



Elkhart County 4-H Fair Parade Rules

Parade Date: Sunday, July 26th, 2026

Entries Due: Tuesday, July 21st, 2026 by 5:00pm

With up to 30,000 people in attendance along a three-mile parade route, patience and cooperation are needed. To help everyone involved, please read, and abide by these rules as you plan for and participate in this year's parade. Any violations of these rules are subject to disqualification and removal from the parade.

ENTRY FEE

Category 3, 4, 5, 7, & 8 – \$99

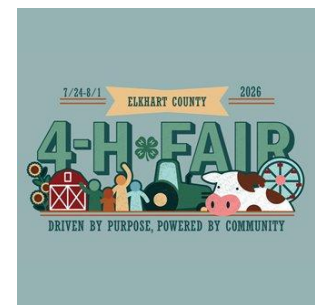
Category 1, 2, & 6 – Free

ENTRY CATEGORIES (*Judged Categories)

1. *4-H Club Floats from Elkhart County
2. *Youth & Agricultural Clubs from Elkhart County (examples: Drill Teams, Saddle Club, Girl & Boy Scouts, Boys and Girls Clubs)
3. Marching Bands & Musical Units- Self-Contained (examples: Square Dance Groups, Pep Bands, Etc.)
4. Equestrian Units (Other than 4-H)
5. *Open Class FLOATS or units carrying out the Parade Theme
6. Fraternal Organizations (examples: Shriner's, Exchange, Rotary)
7. *Antique Automobiles & Tractors: 50 years or older
8. *Commercial Entries that are not carrying the Parade Theme

2026 THEME

The theme of this year's parade is "Driven by Purpose, Powered by Community." Use imagination and good taste in creating your entry/float.



RULES

1. Every club/organization must prepare a 40-50 word statement to be read as your unit passes in review before the grandstand. This statement will also be used for public relations and other media.
2. There will be NO RAIN DATE this year. The parade will go unless there is a State of Emergency in effect.
3. There is to be NO handing out or throwing of any items from ANY MOVING vehicle (motorized, horse-drawn, or people-powered). Handouts are allowed by responsible



persons walking adjacent to the respective unit, preferably 8-10 feet from units and close to the curb line.

4. Any club with motorized vehicles, including but not limited to motorcycles, cars, tractors, and jeeps, will be limited to 4 vehicles per entry. This is done because our staging areas are at capacity.
5. Multiple entries for the same club/organization are not allowed. This limit does not apply to bonafide service clubs or agricultural expositions.
6. Curtailment of sirens and air horns are requested for emergency vehicles. Electronic sirens are too loud for many of the spectators along the route.

STAGING AND REGISTRATION

1. The parade will stage in the parking lots at Linway Shopping Plaza, Rogers Park, and Eastlake Fitness located in the general vicinity of West Lincoln Avenue and Chicago Ave in Goshen, Indiana.
2. Parade volunteers will be in the staging areas to help you find where to stage your float.
3. The parade order will be staged using a computer-generated random number, except for 4H clubs and parade dignitaries. Please do not call with special placement requests.
4. A registration table will be located far west of the Linway Plaza parking lot. Registration will begin at 9:30 am. Each unit will be assigned the randomly generated ID number at registration.
5. The parade will step off promptly at 1:30 pm once traffic has been cleared from the streets.
6. The parade director will make the final decision on all parade-related activities.
7. The parade is a community event. We need to make sure the parade keeps a steady pace for the community. This is for the sake of all involved, including participants and spectators. Please make sure that all members of your entry, including walkers, can keep the parade's pace. If your unit cannot keep pace with the parade, you may be asked to pull aside.

JUDGING

1. Judging will be done along Main Street in the Goshen Business District.
2. All winners will be announced at the Grandstand and awards will be presented at that time. Monetary awards can be picked up at Fair Office the following day of the parade, Monday after 12:00 noon.
3. Presentations before the judges stand and grandstand need to be limited to 60 seconds. After performing, your unit needs to quickly close up the gap.
4. Group 1 4-H Club Floats from Elkhart County Group 1 will be previewed at 12:30 pm. 4-H Leaders need to ensure that their club is ready for judging at 12:30 pm.

JUDGING CRITERIA FOR CATEGORY 1

1. Theme Use – 25 points. How well does your float communicate the Fair's Theme?



2. Quality of Design – 15 points. How well was the space used on the float? How well were colors and materials chosen?
3. Utilization of 4-H members – 25 Points. Are the kids a prominent part of the float, or are they just catching a ride to the fairgrounds?
4. Quality of Workmanship – 20 Points. How neat and precise was the workmanship? How good was the structural design?
5. Overall Presentation – 15 Points. How well does the theme, quality of workmanship, and use of 4-H members flow together? Does the float look like a cohesive unit?

JUDGING CRITERIA FOR CATEGORIES 2, 5, 7, & 8

Floats should be decorated on both sides and display a 4-6 word theme or slogan. The sponsoring organization's name should be conspicuous and may be either on the hood, cab, tractor or on a lower edge of your banner. Unit #'s should appear on the front right side of the vehicle. Numbers are assigned at parade registration. All floats are to be at their place and assembled in the Linway or Rogers Park staging area by 12:15 pm, at which time “preliminary review” will begin. Please have all personnel riding the float assembled on board the float by 1:15 pm. Each club/organization should have one representative check-in at the registration table between 9:30 am and 12 noon to acquire the number and confirm the staging location.

Judging will be based on the following criteria:

- A. Promotion of the 4-H Ideals
- B. The similarity between float Design and Parade Theme
- C. Aesthetics: Color, Materials, and Workmanship
- D. Overall affect: Creativity and Originality

Please keep your entry in numerical order as it passes the judges and the grandstand.

AWARDS

Group	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th
1	\$250	\$200	\$150	\$125	\$100	\$75
2	\$250	\$200	\$150			
5	Trophy	Trophy	Trophy			
7	Trophy	Trophy	Trophy			
8	Trophy	Trophy	Trophy			

WILLIAM BIGLER MEMORIAL TROPHY

The William Bigler Memorial Trophy will be presented to the entry best representing the Parade Theme in the opinion of the judges.

PURDUE DISCLAIMER



Purdue University is a separate organization from the Elkhart County 4-H Fair. As a state institution, Purdue University is mindful of the legal requirement to maintain viewpoint neutrality among religions and between religion and non-religion. Purdue University's relationship with volunteer 4-H organizations in each of Indiana's 92 counties to deliver 4-H youth development programming should not be taken as Purdue's approval or endorsement of the speech, expressive conduct, and/or symbolic or nonverbal speech undertaken by such private nonprofit entities. Purdue does not endorse or sponsor the viewpoints expressed or conveyed by speech, expressive conduct, and/or symbolic or nonverbal speech undertaken by such private nonprofit entities. - 1156160v1

Please note that to help with traffic, the fair traffic directors have determined that once an entry passes by the Grandstand, it will be permitted to leave the Fairgrounds immediately through the County Road 36 entrance ONLY. Otherwise, like in previous years, entries will be held on the infield of the grandstand track after the parade. Your entry may be held there for several hours. Once the incoming traffic dissipates, the fair traffic directors will allow you to leave the Fairgrounds.