old friends to reconnect, and for new generations to appreciate the history that shaped our home.

Whether you're here for the parade, the crafts, the music, the food, or simply for the fellowship, I hope you feel that sense of pride and community that makes this celebration special year after year.

Thank you for joining us as we honor the mules and the rich heritage they represent in America.

Make yourself at home. I wish you a joyous, safe, and memorable Mule Day 2026.

Warmest regards,  
Sheila K. Butt  
Maury County Mayor

Mule Day OFFICE  
PO Box 66, Columbia, TN 38402  
931-381-9557

[www.muleday.com](http://www.muleday.com) • [info@muleday.com](mailto:info@muleday.com)



Office Hours  
JAN: Mon–Wed 9-3  
FEB: Mon–Thur 9-3  
MAR & APR: Mon–Fri 9-3



## START YOUR DAY



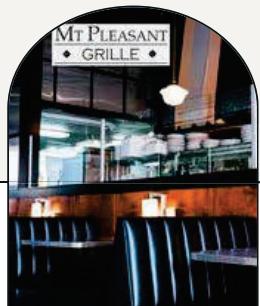
Start your day at one of our many coffeehouses with a handcrafted coffee and fresh pastry. In the mood for a larger breakfast? Try Puckett's Grocery & Restaurant to enjoy a classic southern breakfast with options like biscuits and gravy or their skillet cinnamon roll.

Mid-morning, tour one of the many historic homes and civil war sites in Maury County, such as the ancestral home of the 11th President of the United States, James K. Polk, in Columbia. Another terrific option is Rippa Villa, located in Spring Hill. It is a Greek Revival-style mansion built in the early 1850's by Nathaniel Cheairs IV. The estate played a significant role during the Civil War, particularly during the battle of Spring Hill on Nov. 29, 1864.

Not a history buff? No problem! Enjoy the beautiful, natural scenery of Maury County. Explore scenic hiking trails and waterfalls, paddle or fish along the serene Duck River or at the picturesque Williamsport Lakes, and savor fresh finds from our vibrant Farmers' Markets.



## MID-DAY



Once you've worked up an appetite for lunch, you have bountiful options! Maury County boasts a thriving local restaurant scene. Satisfy your European cravings at Grecian Family Restaurant and Bakery in Spring Hill or with authentic Italian flair at Mama Mila's. If you find yourself in Mt. Pleasant, don't miss Mt. Pleasant Grille, a casual restaurant offering classic American fare, ice cream, and a full bar. And those are just a few options – from sandwich shops to steakhouses, fish & chips to pad thai, we have it all!

Spend the afternoon shopping in one of our locally owned boutiques or antique shops. Not in the mood to shop? Take in some art at the Cherry Theater/ Pryor Art Gallery at Columbia State Community College. Families with young children will enjoy a stop at aMuse'um Children's Museum, while activities for every age can be found at Tenn Pin Alley. Those looking for adventure can turn to Fisher's Off-Road Tours for a true backroads experience.



## AFTERNOON

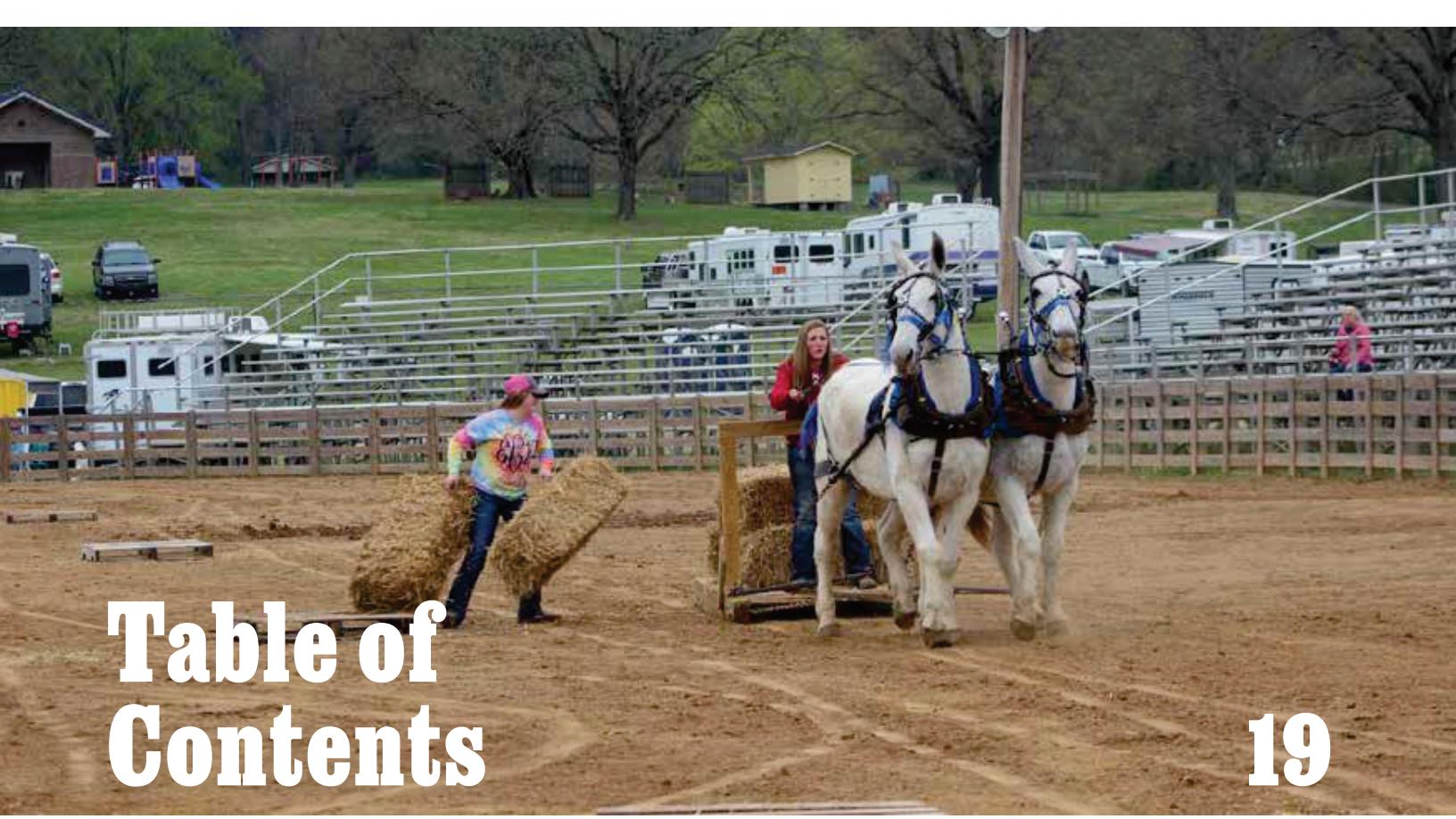


If wine, beer, or cigars are of interest to you, you're in for a treat. Check out Amber Falls Winery in Hampshire or Grinder's Switch Winery in Columbia to sip local wines. Whiskey Alley Saloon or Ransom Spirits & Provisions offer a casual yet refined menu paired with craft cocktails, a dedicated wine list, and extensive top shelf liquor selections. Visit Bad Idea Brewery for a local beer and a sandwich from Ollie & Finn's Counter. Don't forget to visit Briarworks Pipes & Cigars. Located in a spacious lounge in a 1940's warehouse, they offer premium cigars, tobacco pipes, craft beer, cocktails, and darts.



## EVENING

Cap off your day with a dining experience featuring locally sourced menus. Visit Papa Boudreax's Cajun Café in Santa Fe, a laid-back eatery serving Cajun delights like boudin balls, blackened shrimp cheese grits, and beignets. For a more upscale experience, head to River Terrace, where you can enjoy traditional Cajun and Creole dinners with stunning river views. Check out Prime & Pint, a steakhouse that doubles as a butcher shop, offering steaks, cocktails, and small plates in a casual setting. If you're not ready to call it a night, enjoy an evening of live music at Puckett's, The Mule House, Rebel Bar and Grill, or The Boondox—just to name a few!



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## Mule Shows

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# Schedule of Events

PLAN NOW FOR  
**MULE DAY 2027**  
**APRIL 8-10**

## SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 21st

2026 Beauty Pageant CSCC ..... Page 11

## MONDAY, APRIL 6th, 2026

9:00 a.m. .... Wagon Train Departs ..... Page 12

## WEDNESDAY, APRIL 8th, 2026

Mid-Afternoon ..... Wagon Train Arrives at Maury County Park ..... Page 12

## THURSDAY, APRIL 9th, 2026

10:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.	Craft Fair	Page 14
10:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.	Live Music at <b>Main Stage</b>	All Weekend
11:30 a.m.	Little Miss Mule Day Pageant – Columbia Central HS Auditorium	Page 10
12:00 Noon	Old-Fashioned Log Pull – <b>Main Arena</b>	Page 22
1:00 p.m.	Mule Day Dog Show – <b>Old Arena</b>	Page 51
2:00 p.m.	Feed Time Race – <b>Main Arena</b>	Page 19
4:00 p.m.	Classiest & Trashiest Wagon Show – <b>Main Arena</b>	Page 43
7:00 p.m.	Bluegrass Music Fest – Columbia Central High School	Page 23

## FRIDAY, APRIL 10th, 2026

9:00 a.m.	Auctioneers at TN Livestock Producers Sales Barn – contest	Page 31
10:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.	Craft Fair	Page 14
10:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.	Live Music – <b>Main Stage</b>	All Weekend
10:30 a.m.	Riding Mule Show – <b>Main Arena</b>	Page 34
Following Riding Mule Show	Jackpot Mule Races – <b>Main Arena</b>	Page 34
12:00 Noon	Driving Mule Show – <b>Old Arena</b>	Page 30
3:00 p.m.	Farm Pulling <b>NEW!</b> – <b>Main Arena</b>	Page 49
5:30 p.m.	Cart Barrel Races – <b>Main Arena</b>	
6:00 p.m.	Gaited Mule Show – <b>Old Arena</b>	Page 37
6:00 p.m.	Live Music – Ridley 4-H Center with Tony Malugin	Page 33
7:00 p.m.	Liars' Contest Mule Tales – Columbia High School	Page 32

## SATURDAY, APRIL 11th, 2026

6:00 a.m.	Pancake Breakfast – Memorial Bldg.	Page 32
8:00 a.m.	Maury Regional 5K Mule Kick Race – <b>Riverside Park</b>	Page 43
10:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.	Craft Fair	Page 14
10:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.	Live Music – <b>Main Stage</b>	All Weekend
11:00 a.m.	Mule Day Parade – Downtown	Page 53
11:00 a.m.	Mule Pulling – <b>Main Arena</b> – Followed by Miniature Horse Pull	Pages 38 & 39
2:00 p.m.	Skillington Draft Mule Show – <b>Old Arena</b>	Page 44
2:00 p.m.	Knife Auction – <b>Main Stage</b>	Page 46
6:00 p.m.	Mule Town Stompers & Urban Cowboy Line Dancing at Ridley 4-H Center	Page 47

**Schedule of Events NOTE:** ALL Wagon Trains coming into Columbia should call the Mule Day office with arrival day and time to ensure help from local police with traffic.



# Maury County Park Map



## Green Entrance - Outside Fence Area

## Red Entrance - Gate 1

## Blue Entrance - Gate 3

## Yellow Entrance - Gate 4

## Black - Exit Only

- Mule Day Office
- Ⓐ Parking Lot
- Ⓑ Stadium Campers
- Ⓒ Parking Lot (Sr. Citizens)
- Ⓓ Vendor Parking Lot
- Ⓔ Campers Inside Fence
- Ⓕ Campers
- Ⓖ Parking
- Ⓗ Trailer Drop
- Ⓘ School Campers (S)
- Ⓛ Vendor Check-in

**OLD ARENA:** Front  
**MAIN ARENA:** Back





# Little Miss Mule Day

The Little Miss Mule Day Pageant with divisions for ages 0-14 will take place Thursday, April 9, 2026 at the Columbia Central High School Auditorium. Attire for this pageant is western wear.

- Baby Miss (0-17 months)
- Toddler Miss (18-35 months)
- Tiny Miss (3-4 years)
- Petite Miss (5-6 years)
- Little Miss (7-8 years)
- Young Miss (9-10 years)
- Pre-teen Miss (11-12 years)
- Junior Miss (13-14 years)

## 2025 Little Miss Mule Day Division



Baby Miss: 1st RU: Virginia Zent, Queen: Bernadette Berry, 2nd RU: Dakota Agee



Toddler Miss: 1st RU: Audrey Turnbull, Queen: Everleigh Dodd, 2nd RU: Ansley Whiteside



Tiny Miss: 1st RU: Natalie White, Queen: Mavery Rae Hudson, 2nd RU: Kaylee Denise Moses



Petite Miss: 2nd RU: Kinleigh Brooks, Queen: Penelope Qualls, 1st RU: Harper Gibbs



Little Miss: 1st RU: Berklee Moyers, Queen: Adalee River, 2nd RU: Aurora Rose



Young Miss: 1st RU: Kaylee Crane, Queen: Iris Houston, 2nd RU: Ziva Clair Grimes



Pre-teen Miss: 1st RU: Emma Colvin, Queen: Eden Marie Stutts, 2nd RU: Aubrey Dale Keeling



Junior Miss: Queen: Joenie Sims, 1st RU: Madison Goar

Registration for the Little Miss Mule Day pageant begins at 11:30am on April 9th, and the pageant begins at 1pm. All contestants must arrive and be registered before 1pm.

Please follow [@muledaypageant](#) on Facebook and Instagram for further registration information and pageant updates!



**PLAN NOW FOR  
MULE DAY 2027  
APRIL 8-10**





# Mule Day Queen Pageant

Mule Day Queen Beauty Pageant is a Life Altering Experience — And Loads Of Fun!



Left: 2025 Queen Colbey Fritts & 2024 Queen Anissa Grimes. Right: Colbey Fritts, 1st RU: Shae Klamert, 2nd RU: Phynlee Keeling, 3rd RU: Maya Keeton, 4th RU: Ava Sykes



From left: 4th RU: Ava Sykes, 1st RU: Shae Klamert, Queen: Colbey Fritts, 2nd RU: Phynlee Keeling, 3rd RU: Maya Keeton

# The Wagon Train



*Sponsored By*



**THE WAGON TRAIN, THE KICK START TO MULE WEEK!** The wagon train was started as advertising for Mule Day to get people excited for the festivities to come by the weekend! Since 1995 the Wagon Train has traveled through rural communities for two days until it makes its way to Maury County Park on Wednesday, April 8, 2026. Observers can gather on Lion Parkway Wednesday into mid-afternoon to welcome the Wagon Train into the park. The 2025 Wagon Train was held in Hampshire and was hosted by Will Dunnebacke and Dunnebacke farms and Sponsored by Summertown Metals.

The 2026 Wagon Train information will be mailed to past participants. All participants "MUST" pre-register through the Mule Day Office before the ride. No one will be allowed to register on location. For more information contact the Mule Day office at 931-381-9557. ABSOLUTELY NO ALCOHOL ALLOWED.

# Royal Gift: The First General, the First President was also the First Professional Mammoth American Mule Breeder



Above: What George Washington and Royal Gift might have looked like together. Photo illustration by Meilan Solly

Right: Raúl Miguel Barroso, "Pedro Tellez and Royal Gift arriving at Mount Vernon, 1785." El regal de Carlos III a George Washington (2019). Image courtesy of Mount Vernon Ladies' Association.



By Brady Carr  
Mule Day WORKS

2026 IS THE 250TH ANNIVERSARY of the Declaration of Independence. A declaration that would most likely have

failed without the man known as the "Founding Father" of America – George Washington. But what many mule enthusiasts may not know, is that George Washington is also credited with being the "Father of the American Mule".

Gifted two pure-bred Spanish Jacks (one of which didn't survive the trans-Atlantic voyage) and two jennets by King Charles III of Spain in 1785 George Washington, now retired to his Mount Vernon plantation pursuing his love of animal husbandry aptly named the first donkey from Zamorano-Leonesa area of Spain – Royal Gift.

Royal Gift arrived in December of 1785 where preparations for the 1786 breeding season began in earnest. Breeding of his own mares as well as beginning of an aggressive advertising campaign in every major newspaper in Virginia and Maryland Washington was once again leading America, but this time by introducing the most efficient draft animal that would impact the new nation he had so impacted.

Always the entrepreneur and recognizing that mules were, pound for pound, much more efficient as a draft animal than horses, in a time without mechanization, Washington obviously saw not only higher profits from his own plantation, but a huge opportunity from the expansion of the "mule industry". This led him to import jennets from other countries to expand the propagation of high-quality mules in the newly formed United States of America.

Washington was so involved and visibly committed to his mule and donkey breeding operations that even after he took office as the first president of the United States in early 1789, he purchased thirty additional mares in Pennsylvania specifically to raise draft mules. Now that's a president mule men can get behind!

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817 Nashville Hwy  
Columbia, TN  
(931) 350-6240



*continued on page 28*

# At Maury County Park

## Festivities Begin

Mule Day festivities begin Thursday at 10AM. See Schedule of Events for complete list of activities.

## Park Admission

Thursday, Friday, Saturday, \$10, under 12 is free, 10am-7pm. Weekend passes available for only \$25. All campers are required to have weekend passes whenever they arrive. Please get them when you make arrangements for camping. Price includes state amusement tax and are good for all in park activities, excluding rides.

## Craft Fair

We have one of the largest craft fairs in the area! Stop by for a unique shopping experience. With over one hundred vendors we have something for everyone. Shop handcrafted jewelry, art, quilts, home decor, apparel, furniture, western tack, and clothing, toys, and more. The event only happens once a year so don't miss it!

## Concessions – Food

Italian sausage and peppers...roasted corn...pizza...philly cheese steaks...onion blossoms...kettle corn...hot apple fritters...funnel cakes...ice cream...nachos...lemonade...cotton candy...and of course hamburgers and hot dogs. As you enjoy the activities of Mule Day be sure to sample all your favorite foods. All food concessions are open until 7:00 PM, and are inspected by the Tennessee Health Department. For more information contact the Mule Day Office.



## Pickin' and Grinnin'

There will be live music throughout the entire event. There will be a variety of musical entertainment ranging from bluegrass to country. Come on out and show off your singing talent or just bring a chair and listen to various musical groups pick and grin. Stage in Craft Fair area.

## Children's Entertainment

Be sure you take your children to the entertainment section, where they will find all kinds of rubber inflatable's to bounce around on, face painting, vendors with games etc. This section which is located to the left of the **Old Arena**.

## Commercial Vendors

Limited vendor space is available at Maury County Park. Booth sizes range from 10' to 35' frontage and 10' to 20' in depth, depending on the location. Vendors with big rigs are encouraged to set-up starting Tuesday afternoon or all day on Wednesday, but everyone must be operational by 10AM on Thursday. Corporate Sponsors & equine related vendors will receive priority for new vendors.

## MULE DAY OFFICE

The Mule Day and Maury County Bridle and Saddle Club office is now located in the Exhibit Building, in the Front Parking Lot, as you enter Maury County Park, across the street from the Log Cabin.

During Mule Day week, we will continue to operate out of the Information Center, at the top of hill in front of the barn (stalls).



### Mule Day Office

PO Box 66,  
Columbia, TN 38402  
931-381-9557

[www.muleday.com](http://www.muleday.com)  
[info@muleday.com](mailto:info@muleday.com)

### Office Hours:

January: Mon - Wed / 9-3  
February: Mon - Thur / 9-3  
March & April: Mon - Fri / 9-3

**DISCLAIMER:** Under Tennessee Law, an equine activity sponsor or an equine professional, or any other person is not liable for an injury to or the death of a participant in equine activities resulting from the inherent risks of equine activities pursuant to TENNESSEE CODE ANNOTATED, SECTION 44-20-103.

# Foster

Insurance Agency, Inc.

931-388-8365

Fax: 931-388-8389

204 W 4th Street

Columbia, TN 38401

[www.fosterins.com](http://www.fosterins.com)

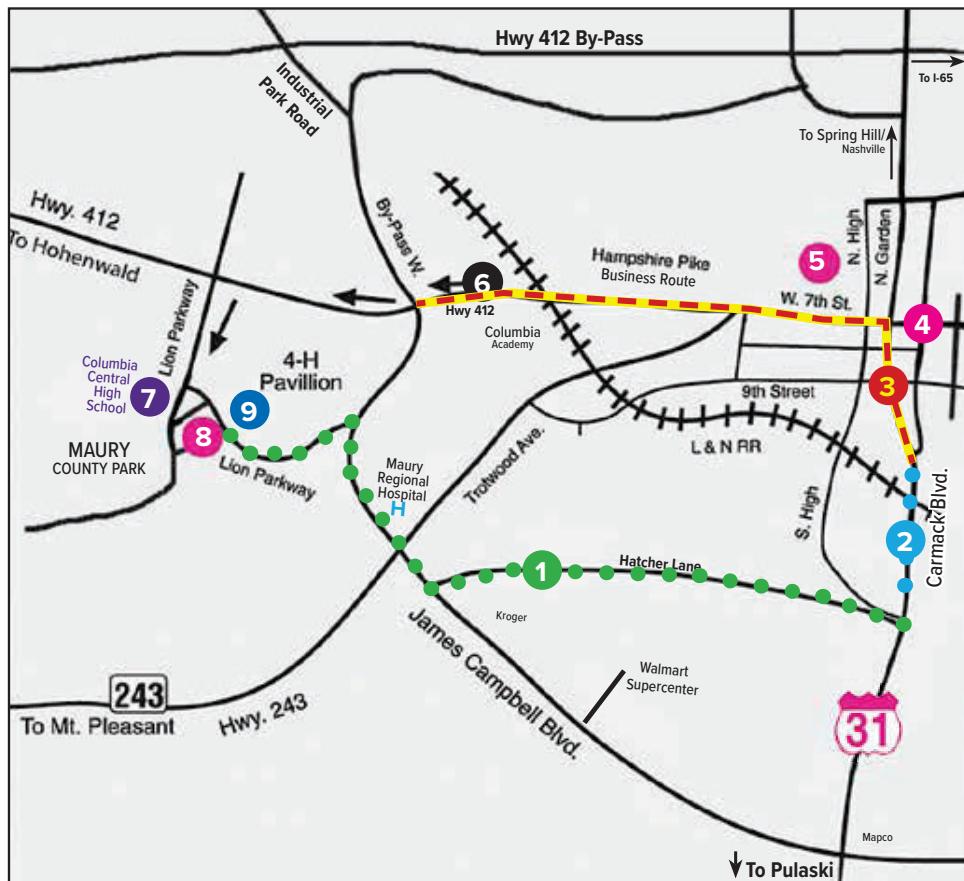


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- Life
- Workers Compensation
- Bonds
- Home
- Auto



## LEGEND

- 1 Route from Park to Parade Line-up ..... James Campbell Blvd.
- 2 Parade Line-up ..... Carmack Blvd.
- 3 Parade Route ..... Carmack Blvd. & West 7th
- 4 Maury Co. Courthouse ..... West 7th
- 5 Memorial Building ..... West 7th
- 6 Columbia Academy Front Gate ..... West 7th
- 7 Central High Auditorium ..... Lion Pkwy
- 8 Maury County Park ..... Lion Pkwy
- 9 Ridley 4-H Center ..... Lion Pkwy



# STEP INTO MULETOWN

## A Visitor's Guide to Columbia during Mule Day

Welcome to Columbia, Tennessee, recognized as one of the "South's Best" Small Towns by Southern Living. Each year, "Muletown" comes alive as thousands gather for Mule Day, a beloved tradition spanning more than 150 years and culminating in the iconic Saturday parade. While Mule Day brings excitement to the streets, Columbia offers so much more to explore. Whether you're a visitor or a local, stop by the Columbia Welcome Center to start your journey and discover the history, charm, and vibrant community that make this town truly special.



### Explore Downtown Columbia

Downtown Columbia is the heart of the city and a must-visit for anyone wanting to experience the town's local flavor. Stroll along charming streets lined with unique and cozy shops. When it's time to refuel, you'll find an array of eateries, from coffee shops and donut stops to ice cream parlors, and full-service restaurants. With so much to see, taste, and explore, downtown Columbia offers something for every visitor.

### Outdoors & Recreation

Columbia is full of ways to enjoy the outdoors and stay active. Challenge yourself on a disc golf course or share laughs over a round of miniature golf. For a bit more excitement, try go-karting or head to the bowling alley. If you're looking for a slower pace, explore virtual golfing or unleash your creativity with a pottery painting class, perfect for making memories to take home.

[www.muleday.com](http://www.muleday.com)



## Visit the Columbia Arts District

Discover Columbia's Arts District, a flourishing center of creativity and culture. Explore vibrant murals, striking public sculptures, and one-of-a-kind shops that showcase the town's artistic spirit. Sample delicious fare from local restaurants while admiring the works of talented artists throughout the district. With its lively atmosphere and rich artistic offerings, the Arts District is a must-visit for anyone who loves art, culture, and creativity.

## Stop By the Factory at Columbia

Step into the Factory at Columbia, where history meets shopping in a truly unique way. Once a 1958 shirt factory, this beautifully repurposed space now houses some of the area's favorite merchants. Wander through the shops, soak in the building's historic charm, and discover one-of-a-kind finds that capture the spirit of Columbia.



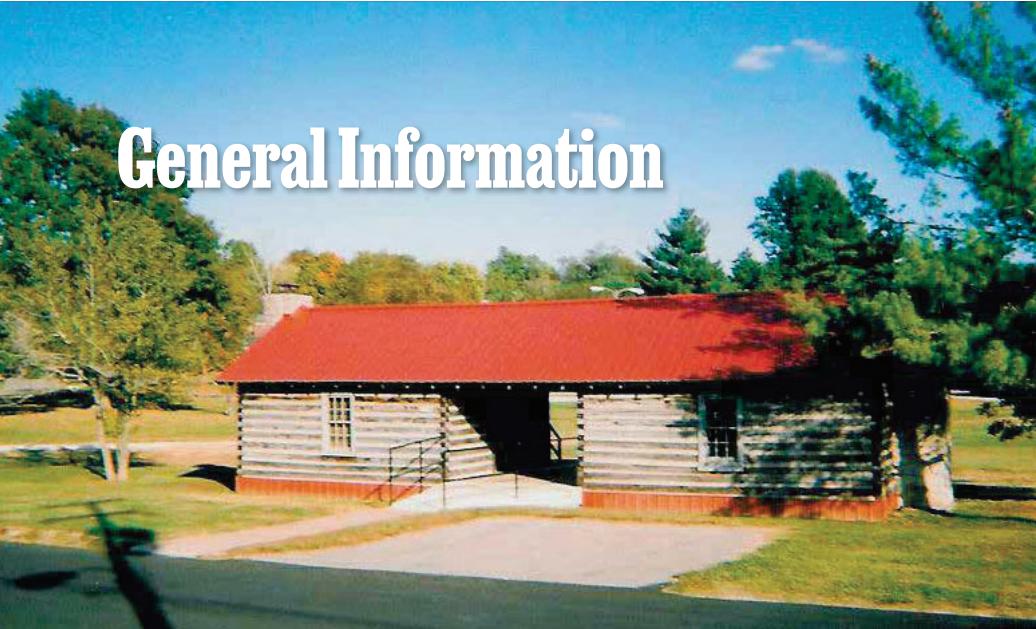
## Uncover the History

Columbia's history runs deep, extending far beyond Mule Day. Explore historic museum homes, follow the cultural trail through the interactive app, discover historical markers throughout town, and more. Each site offers a window into the past, sharing the stories that helped shape Columbia into the vibrant town it is today.

## Plan Your Visit!

With so much to see and do, visit the Columbia Welcome Center to make the most of your Mule Day experience or check us out online at [VisitColumbiaTN.com](http://VisitColumbiaTN.com) to plan your visit.

# General Information



## Check-In Center

The Red Top Log Cabin at the entrance to Maury County Park will be used as a Check-in Center for exhibitors, concessionaires and people bringing equipment that need assistance.

Our visitors that know where they are going, have the correct paperwork, etc. need not stop at the cabin. The cabin will be open through Friday evening.

The Information Center within the park will still be open and is there to assist everyone with general information, official Mule Day pins, bumper stickers, etc.

## Golf Carts/ATVs at Park

No Golf Carts or ATVs are allowed inside "the fenced-in area" at Maury County Park, except for those that have a "handicapped sticker" or Mule Day Officials. All operators must have a current drivers license.

## Process for Vendor Registration

Vendors that had a booth at Mule Day 2025 will receive an application during early January 2026, along with other information, including insurance requirements for Mule Day 2026. Payment with completed application must be received in our office by February 15th or the space will be given to other vendors that have applied. New vendors may start calling during January, and will be placed on a waiting list until space becomes available. Contact us via email at: [info@muleday.com](mailto:info@muleday.com)

## Riding After Dark

The Mule Day Committee strongly advises that when riding after dark (in or outside the park) please have something reflective on yourself, your horse and/or wagon and cart. This rule is for safety reasons.

## Disclaimer

State Law requires that your animals have proof of an Equine Infectious Anemia (Coggins) Test, done in the last 12 months must be presented for verification before animals are permitted on the grounds or to participate at Mule Day functions.

Equine that are sold require the Coggins done within the last six months. Further, Tennessee State Law REQUIRES everyone from out-of-state to have a health certificate on equine entering Tennessee. The health certificate is only good for 30 days from the time it is issued.

Horseback and Muleback riding is allowed in designated areas at Maury County Park until 10PM. Riding at a walk except in the arenas.

Under Tennessee Law, an equine activity sponsor or an equine professional, or any other person is not liable for an injury to or the death of a participant in equine activities resulting from the inherent risks of equine activities pursuant to TENNESSEE CODE ANNOTATED, SECTION 44-20-103.

## Camping

Limited camping is allowed in the park. Spaces must be reserved by advance payment received by February 15th. First time campers should call ASAP in January to be placed on a waiting list. Rates: Start at \$160.00 with electricity and \$60.00 without electricity. All campers are required to have a gate pass. No bus transportation to parade from Park is available. All reservations should be made through the Mule Day Office. No alcoholic beverages allowed in camping or Park area. No horse stock will be allowed in electric camping area. Original Proof of Negative Coggins Test Required for all animals entering the park. Dogs must be on a leash at all times. Your campsite must be cleaned up before you leave.

## Stalls

Limited stall space is available for \$75, inside stall, \$50, outside stall (only 2 animals per stall, except miniature mules & donkeys that are separated by panels inside stalls). Reservations from last year's stall renters must be accompanied by advance payment which must be received by February 15th or stalls will no longer be held. First time stall renters should call ASAP in January to be placed on a waiting list. After February 15th, first time stall renters on the waiting list will be notified of stall availability. Stall renters receive one vehicle pass - a vehicle pass per each stall rented will no longer be issued. No jacks in portable stalls. **No horse stallions allowed anywhere in Maury County Park on Mule Day weekend.**

NOTE: The show barns (covered barns) will only be rented to persons having mules, Jacks or Jennies. Horses will not be allowed in show barns except those that have been grand-fathered in. Persons wishing to get stalls for horses will be allowed to use outside stalls.



# Feed Time Race

## Thursday, 2:00 PM, Main Arena

It's a fun time for everyone! You need a driver and a loader/stacker with a team of mules. The team will be pulling a sled with the driver and stacker. The clock starts when both teams are hooked and cross the starting line. Each team will pull up a pallet loaded with 6 bales of straw. The loader will stack all 6 bales onto the sled. The driver will drive the mules to the first of three empty pallets. The loader will drop off two bales at each empty pallet. The team then circles an end barrel and stops at each pallet, and picks the bales of straw back up. They then restack the bales on the first pallet. The team that does this the fastest will win that round and advance. Entry Information and rules see page 50 or call Mandy Mills, 931-982-0061.



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# Mule Day: 52 Years of Impacting Our Community

By Brady Carr  
Mule Day WORKS

**SCIENTIFIC STUDIES HAVE REVEALED** that there are two types of people in Maury County, Tennessee; those that LOVE MULE DAY and those who are more like the Scrooge or Grinch.

Ok, I made that part up about it being scientific. But it is a known fact that a very large portion of the residents of Maury County simply LOVE MULE DAY. When Sunday after Mule Day comes around, they are already planning for the next year. They LOVE IT ALL! From Bloody & Biscuits to Pancakes before the parade, and of course, the Mule Day Parade. From the Wagon Train to the Crafts. From the food (another scientific fact I'll share is calories consumed at Mule Day don't count!) to the mule pulling, Liars Contest, gaited mules... You get the



picture, from small to huge they LOVE MULES and MULE DAY!

The second group I mentioned, the Mule Day Scrooges &/or Grinches, curse the traffic. Complain about the crowds. Whine about the road closures. Detest the bright green "mule exhaust" that is

seen on occasion and pretty much abhor the entire event from start to finish. Luckily this group is small, but I would like to share some good news so this group – we'll call them MDSG's – can at least know, it's all for a good cause. In addition to the MDSG's we also have thousands of new neighbors who have moved to our county, region, and state who have no idea what all the crowds and fuss is about and what it is for.

It's primarily about celebrating and honoring the Mule. But, it's also much, much more.

Mule Day is really about neighbors helping neighbors. Since it began as Breeders Day in the early 19th century, Mule Day has brought people who love mules to the Mule Capital of the World, Columbia, Tennessee. Now, in 2026 we have cars, log skidders, tractors, and big trucks that have taken the mule's place.

These manmade contraptions haven't dampened the enthusiasm for Mule Day one bit! And the Maury County Bridle & Saddle Club, the Mule Day Committee and our entire community is blessed to see that enthusiasm manifest itself in giving back.

At a governmental level, Columbia, Mt. Pleasant, and Spring Hill, the county, the state and the surrounding area enjoys a spring boost in tax revenues that have been estimated to be in the 10's of millions of dollars. That's a good thing.

But dear reader and hopefully Mule Lover, I'd like to share a few of the non-Mule Day managed charities impacted by and in many cases made possible by Mule Day, beginning on Friday morning with the Mule Day Auctioneer's Championship. Auctions and auctioneers have been huge part of Mule Day since it was called Breeder's Day. Hosted by the Columbia Breakfast Rotary Club, this event has awarded over \$80,000.00 in college scholarships over the last fourteen years. According to the two Eddie's, Ables & Allred, you will experience some of the best auctioneers in the country and some of the best young auctioneers. If you enjoy a good auction, don't miss this chance to help with the education of our young people. And enjoy a good auction!

Also, on Friday and not to be confused with anything as serious as an auction sale is the Mule Day Liar's Contest. Like fisherman, mulemen have been known to stretch the truth, tell a windy and even spin a yarn. If creative and colorful stories intrigue you, if you agree with the statement that, "laughter is the best medicine" then the Mule Day Liar's Contest just might be your cup of tea. But be careful, you just might have that tea coming out of your nose! Hosted and produced by Maury County's own historian and storyteller, Adam Southern, with 100% of the proceeds going toward maintaining the historic Rose Hill Cemetery. Clean family fun stories and tall tales with contestants from the very young to the very not young kick all having a few laughs and giving back.

Culleoka Community Club (formerly Culleoka Lions Club) host the Mule Day Pancake Breakfast in the historic Memorial Building on Saturday morning before the Mule Day Parade. This event has been going on in conjunction with the parade for fifty-two years – every year since the Bridle & Saddle Club brought it back! Todd Hooper, treasurer, estimates that over that time more than \$350,000.00 has been raised that has directly impacted the residents of the Culleoka community. Over the years this

organization has provided eye glasses to those in need, helped with storm clean up and provided for neighbors in need. If you like pancakes – and you like to support those who give back. Don't miss it!

Bloodies and Biscuits, held at the Polk Home hasn't been around for 50+ years, but it has become a pre-parade must do for hundreds each year. Located just across from the Memorial Building right on the parade route, every dollar raised at Bloodies and Biscuits goes to fund the maintenance and operations of the historic James K Polk Home & Museum. Live music, conversation in the garden, biscuits and your choice of Mimosa, Bloody Mary, or just orange juice is a great way to kick off your Mule Day and give back.

For those with an itch to move, the Maury Regional Health Care Foundation hosts the Mule Day Kick 5K & 1-Mile Trot that begins and ends at Riverwalk Park. Participants traverse the Riverside neighborhood, passing by the old Armory, hundreds of beautiful old homes and end with the final leg along the Duck River. The 2025 Mule Kick raised nearly \$70,000 and featured 758 entrants. You can run, jog, or just walk – it's good for you and it's all for a good cause.

Once you make it to the Maury County Park to enjoy the mule close up, you'll also want to stop at the Mt. Pleasant Lions Club food pavilion on the hill between arenas. Breakfast biscuits, hamburgers, coffee, soft drinks, and more, plus again, every dollar raised stays in and supports those in our community.

Fact is these are the best known of the dozens of fundraising events that have become part of Mule Day itself. The part that is what defines Mule Day – giving back.

So, if you're one of the MDSG's and you find yourself tapping on the steering wheel, sitting through a traffic light for the third time, please take a deep breath and just remember – IT'S FOR A GOOD CAUSE!





# Old-Fashioned Log Pull

Thursday 12:00 Noon



Log pulling is one of the foundation competitions of mules and horses

Columbia, TN, was known for being the place where you could find a good pair of mules for farming, logging, or even mining.

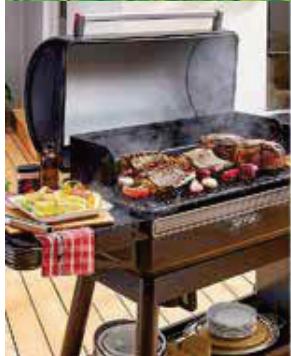
There are two classes – a lighter weight class and a heavy weight class.

For Rules and Entry Information see page 50.

# It's time to Spring it on.



112 East James Campbell, Columbia, TN



# Bluegrass Music Fest

Thursday 7:00 PM (doors open 6:30 PM)



Columbia Central High School next to park. Admission \$10. Tickets available through Mule Day Office or at the door.

This is the 14th Annual Bluegrass Fest featuring Columbia's own GRASSKICKERS, a hard driving bluegrass group made up of Phain Smith, and Randy Drane on guitar, Tom Winters on mandolin and fiddle, Ray Welch on banjo and Shane Green on bass. They will be playing hard driving Bluegrass some Newgrass along with some old country tunes. If you are looking for some good entertainment for Thursday night... This is it! There may be a surprise or two.

Call 931-626-6637 for additional information



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Left: Tyler Maxwell, 2024 Mule Day WORKS recipient, servicing, and maintaining lifesaving electrical equipment at Maury Regional Medical Center.



Right: 2025 Mule Day WORKS recipients Jeremiah Roan (L) and Jeremiah "Noah" Ragsdale (R) with Mule Day WORKS Chairman, Brady Carr at the Columbia State Pre-Apprentice Lineman Rodeo.

## Mule Day: Making a Difference in Our Community

By Brady Carr  
Mule Day WORKS

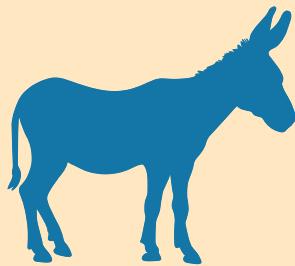
**MULE DAY WORKS IS THE Maury County Bridle & Saddle Club and Mule Day's primary charitable focus.** The program was created in 2023, with the first class of four recipients receiving funding in 2024. In 2025, due to numerous sponsors, whose support made (and continues to make) it possible for the Mule Day Committee and the MCB&SC to increase the number of Mule Day WORKS recipients to ten!

Just to be clear – In addition to the businesses that have become Mule Day Partners, this program or Mule Day for

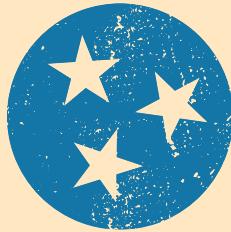
that matter wouldn't be possible without the hundreds of volunteers who donate their time and talents to make Mule Day possible, both the City of Columbia and Maury County mayors and their respective teams. A debt of gratitude is due all of these groups. But in my humble opinion, the following examples of the quality of young people and their success are thank you enough.

Tyler Maxwell, graduated from Hampshire Unit School and was one of the four in that first Mule Day WORKS class of 2024. Tyler attended TCAT Hohenwald's Electro-Mechanical Technology program. A twenty-month program that he

*continued on page 27*



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from page 24

graduated from in December, 2025. But the best part is, at least for a young person seeking to kick start their career, he was fully employed two months before graduating from the program! Debt FREE I might add.

Tyler is now working full time at Maury Regional Medical Center as a Bio Medical Equipment Technician. Where he works on a myriad of high-tech medical equipment like: ventilators, anesthesia machines, sterilizers, defibrillators, balloon angioplasty pumps, monitors, and EKG machines. Plus, Maury Regional Medical Center is one of Mule Day's oldest partners!

Good Luck Tyler and thanks for making us all proud.

One of the greatest parts of a future in “the trades” or a Career and Technical Education field is the speed in which a young person’s career can get off the ground. The Mule Day WORKS Committee was pleased to be able to provide assistance to two young men to attend Columbia State Community College’s Pre-Apprentice Lineworker program. Jeremiah Roan, of Mt. Pleasant and Jeremiah “Noah” Ragsdale, or Culleoka, graduated this spring with the Class of ’25 and have already completed this important seven-week program. According to Tiffany Odom, Columbia State Workforce Solutions and Continuing Education coordinator, upon completion, the students received a Tennessee Valley Public Power Association climbing certification, first aid and CPR certifications, OSHA 10 with ET&D certification and NSC flagger certification. In addition, the students are prepared for a commercial, CDL Class A-57, driver’s license required to operate the large trucks and be ready to join the industry as an apprentice lineworker.

But not only did these two young men complete their training – THEY DOMINATED! At the end of each cohort a Lineman Mini-Rodeo is held, and these two young men made Mule Day PROUD! Jeremiah Ragsdale placed second out of fifteen in both the 80-foot pole climb and 40-foot bell change and would have won the transfer switch, but unfortunately was penalized for a dropped tool. Jeremiah Roan won the bell change, placed third in switch transfer and was presented with the Pre-Apprentice Lineworker Academy Outstanding Student Award.

These successes illustrate what is possible when communities come together and focus on education that fills the needs of local and regional business and industry.



### **WHO IS ELIGIBLE & HOW TO APPLY**

If you are a resident of Maury County, or an active member of the Maury County Bridle & Saddle Club and have either graduated or earned a GED within the previous three years and are seeking a career in a non-degreed field visit [www.MuleDay.com/WORKS](http://www.MuleDay.com/WORKS) to download an application.



from page 13

Royal Gift was so popular that a group of southern planters convinced Washington to send him south to assist their efforts to add the breeding high quality donkeys and draft mules to their plantations as well. Unfortunately, a serious hoof injury incurred during the twenty-nine-day journey to Charleston, South Carolina that never healed and eventually lead to his death in 1796.

Royal Gift might have passed, but his legacy lives on within the genetics of jackstock even today. Close your eyes and imagine the next time you see a fine set of big black draft mules that they may trace their lineage back to the royal blood of Royal Gift.

To learn more about Royal Gift and George Washington's mule breeding operation visit [mountvernon.org](http://mountvernon.org). Images courtesy of The Mount Vernon Ladies' Association: a private, non-profit organization dedicated to sharing and maintaining George Washington's Mount Vernon.

Right: Advertisement announcing Royal Gift's breeding potential in *The New-York Packet*, 16 March 1786. *Image courtesy of Mount Vernon Ladies' Association*

**R O Y A L G I F T.**  
**A** JACK ASS of the first race in the kingdom of Spain, will cover mares and jennies (the asses) at Mount-Vernon the ensuing spring.—The first for ten, the latter for fifteen pounds the season. Royal Gift is four years old, is between 14  $\frac{1}{2}$  and 15 hands high, and will grow, it is said, till he is 20 or 25 years of age. He is very bony and stout made, of a dark colour, with light belly and legs. The advantages, which are many, to be derived from the propagation of asses from this animal, (the first of the kind that ever was in North-America) and the usefulness of mules, bred from a Jack of his size, either for the road or team, are well known to those who are acquainted with this mongrel race. For the information of those who are not, it may be enough to add, that their great strength, longevity, hardiness and cheap support, give them a preference of horses that is scarcely to be imagined. As the Jack is young, and the General has many mares of his own to put to him, a limited number only will be received from others, and these entered in the order they are offered. Letters directed to the subscriber, by the post or otherwise, under cover to the General, will be entered on the day they are received, till the number is completed, of which the writers shall be informed, to prevent trouble or expence to them.

JOHN FAIRFAX, Overseer.

## JAMES K. POLK HOME AND MUSEUM

Save the date for our annual Bloody's and Biscuits on April 11, from 9-11am. Join us for bloody marys, mimosas, biscuits, music and more!

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# Home of Mule Day Monday

Every Monday Morning at 7:00 AM





# Driving Show

## Friday 12:00 Noon



Western Mule Magazine

This show demonstrates how well mules work to wagons and how well they are trained to both "lines" and voice command.

A lot of time and practice, along with driving skills make everything come together for this event. As you watch this show you will soon learn how the driver gets the mules attention and also how he gets them to go in the direction he wants them to go.

In the first two classes we have log skidding. This is with the driver using ONE line or NO line to guide the mules between the pilings. The best part of these two classes is when the driver uses only voice commands. This takes a lot of training and time between the driver and

his mules. During the old days this was a much more common practice than today. The voice command is better with mules that are used for logging so as not to tangle lines in the trees.

Classes three through nine, the mules and horses are hitched to wagons or carts. In class five, the ladies show the men how to drive. In class six, notice how well the mules and drivers work together to back, cross obstacles, and turn in the correct direction. Please notice that the teams are matched in color, size, and uniformity. Now sit back and enjoy the afternoon show of skills and see how well these sometime stubborn animals show off just how smart they truly are.

*Corporate Sponsor*



MAURY REGIONAL  
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Ricky Skillington – 931-637-2217

Charlie Skillington – 931-637-1664

See entry information and competition rules on page 50.

# Auctioneers Championship

Friday, April 10



2026 will mark the Mule Day Auctioneers Championship's 15th year of crowning a Mule Day Auctioneer Champion. The Championship is hosted by the Columbia Breakfast Rotary Club. Professional auctioneers from across the country come to Columbia each year to compete in what has become one of the top auctioneer championships in the Southeast.

The 2025 Mule Day Auctioneers Championship saw auctioneers from 9 states come to compete in the Pro, Rookie and Junior divisions. Will Gregory coming out of Kentucky claim the 2025 Championship, Drew Williams, Dickson, TN was the 2025 Reserve Champion, Will Lovelace, Atwood, TN was the 2025 Rookie

Champion and Brady Schaffer, Missouri was the 2025 Junior Champion.

The auctioneers are judged by four judges and are scored in five categories with a score of 1-20 points:

1. Introduction/Initial Command
2. Clarity of Chant-Voice Quality
3. Bid Catching
4. Execution of Sale
5. Would You Hire this Auctioneer.

The MDAC is a real "Live Auction" each auctioneer brings items to sell. People attending the Championship get to experience a real live auction with the excitement of bidding and buying items. The MDAC has become



Clockwise from left: 2025 Mule Day Auctioneer Championship Finalists  
Will Gregory, 2025 MDAC Champion  
Drew Williams, 2025 Reserve Champion  
Junior Mule Day Auctioneers

one of the most attended events during Mule Day. The Championship is held at the Columbia Central High School Auditorium (located next to Maury County Park). The Columbia Breakfast Rotary Club hosts the Mule Day Auctioneers Championship. The Championship funds the Club's College Scholarship Program, which has awarded over \$80,000.00 in college scholarships. Mark your calendar for Friday, April 10, 2026 and be with us for the 2026 Mule Day Auctioneers Championship.

For Information contact Eddie Ables (931) 698-2220, [biddernow@gmail.com](mailto:biddernow@gmail.com) or Eddie Allred (931) 212-8150 – [eallred2223@gmail.com](mailto:eallred2223@gmail.com). Free Admission and Free Parking.

# Liars' Contest

## Friday 7:00 PM

The Mule Day Liars' Contest is a fun-filled event with tall tales and good clean fun. The contest will be held at Central High School, which adjoins Maury County Park and is sponsored by the Rose Hill Cemetery Association. Tickets are \$5.00 for adults and \$4.00 for students. There are 2 divisions of competition: Adults 18 and over and Students 17 and under. Cash prizes in both divisions, adult winner will also receive a beautiful trophy buckle. Participants are to register with the clerk at the contest.

The master of ceremonies, Maury County's own Adam Southern, will call the performer to tell a tales of no longer than five minutes. Prize money is awarded in each division. First place winners from previous years are not eligible for the prize money, but they are invited to tell one of their favorite stories and should also register with the clerk at the contest. Please email [rosehillcolumbia@gmail.com](mailto:rosehillcolumbia@gmail.com) with any questions.

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## Culleoka Community Club PANCAKE BREAKFAST



Start Mule Day off right!!!

This 50+ year tradition is going strong, and we'd love to see you again this year!!

**Memorial Building – 308 W 7<sup>th</sup> St.**

**Saturday : 6:00am until 11:00am**

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<sup>1</sup>Rates effective November 1, 2025.

<sup>2</sup>Annual Percentage Yield

<sup>3</sup>Some benefits require registration/activation. Additional terms and conditions may apply. Visit [ascend.ecubonline.net](http://ascend.ecubonline.net) for more details.



## LIVE MUSIC!

**Friday, April 10, 6:00 PM  
4-H Ridley Center**

Tony Malugin brings his country vocals and line dancing fun to every event! Grab your boots & come on out!!

The event will be at the 4-H Ridley Center (located across from Maury County Park). Admission will be \$7.00 for adults and \$4.00 10 years and under. M&M Catering will be catering this event. The Mule Day Queen and Court will visit the event.

For information call, Tony Malugin at 931-698-5263



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# Riding Mule Show

Friday 10:30 AM

## NEW FOR 2026 – The *MULE SCRAMBLE!*

Versatile, adaptable, dependable are all words mule lovers use to describe their mules, and you'll see why at the Riding Mule Show. These amazing equine hybrids will compete in everything from Western Pleasure, Halter, Gaited Pleasure, plus many FAST FUN AND EXCITING speed events like Run-Ride-Lead, Rescue Race, Barrel Racing, the ever-popular Panty Hose Race, and the RUN FOR THE CASH – Jackpot Races. The Riding Mule Show is an exciting way to kick off your Friday morning celebrating America's most amazing hybrid – the Mule.



*Photo by Western Mule Magazine*



*Sponsored by:*



For more info contact  
the Mule Day Office  
931-381-9557.

See entry information and  
competition rules on page 51.

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# Gaited Mule Tennessee State Championship

Friday 5:00 PM



At the Tennessee Gaited Mule State Championship you'll enjoy watching the very best gaited mules from Tennessee and across the entire United States strut their stuff.

This event highlights the gaited mule, which is any mule that has a smooth gait other than a walk, and one which is distinct from a trot. Whatever the gait may be called, its primary virtue is smoothness. The gaited mule can be ridden farther without discomfort from the bouncing one will experience at a trot and at a more manageable pace than a canter.

So come out and watch riders of all ages and mules from all "gaits" of life strut their stuff to be declared the Tennessee State Champion.

For more information, contact Phain Smith 931-626-6637. See entry information and competition rules on page 50.

**PLAN NOW FOR  
MULE DAY 2027!  
APRIL 8-10**



# Mule Pulling Tennessee State Championship

Saturday 11:00 AM



Photos Courtesy of Amanda Buchanan

*Sponsored by:*

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Come see what all the hollerin' is about! Watch as mule teams compete for the Championship title by seeing who can pull the most weight, the longest distance. You will be amazed at the capabilities of even the smallest mule teams as well as the men who drive them. So come on out and show these mules some love as they show off their muscles!

For more information, contact Brian Osborne 615-200-2399  
See entry information and competition rules on page 50.

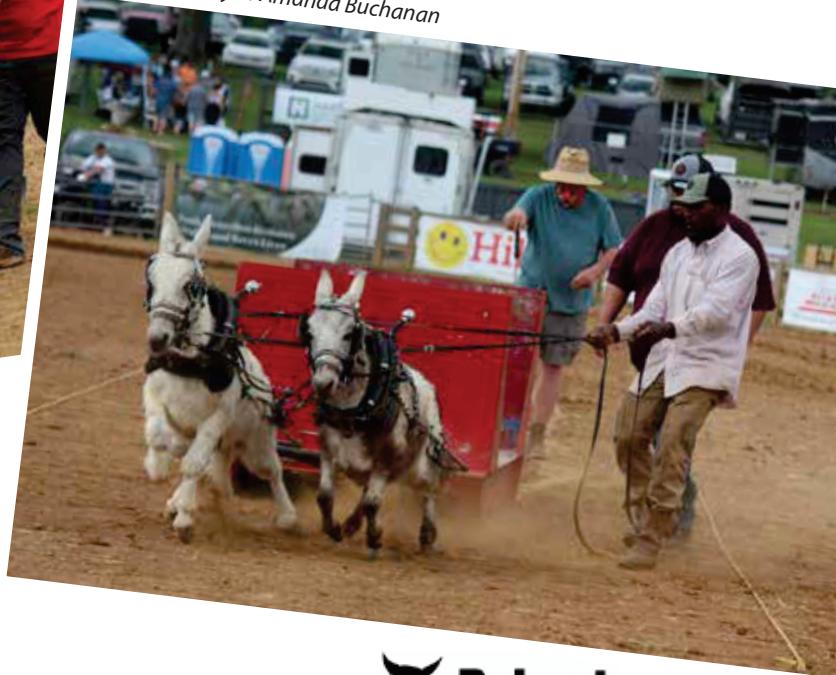


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From left: Mike Shipp, Muletown Pullers, Larry Burton, Ricky Alderson, Mark Speck, and Ott Osborne



Photos Courtesy of Amanda Buchanan



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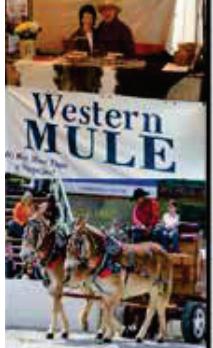
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## Editorial

# Tennison

**HECK YEAH, IT'S A BUCKET LIST EVENT!**

**See us under "The Big Tent"**

**F**ebruary is that time of year, from the inside looking out, it looks nice. BUT IT'S NOT! I am reminded often, just on a trip to the barn, as nice as it looks outside, I needed way more clothes than I had on. February sometimes has some of the most bone-chilling days of all winter. The coldest cold, the deepest snow and February can give you more than your money's worth of a winter you thought you weren't going to have. What I'm looking for, warm and sunny, hasn't quite shown up yet, but I know it's coming. I am exceedingly aware of the sun's earlier arrival now and the sun going down a bit later. The more daylight the merrier, the more daylight are my signs of the coming spring. Those fur ball mules at the barn are anticipating warmer days too, we all are hoping and praying it comes sooner than later. God has never denied me Spring...He is always true and faithful about spring and all the seasons...You may need to remember this before spring shows up.

Neta and I have been talking about Columbia Mule Day in Columbia, Tennessee. It's that time of year here at the *Western Mule Magazine* office. Columbia Mule Day is a sign of spring to Neta and I. Fresh cut grass, wild plums trees in bloom, strutting wild turkeys in green pastures, dogwoods in bloom and Mules, lots and lots of Mules. If you've not been to Columbia Mule Day, in beautiful Columbia, Tennessee, I encourage you to come. It's for sure a bucket list event; it has become mine and Neta's right to spring, and it always comes with plenty of good ol' southern hospitality that's alive and well in the area.

This will be Neta's and my thirty second year at Columbia Mule Day. It has never failed to teach me something new, and we've never failed to leave feeling extremely blessed to have made new friends and to see those friends again we have made over these thirty plus years. I said it many times in my writings, "We have the best job in all of America!"

After setting up for several years beside Jacksons Western Store at Columbia, Mule Day, we decided to team up and Jacksons Western Store, and *Western Mule Magazine* went under one big tent, thus, See us under "The Big Tent". Larry Wade and Tim Haney of Jacksons Western Store from Asheville, North Carolina, always bring the latest and finest of tack, plus their closeout, overstock, and discontinued western wear, boots, jeans, coats, hats etc. etc. etc. After being around those Carolina boys all these many years, we no longer need an interpreter, we have got onto their language. They do talk funny. We like 'em anyway...you will too!

A few years back under the big tent I learned I was a bit claustrophobic, maybe a lot claustrophobic. At times over the years there have been so many people in the Big Tent I felt overwhelmingly compelled to step just outside the door for some relief. It has kind of become a joke among those who know. If you see me contently standing outside the Big Tent while several are in the Big Tent, now you know.

You put Columbia Tennessee Mule Day on your bucket list of things to do. Mule Day in Columbia, Tennessee is an atmosphere of some rich history of mules in the area, and mules in America. Mule Day is of course the many Mules in attendance. It's a four-day celebration of mules, celebrated as a Mule Show, and many other competitive Mule Events held at Maury County Park in MULE TOWN USA, Columbia, Tennessee. Mule Day is also the multitude of vendors at the park, and the wonderful people you'll meet while you're there.

It's a bucket list event, Columbia Mule Day! Make plans to come. We look forward to seeing you! When you make it, please take the time to stop by the Big Tent, On Mule Alley, across from the Mule Day Office, Ben and Neta Tennison feel truly blessed to meet our *Western Mule Magazine* readers and those attending Mule Day!

Take a deep seat, sit back and enjoy *Western Mule Magazine*. Your comments are always welcome.

May God Bless.

**John 3:16**



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Come see us in the Big Tent,  
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# Souvenirs

Ears to the Red, White, & Mule!

As we celebrate America's 250th birthday, we are also celebrating George Washington's introduction to the first American mule! Not only can you wear your Mule Day merchandise proudly during Mule Day, you can show your patriotism all year long. Come, see, and purchase Mule Day merchandise in the Baker Building. We will have T-shirts, hoodies, hats, buttons, pins, mugs, and a few more surprises.

Celebrate with us at Mule Day 2026!



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# MuleKick 5K & 1-Mile Trot



COLUMBIA, TN

**SATURDAY, APRIL 11**

**5K AT 8 AM • 1-MILE TROT AT 9:15 AM**  
**RIVERWALK PARK IN COLUMBIA**



Whether you're running for a personal best or taking part in a fun family stroll, your participation in this 3.1-mile race supports Maury Regional Health's mobile medical unit in providing vital care to at-risk and underserved communities. Sign up at [MauryRegional.com/MuleKick5K](http://MauryRegional.com/MuleKick5K).

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**On the COVER:** Mule Day Committee member Steve White, pictured on the cover riding Marcus while proudly displaying Old Glory. On this 250th year celebration of the Declaration of Independence it is our honor to recognize Steve and his fine mule, Marcus. Steve is a retired naval aviator, who flew F-14 fighter jets off the aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt during the Gulf war. After his time in the Navy, he piloted commercial airliners for United Airlines for 30 years. Steve and his wife Cindy are both members of the Mule Day committee.

Thanks for Your Service Steve!

## Classiest & Trashiest Wagon Show

New to Mule Day in 2026, this event is all about FUN! There are plenty of classes for the big fancy show rigs... And we all love them! But Mule Day is about fun – so join in and bring your entry this year.

**Classiest Winner**  
Kenneth Sewell

**Trashiest**  
Brian Osborne





# Skillington Draft Mule Show

## Saturday 2:00 PM



The beauty contest of Mule Day, (see page four, which reflects the "King Mule" for 2025). The draft mule has been the foundation of Mule Day, since day one, either in this show, Mule Pulling, used in the Parade to pull wagons, or the basis for our Wagon Train.

This show starts at 2:00 PM after the Mule Day Parade. It is held in the **Old Arena** with the Jack (the father of the Mule) and Jennet classes first, graduating to the Draft Horses (the mother of the Mule).

Class eight begins the segment of the show that leads to who is going home with the top prize of Mule Day 2026 and that is the "KING MULE" trophy. The judge is looking for long legs, long ears, and a good build. During this show you will notice there are classes for both Horse Mules (male) and Mare Mules, singles or in pairs.

Be sure and cheer for the best looking mule you see and let the Judge know your preference.

**Ricky Skillington 931-637-2217**  
**Charlie Skillington 931-637-1664**  
See entry information and competition rules on page 50.

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Photos by Western Mule Magazine



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# Mule Day Knives & Auction

**Saturday 2:00 PM, Main Stage**

**The Knife Auction will be held at the Main Stage, Saturday (April 11, 2026), at 2:00 PM.**

Mule Day Knives 1 through 10 will be auctioned, with Knives going to the highest bidder above a set minimum bid. The proceeds will go to various local charities.

The Mule Day knife is a smooth, natural bone trapper with 2 blades. The knife handle is laser engraved with diagonal red stripes, partnered with a blue mule. The colors will align with this year's theme: "Red, White, and Mule". Each of the knives are boxed, serialized, and etched with the Mule Day logo. There will also be 100 non-serialized Mule Day knives available; first come, first served.

*Mule Day collector's knives can be picked up at the Mule Day office in the Exhibition Building during Mule Day at specific times, April 9–11, 2026, as well as previous dates and times prior to Mule Day. If collectors are unable to pick up their knives, you may mail a check payable to "Mule Day" to: Mule Day knives; P.O. Box 66, Columbia TN 38402. For full details and updates visit [www.MuleDay.com/MuleDayKnives](http://www.MuleDay.com/MuleDayKnives)*

*In February, collectors will receive notification by mail with more detailed information pertaining to specific dates for pick-up, knife prices and shipping charges. Collectors wishing to place their collections up for sale, or anyone interested in purchasing a collection, may call the Mule Day office at 931-381-9557; as small collections may be available.*



To Celebrate the Declaration of Independence, Mule Day is offering a one-time collector's knife, designed to commemorate our nation's 250th Anniversary. Only 250 numbered knives will be produced, and will be sold first come, first served. Several of these knives will be in the knife auction.

The Anniversary knife is described as a smooth natural bone trapper with 2 blades. The knife handle has a blue etched 250th Anniversary design to commemorate this special year.



MTMS focuses year round toward promoting the heritage of the rural work mule through school and community events, working mule exhibitions and wagon trains. The MTMS Mule show is held annually the 2nd Saturday in May in Woodbury TN. The May wagon train is Thursday & Friday before the May Mule Show. The September Wagon Train is held in September. Visit the MTMS website for more details.

**invites you to**

- \* Become a Member**
- \* Attend the Annual MTMS Mule Show**
- \* Attend the MTMS May & September Wagon Trains**

## **Middle Tennessee Mule Skinners Association**

[www.midtnmules.com](http://www.midtnmules.com)

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL: 931-607-8225**

# Clogging & Line Dancing

## Saturday 6:00 PM

Saturday night's event will open with the local talent of the Muletown Stompers from 6:00 PM to 7:00 PM. This group has been clogging for Mule Day for several years.

Urban Cowboy Line Dancing begins at 7:00 PM. Urban Cowboy is Nashville's premier line-dancing company. Throw on your boots and get ready to dance! They will be teaching and dancing.

Tony Malugin will play during breaks.

This event will be at the 4-H Ridley Center (located across from Maury County Park). Admission will be \$7.00 for adults and \$4.00 10 years and under. **For more info call Tony Malugin, 931-698-5263**



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## **NEW! Farm Class Pulling Competition**

The Farm Pulling Competition is new to Mule Day for 2026. This event illustrates the strength and power of yesteryear's 'tractor' and is unique in several ways. First, draft horses ARE allowed to compete. There are two classes; one for horses and one for mule.

Rules are simple and straightforward:

1. Pulling begins with tight traces. NO Snatching or Jerking to start a pull.
2. No toe cleats, no cleated pulling shoes. Borium or flat shod ONLY.
3. One handler to drive and hook, unless otherwise determined by the show staff.
4. Weights pulled are based on percentage of team weight. 3 tries to pull 10'.
5. \$1,000 Added Prize Money in each class paid, \$400, \$300, \$200, \$100.

**Weigh-In begins at 9:30 AM Friday – Pull begins at 3:00 PM in Main Arena**



## **Dixie Longears**

***"The Mule Magazine from the South"***

Dixie Longears shares stories about you ... the 'longear' lovers. Dixie enjoys covering events, shows, festivals, wagon trains, trail rides, sales etc. when mules and donkeys are involved. Look for Dixie Longears at Columbia Mule Day 2020, smile for the camera, tell us a story, or share an upcoming event for our calendar. Jeff & Cindy enjoy the socializing ... our four, blonde, social-friendly, long-eared beauties, enjoy petting and an occasional 'cookie'.

Dixie Longears & Odle Farms Proudly Supports Columbia Mule Day ... See you soon -- Jeff & Cindy Odle  
[www.dixielongears.com](http://www.dixielongears.com) • [cindy@dixielongears.com](mailto:cindy@dixielongears.com) • 615-904-5356





# Entry Information & Competition Rules

## Pg19 FEED TIME RACE

Both members must stay on the slide while moving. Hay bales must remain on the slide or pallets – participants may go back and pick them up if they fall off. Mules cannot go above a trot. You must be a good sport and have fun!!!

1st Place Team - \$200 (\$100 each)  
2nd Place Team - \$150 (\$75 each)

## Page 22 Old-Fashioned Log Pull

### RULES

- Each pair of mules will have three attempts to pull each log
- No hitting or slapping mules with lines
- Must pull and stay between ropes (12 ft)
- Mules will be judged on teamwork between the driver and the team and strength of the team. Distance of pulls will help determine winners

## PG 30 Driving Show Friday 12:00 Noon

\$5 Entry Fee Per Class. Payback \$60, \$50, \$40, \$30 and \$20. Chairman of this show is Ricky Skillington 931-637-2217 & Charlie Skillington 931-637-1664.

1. Skidding – 1 Mule to Slide 1 Line and/or Voice Commands
2. Skidding – 2 Mule to Slide 1 Line and/or Voice Commands
3. Draft Horse Hitch
4. Mule Hitch-Show Wagon, 2 Mules
5. Mule Hitch-Lady Driver, 2 Mules
6. Youth Driving
7. Skill Driving – 2 Mules Driving Skills and Teamwork to be Judged
8. Unicorn Hitch – 3 Mules
9. 2 Mule Hitch – Any Wagon EXCEPT Show Wagon
10. Mule Hitch – 1 Mule
11. Mule Hitch – 4 Mules

## PG 34 Riding Mule Show Friday 10:30 AM

There will be a high point award given to the top youth and adult exhibitor. All classes on the showbill will count except the ones marked with an \*. \$5 Entry Fee Per Class (except Leadline). Payback will be 1st \$35, 2nd \$25, 3rd \$10 and 4th \$5. If you have any questions concerning the Riding Mule Show, please contact Brad English 931-698-7342

1. Halter
- \*2. Leadline NO ENTRY FEE (Ribbons Only)

3. Gaited Pleasure
4. Walk-Trot 17 & Under
5. Walk-Trot 18 & Over
6. Gaited Trail Pleasure
7. Western Pleasure 17 & Under
8. Western Pleasure 18 & Over
9. OPEN Western Pleasure
10. Trail Starting at 12:30 PM - Main Arena
11. Run-Ride-Lead
- \*12. Rescue Race
13. One Barrel 17 and Under
14. One Barrel 18 and Over
15. Catalog Race
16. Potato Race
- \*17. Panty Hose Race
18. Barrels 17 and Under
19. Barrels 18 and Over
20. Arena Flags
21. Mule Scramble

RUN FOR THE CASH — Jackpot Races  
Immediately after Riding Mule Show

## PG 37 Gaited Mule Tennessee State Championship Friday 5:00 PM

Entries from All States Welcome! Sponsored by the Maury County Bridle & Saddle Club. Entry office opens at 3:30. AGMA Rules Apply. Shoe Size no Larger Than 1/2 x 1 1/2. English or Western Attire. No Canter in Any Class. \$15 Entry Fee Per Class. Payback 1st Place \$50, 2nd Place \$30, 3rd Place \$20, 4th Place \$15, 5th Place \$10. For more info contact the Mule Day office 931-381-9557 or Phain Smith at 931-626-6637.

1. Gaited Mule to Halter – Open
2. Trail Pleasure Racking Men 18 and over
3. Style Racking – Riders 17 and under
4. Men Riders on Gaited Mules Riders 18 and over Walk & Favorite Gait
5. 4 Years and under Tennessee Walking Mules – Riders 18 and over Specialty
6. Trail Pleasure Racking Ladies 18 and over
7. Gaited Mules – Riders 17 years and under Specialty
8. Western Gaited Trail Pleasure – Walk and Favorite Gait, No Caveson, One Hand Riders 18 years over
9. Lady Riders on Gaited Mules Riders -18 Years and over Walk and Favorite Gait
10. Riders 50 and over on Tennessee Walking Mules – Flat Walk and Running Walk
11. Western Gaited Trail Pleasure – Walk and Favorite Gait, No Caveson, One Hand Riders 17 years and under
12. Trail Pleasure Racking Riders 17 and under

13. Gaited Mules Riders 50 and over Walk and Favorite Gait
14. Style Racking – Riders 18 years and over
15. 5 Year and Over Gaited Mules – Riders 18 years and over
16. Speed Racking – Riders 18 years and over
17. 5 Years and over Tennessee Walking Mule State Championship \*Specialty means No Canter

## PG 38 Mule Pulling Tennessee State Championship Saturday 11:00 AM

The Tennessee State Mule Pulling Championship is in the Main Arena. Weigh in is from 8 to 10 AM There will be seven classes with a \$10 entry fee. Ribbons are awarded in each class. **\$7,500 IN GUARANTEED PRIZE MONEY!** \$1,500 Per Class – 1st Place - \$600, 2nd Place - \$450, 3rd Place - \$300, 4th Place \$150. Overall, Champion Team will receive a Trophy Belt Buckle. Mule Day Jackets will be awarded to the Champions of each class.

- Pull slide 10 ft. / Sled weights 1,000 lbs.
- Small Mules pull between 11' ropes (percentage) 0 - 1,000 pounds / 1,005 - 1,500 pounds
- Medium Mules pull between 12 ft. ropes 1,505 - 1,900 pounds 1,905 - 2,100 pounds
- Heavy Mules pull between 14 ft. ropes 2,105 - 2,300 pounds 2,305 - 2,500 pounds
- Single Overweight pull between 14 ft. ropes Pull slide 15 ft. 2,505 – 2,700 pounds.

For More Information on the Tennessee State Mule Pulling Championship Contact: Brian Osborne 615-200-2399

## PG 44 Skillington Draft Mule Show Saturday 2:00 PM

\$5 Entry Fee Per Mule. Payback \$40, \$35, \$30, \$25 and \$20. No horse stallion of any age allowed in any class. Chairman of this show is Ricky Skillington, 931-637-2217 & Charlie Skillington, 931-637-1664.

The Draft Mule classes are as follows:

1. Best Jack - 2 years old & under
2. Best Jack - 3 years old & over
3. Best Jennet - 2 years old & under
4. Best Jennet - 3 years old & over
5. Best Draft Horse - 1 year old & under
6. Best Draft Horse - 4 years old & under (No Stallions)
7. Best Draft Horse - 4 years old & over (No Stallions)

8. Best Pair Horses - Open (No Stallions)
9. Queen's Choice Best Draft Mule, either sex. Sponsored by Western Mule Magazine
10. Best Mare Mule - 1 year old
11. Best Pair Mare Mules - 1 year old
12. Best Horse Mule - 1 year old
13. Best Pair Horse Mules - 1 year old
14. Best Mare Mule - 2 years old
15. Best Pair Mare Mules - 2 years old
16. Best Horse Mule - 2 years old
17. Best Pair Horse Mules - 2 years old
18. Best Mare Mule - 3 years old
19. Best Pair Mare Mules - 3 years old
20. Best Horse Mule - 3 years old & over
21. Best Pair Horse Mules - 3 years old & over
22. Best Mare Mule - 4 years old & over
23. Best Pair Mare Mules - 4 years & over
24. Best 4 Mules
25. Champion Mare Mule of Show  
Winners of Class
26. Champion Horse Mule of Show  
Winners of Class
27. Grand Champion of Show to be  
Crowned "King Mule"

**Original Proof of Negative Coggins Test  
Required for All Competition Events –  
See Disclaimer on page 18.**

# Dog Show

## Thursday 1:00 PM

Join Us for Our  
Annual Fun Dog  
Show!

Bring your family  
and furry friends  
to our Annual Fun  
Dog Show, where  
dogs of all breeds,  
ages, and sizes  
— mixed breeds  
included — are  
celebrated! Enjoy  
a day filled with  
laughter, community,  
and plenty of  
wagging tails as we  
showcase our talented canine companions.



Highlights include fun classes such as Best Costume, Best Trick, Favorite Rescue, and more! It's an event the whole family will love — mark your calendars and make plans to join us for this tail-wagging good time!



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# PARADE ENTRY FORM

## MULE DAY - COLUMBIA, TENNESSEE

Parade is on Saturday, April, 11<sup>th</sup> 2026

### RED, WHITE, & MULE

NO POLITICAL BANNERS  
ATTACHED TO WAGONS

#### PARADE REQUIREMENTS

Anyone wanting to participate in the parade should send a brief description of their parade entry to the Mule Day Office 931-381-9557, or P.O. Box 66, Columbia, TN 38402 by March 1st. They will be notified by mail of their lineup number by March 22nd.

All entries must be in place and ready for judging by 10 a.m. Judging is in the assembly area before the parade begins and the entries will be judged on originality, and appropriateness to Mule Day, Judge's decision will be final.

No cars, trucks, vans or tractors will be accepted as entries except those decorated as floats, pulling floats, or carrying beauty queens, political figures, etc. No campaign signs, bicycles, motorcycles, go carts, dune buggies, lawn mowers or 4-wheelers permitted on parade route.

No entry in the parade shall wear or display any costume, flag, sign, banner, standard or insignia, which in the sole discretion of the Mule Day Committee of the Maury County Bridle and Saddle Club, is judged to be offensive according to community standards recognized by said Committee, or which in said Committee's sole judgment would be repulsive, or cause fear or anxiety to a large portion of the Community and/or might incite people to violence.

Alcoholic beverages are prohibited in assembly area, along parade route and at Maury County Park. Anyone who does not comply will be subject to arrest and will be PULLED FROM THE PARADE ON THE SPOT. Nothing is to be thrown from or passed out from parade entries or by anyone participating in parade. ABSOLUTELY NO BALLOONS OR BUBBLE MACHINES ALONG PARADE ROUTE. Likewise, parade entrants must be suitably dressed. Shirtless riders will not be permitted to participate in the parade. Dogs must be on a leash on Parade route.

State Law requires that your animals have proof of an Equine Infectious Anemia Test (Negative Coggins Disease) at all events during Mule Day. This test must have been done in the last 12 months. See disclaimer on page 14. Rules continue on next page.

#### AWARDS

Best Mule & Wagon Entry - 1st place \$100.00  
Best Mule & Wagon Entry - 2nd place \$75.00  
Best Pony Mule & Wagon Entry - 1st place \$100.00  
Best Pony Mule & Wagon Entry - 2nd place \$75.00  
Best Commercial Float - 1st place \$100.00  
Best Commercial Float - 2nd place \$75.00  
Best Mounted Mule Entry - 1st place \$100.00

Best Mounted Mule Entry - 2nd place \$75.00  
Best Mounted Costumed Entry - 1st place \$100.00  
Best Mounted Costumed Entry - 2nd place \$75.00  
Best Club Float - 1st place \$100.00  
Best Club Float - 2nd place \$75.00  
Best in Show - 1st place \$100.00

Description of Entry: \_\_\_\_\_

CHECK ONE: Animal Powered  or Mechanical  Length of parade entry: feet

If you will haul a political figure please check here  Do you wish to be judged?  YES  NO

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

#### ACCEPTANCE OF RESPONSIBILITY & RELEASE OF LIABILITY

As consideration for being permitted by the Maury County Bridle and Saddle Club to participate in the Mule Day Parade and/or activities, I do hereby waive any claim and release the Maury County Bridle and Saddle Club and all of their owners, officers, members, affiliated organizations, land owners, agents and/or employees for any injury or death caused by or resulting from my participation in any activity.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Participant or Parent or Guardian

Sponsored By:



# Parade Rules

The Mule Day parade is one of the highlights of the festivities and is attended by more people than any other event or activity during Mule Day. Each year the parade grows and the organizers strive to make it bigger and better than the year before. We are at a point where for the time being we can no longer make it bigger, but we can continue to make it better. The line-up area is going to be shorter for the parade and therefore **we ask only pre-registered entries show up on the day of the parade.**

All parade participants should pre-register thru the Mule Day office prior to March 1st. The parade is for approved entries that are pre-registered and assigned a line-up number through the office. If you have not pre-registered, we ask you come out and watch the parade, but not attempt to be a participant.

All participants are asked to adhere to the parade rules.

1. Proof of current Coggins Test required for all equine
2. No balloons or bubble machines in the parade or along the parade route
3. No alcohol allowed in the parade or at the park
4. Horse and mule riders will ride four abreast
5. Shirts and shoes must be worn
6. No passing in the parade. You must stay in your spot.
7. No riding backwards in the parade
8. Nothing is to be thrown or given from parade entries to spectators. This includes candy, t-shirts, passes, tickets, trinkets, etc.
9. No bicycles, motor bikes or four wheelers in the parade
10. Mule riders will ride in front of the MCB&S Club wagon train
11. Entries should stay in the center of the street and follow the center line
12. Floats should adhere to the current theme
13. Entry number should be displayed on both sides of entry
14. Anyone not obeying parade rules will be asked to leave the parade
15. Mounted riders are asked to register as a group and will be assigned a parade number. Other mounted riders will be placed in the back of the parade and will be required to ride in an organized manner.
16. These rules are intended for everyone in the parade and are necessary to make a safe and enjoyable parade for both participants and spectators
17. !! NO CAMPAIGN SIGNS !!
18. !! NO FLOATS OVER 60 FEET IN LENGTH !!



Mule Day OFFICE  
PO Box 66, Columbia, TN 38402  
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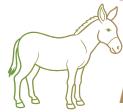
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# Even the Mules Think *You Should Get Checked.*

Don't be stubborn  
about your health.

*Get ahead of  
heart & lung  
disease today.*



*Mule Day has been keeping traditions alive since the 1840s...*

But there's one tradition worth breaking: waiting too long to check on **your health**.

Swing by the **Craft Body Scan booth** today and take advantage of our **special Mule Day offer** on the **Couple's Heart & Lung Scan**, designed to detect early signs of heart disease, aneurysms, lung cancer, and more.

Whether you're here for the parade, the Mule Pull, the biscuits, or just the people-watching, give yourself something even better to take home: **peace of mind**.

**Come see us today. Your future selves will thank you.**

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