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TUT Parade Route Changed to Improve Safety

The 2024 Tip Up Town Parade will still contain all of the winter weather fun that it is known for; however, the route of the parade will look different. Based on recent incidents of mass casualty, the Roscommon County Sheriff's Office and Roscommon County Emergency Management requested a meeting with the Houghton Lake Chamber of Commerce reference enacting changes to the parade route. The historical TUT parade route was the longest of any parade in the county, stretching 3 miles from Houghton Lake Height to Townline Rd. along M-55.

Last year at the Highland Park July 4th Parade, seven people were killed and 48 were wounded by a rooftop shooter. On November 21, 2021 in Waukesha, which is near Milwaukee, a man drove an SUV through a Christmas parade killing 6 people and injuring 62. The historic three-mile parade route requires securing an extensive length of M-55 highway, and attempting to block access to a huge number of access points, including intersecting roads, parking lots and private drives. In the event of a traumatic incident emergency responders would already be stationed at posts securing traffic spread out over a three-mile area. During the highland park event, there were 421 calls to 911 reference this incident. The confusion caused by such an event over a much larger area as law enforcement and first responders worked to locate and contain a threat would be multiplied. Limiting the length of the parade, allows emergency responders more ability to secure a smaller area, and provides Dispatch, Police, Fire and EMS a much smaller response zone in the event of disaster.

The new proposed route would begin at the Tractor Supply Plaza, where parade entries would line up for registration, similarly to the Houghton Lake Memorial Day Parade. The parade route would continue down M-55 westbound to Townline Rd. and on to the Tip Up Town Festival Site, reducing the length of the parade route to just one mile.

There has been no information that Tip Up Town or any other local event has been targeted and there are no known underlying threats. Everyone can agree that it is unfortunate that this sort of planning needs to be done in our current society; however, that does not change the reality that our current society requires safety precautions and plannings never dreamt of by previous generations. Certainly, there will be those in the community who complain about these changes. While we can never guarantee complete safety or avoid tragic incidents altogether, our local public safety owes it to our citizens to learn from incidents around the country and plan for the best response available for our community.

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