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## CITY OF MUSCATINE PRESS RELEASE

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### **PRACTICE FIREWORKS SAFETY THIS HOLIDAY SEASON**

*Fourth of July consumer firework usage allowed only on July 3 and July 4*

**MUSCATINE, Iowa** – Fireworks and the Fourth of July have a long standing relationship but this year’s celebration of our nation’s independence will be different and without many of the festivities that were enjoyed by Muscatine visitors and residents a year ago.

The Fourth of July holiday season will, undoubtedly, still be accompanied by the discharging of consumer fireworks from the homes of area residents including the use of sparklers, firecrackers, and other large displays.

Residents are reminded, however, that the legal discharge of consumer fireworks is limited to just two days in July. Muscatine City Code states that consumer fireworks can be legally discharged **July 3 and July 4 between the hours of 9 a.m. and 10 p.m. only.**

The Greater Muscatine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GMCCI) decided to cancel the annual Fourth of July parade and fireworks demonstration out of concern that residents would not be able to practice the social distancing guidelines recommended by the Iowa Department of Public Health in response to the COVID-19 health crisis. The decision was made after consulting with the City of Muscatine and with Trinity Muscatine Public Health officials.

“As disappointing as it is to cancel this long-standing community tradition, we want to take every precaution to keep members of our community safe and healthy,” Erik Reader, GMCCI President &

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CEO, said. “We are still looking to have a community celebration of sorts, but later in the summer. At this time we are exploring rescheduling the fireworks, adding live music, and trying to find ways to support small businesses that have been impacted by the recent events.”

Muscatine Mayor Diana Broderson echoed Readers’ comment and joined with other City officials in stating the importance of public safety.

“Nothing is more important than the health and safety of our citizens and of the visitors to our community,” Broderson said. “The current health crisis has brought significant challenges to our lives. While it is disappointing that this celebration cannot be held, we will be able to enjoy these types of celebrations in the near future by following the guidelines provided for social distancing and personal hygiene.”

Consumer fireworks will still be, and currently are (although not legally), discharged by residents in the weeks and days leading up to the Fourth of July. Citizens are urged to be responsible regarding the use of fireworks and to remain within the guidelines established in the Muscatine City Code.

Public safety is also the foremost concern for local and state officials in the governance of the sale and use of consumer fireworks.

“Fireworks can have far reaching consequences that are usually not considered when they are ignited,” Kevin Jenison, City of Muscatine Communications Manager, said.

Local government and public safety officials share deep concern for the individuals who discharge the fireworks, those individuals who are in the vicinity when fireworks are discharged, those individuals who may be affected by the noise created by the explosions, for the homes, businesses, or other structures that may be ignited by fireworks, and for household pets.

The Consumer Products Safety Commission states that the Fourth of July, and the month surrounding it, is the most dangerous time for fireworks related injuries. The majority of fireworks-related injuries involve the hands and fingers (41 percent) with the head are second (19 percent).

Trinity Muscatine Emergency Department received six trauma cases from the surrounding area due to severe firework related injuries in July 2019. Muscatine County Public Health also reported additional firework related impacts including a reported dismemberment and one death in the area. Many more firework related injuries went unreported.

While the skies may be dark along the Mississippi River riverfront without the annual fireworks show, expectations are that reaction to the COVID-19 health crisis will create more celebrations at the homes of Muscatine residents.

“The Police Department had about a dozen firework calls over the weekend,” Mike Hartman, Assistant Fire Chief, said.

Applications for tents have been received for various locations including the Muscatine Mall, Blain’s, Fareway, Hy-Vee, Wal-Mart, and Menards, and inside sales are planned at Hy-Vee, Hy-Vee Mainstreet, Wal-Mart, and Menards. The Muscatine Fire Department have approved two tents to sell and beginning their safety inspections of the other locations.

The City of Muscatine encourages residents to be good neighbors when discharging fireworks, to be considerate to any neighbors who might have a sensitivity to fireworks noise, to be mindful of pets who may become frightened by the firework explosions, and to be mindful of the property lines of others who may not want fireworks on their real property.

Per state law, a person shall not use, explode, or discharge consumer fireworks on real property other than that person’s real property or on the real property of a person who has consented to the use of consumer fireworks on that property. Sidewalks, the right-of-way between sidewalks and the street, and the City streets are all public property and thus are prohibited. Parks, trails, public parking lots and so on are also off limits.

Using fireworks outside the designated dates and times listed below is considered to be a violation and can result in fines of no less than \$250 per violation. Anyone discharging fireworks or allowing the discharge of fireworks on their property assumes responsibility for that discharge and the consequences, if warranted.

The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) offers these recommendations:

- Do not allow young children to play with fireworks. Sparklers, a firework often considered by many to be the ideal “safe” device for the young, burn at very high temperatures and should not be handled by young children. Children may not understand the danger involved with fireworks and may not act appropriately while using the devices.
- Persons under the age of 18 shall not discharge any fireworks without adult supervision.
- Do not allow any running or horseplay in or around the fireworks firing area or with fireworks.
- Set off fireworks outdoors in a clear area, away from houses, dry leaves, or grass and other flammable materials.
- Keep a bucket of water nearby for emergencies and for pouring on fireworks that fail to ignite or explode.
- Do not try to relight or handle malfunctioning fireworks. Soak them with water and throw them away.
- Be sure other people are out of range before lighting fireworks.
- Never light fireworks in a container, especially a glass or metal container.
- Keep unused fireworks away from firing areas.
- Store fireworks in a cool, dry place.
- Check instructions for special storage directions.
- Observe local laws.
- Never have any portion of your body directly over a firework while lighting.
- Do not experiment with homemade fireworks.

**Report any fires in buildings, vehicles, or greenspaces by calling 911 immediately!**

**Enjoy a safe holiday season.**

More information can be found on the City of Muscatine [Firework Safety](#) page.