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Carnival tries to build on 2006 success

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LANCASTER - Main Street Lancaster, local businesses and volunteers will stir up some holiday cheer Saturday with the third annual Winter Carnival.

The all-day carnival - from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. - features holiday-themed activities, music and food at many locations in downtown Lancaster.

Carnival-type games and vendors are a new addition to the celebration this year, and the festival is "more rounded," said Becky Hajost, director of Main Street Lancaster.

"It's just a wonderful event for all members of the family to enjoy," Hajost said.

Many businesses are the sites for the different events.

Some of the day's activities will include Breakfast with Santa at Annie's Cheesecake and Tea Room, cookie decorating at Four Reasons Bakery & Deli and an ornament-painting party for children 5 and older at Art & Clay on Main. An ornament-making workshop will be at the Decorative Arts Center.

A focal point of the carnival is the tree decorating contest in Fountain Square, which will take place from noon to 2 p.m. Organizations and individuals trim the trees, and carnival attendees give money to their favorites. The tree receiving the most donations will be the winner.

Monetary donations go to Fairfield County Job & Family Services to provide last-minute gifts for children in need, and the trees go to area families. Those wishing to claim a tree should be at Fountain Square at 4 p.m. with a bag or box for the decorations and rope to tie the tree to their vehicles, said Jenny Ruff, community resource coordinator for Fairfield County Job & Family Services. There will be 31 trees to give out this year.

Last year, the contest raised \$367. Although there were not enough trees from the contest to cover demand last year, an area tree farm pitched in to cover the difference, Ruff said.

"It's really going to help other families in need," said Heather Rager, chairwoman of Main Street Lancaster's Promotions Committee.

Visitors can also see live ice sculpting. Between 1 and 5 p.m. in the Fairfield National Bank parking lot, 143 W. Main St., culinary students will carve 80-pound blocks of ice into artful shapes. Past sculptures have included a dolphin and a praying angel, Hajost said.

In addition, music will fill the air downtown. Local choirs from churches, organizations and businesses will sing at the bandstand between 11 a.m. and 5 p.m. Later in the evening, Art & Clay on Main will have musical duo Avalon Nine.

Carriage rides will be available from noon to 5 p.m., starting at the corner of Main and Broad streets. Children can have their pictures taken with Santa Claus at the Lancaster Glass Museum, 124 W. Main

St.

"It's my hope for the community that (the carnival) will grow," Rager said.

She also added, "It'd be nice if it snowed."
