

Sports

Firework distributors prepare for Fourth of July sales

BY **FREDDIE BOURNE**
MESSENGER-INQUIRER

Though most temporary firework businesses, distributors and vendors have been operating for a number of weeks, a majority are anticipating a big boom in sales in the coming days as it nears Independence Day on Friday.

For James Richey, manager of the Owensboro location of the Reo, Indiana-based BOGO Fireworks, 2024 marked the first time the business pivoted from selling product in tents into a brick and mortar location — taking over the former home of StayFit24 at 1212 J.R. Miller Blvd.

It was a move that fared well, as the business returned to the location for a second year starting June 20.

“Last year went pretty good,” Richey said. “Everyone was coming in saying they were happy that we got a store instead of the hot tent.”

And especially with the recent heat wave that impacted most of the central and eastern part of the United States the last full week of June, Richey found being indoors has helped with bringing in foot traffic.

“It really has (been beneficial),” Richey said. “People come in and actually spend time (here) instead of coming in, grabbing stuff and going.



Photo by Alan Warren, Messenger-Inquirer | awarren@messenger-inquirer.com

James Richey picks up a “Guns Blazing” Roman candle firework, which is one of the popular fireworks this year, inside BOGO Fireworks on Monday at 1212 J.R. Miller Blvd.

“... We had a lot of our (customers) from last year come back,” Richey said. “People (who have) always hunted down our tent have come and found us.”

Richey said sales saw an increase with the stationary location, which he attributes to also having more space for inventory.

“We’re able to house more product than we (were) in the tent for sure, so people had more of a selection to choose from than what we could fit in a tent,” Richey said. “... This year,

we’ve got 312 different products in the store. At the tent, we were limited to about 15 tables.”

So far, Richey said some of the big sellers this year have been artillery shells and the large cake fireworks.

“(With) the artillery shells, people like them because of the big boom and they take forever to set off because you’re doing them one by one,” Richey said. “(For) the cakes, other people like (those) because you light one fuse and it just keeps setting off.

“So it (becomes), ‘Do you like to light one fuse or do you like to light multiple and have a longer (firework) show?’” Richey said.

Located eight minutes down the road from BOGO Fireworks sits a large red, white and blue canopy tent in the Gateway Crossings’ parking lot off Kentucky 54 housing MAD Fireworks — a La Vergne, Tennessee-based company which has individual tent locations scattered throughout Kentucky and Tennessee.

“My dad (operated a tent) for about 10 years through this company, so it’s kind of a family hand-me-down thing,” said Brody Chilton, operator of MAD’s sole Owensboro location for the past two years. “We’re local. We’re from here. We’re just operators of the tent, so we just sign a contract, they send us all the fireworks and we just sell them and make a commission.”

Chilton, who said the tent opened June 22, said the business carries “a little bit of everything” and finds operating outdoors creates an approachable atmosphere for prospective consumers.

“... We’ve got all the categories — firecrackers, roman candles, cakes,” he said. “... I think (coming) to a tent is a little less intimidating. You walk into a store and there’s so much going on”

Like Richey, Chilton said cakes have been popular draws such as “Overloaded,” “Boom Time” and “Amazing Pyro.”

However, Chilton said MAD operates differently than other tents — whereas some offer “buy one, get one” and other marketing initiatives, MAD “does the best price up front.”

Though sales at both stops have been steady, Richey and Chilton expect to see a booming business throughout the rest of the week.

“... Typically for us, once it hits July — like the 2nd, 3rd, 4th and sometimes even the 5th — (it’s) very busy ...,” Richey said.

“It’s always pretty slow to begin with. It’s all about being seen when we first get out there,” Chilton said. “But most (our) sales come the 3rd and the 4th — a vast majority of (our) sales. ... We’ll quadruple (sales); it’s crazy. (There’s) a big difference.”

“We always got our sales sheet from last year, and we’re on pace with last year,” Chilton said. “So far, so good.”

For the latter, which is located near the widening project of Kentucky 54, Chilton hopes it will not hinder annual sales.

“I don’t know — it’s a good question,” Chilton said of the construction taking place. “I am concerned with it, but (we’ll) see.”



Photo by Kayden Mulrooney Messenger-Inquirer kmulrooney@messenger-inquirer.com

Wynonna Judd closes out the 22nd ROMP Festival with a mainstage performance on Saturday at Yellow Creek Park.

ROMP ends strong despite weather

BY **FREDDIE BOURNE**
MESSENGER-INQUIRER

On Saturday evening, five-time Grammy Award winner Wynonna Judd graced the main stage of the 22nd ROMP Festival at Yellow Creek Park — marking her inaugural appearance at the bluegrass and roots music event.

But nearly 12 hours later, the physical platform that hosted the Ashland native, among others, was folded up and ready to be driven off the festival grounds as the Bluegrass Music Hall of Fame & Museum’s annual, multi-day music spectacular came to a

close for 2025.

And despite concerns ranging from the sweltering heat throughout the week, some slight rain showers and moments of thunder and lightning occurring nearby, officials with ROMP were satisfied with the outcome.

“We did have a little bit of weather — but nothing that pushed any acts back, and we fared through the heat. ... Towards the end of the day (Saturday) for the headliner acts, the weather turned out perfect,” said Erin Rouse, the Hall of Fame’s marketing manager, during the festival’s Sunday morning cleanup at

the park. “Overall, it’s just been really great. We’ve been hearing a lot of positive comments from longtime attendees and a lot of new people coming to ROMP that ... had a great time and now they said they’re hooked.

“That’s what we want,” Rouse said.

Rouse said positive feedback she and fellow staff members have received included thoughts on the acts that were on tap to perform this year like Judd, the Del McCoury Band, Molly Tuttle, Sam Bush and The Dillards.

“We try to keep the lineup really diverse and try to have

something for everyone. Bluegrass is what we’re here for, but we like to branch out and try to bring some other genres in there,” Rouse said. “We had some people that (were) kind of skeptical about some of (the) artists; but once they saw them, they (were) very complimentary and they said that they were some of their favorites.

“That’s always really exciting to see,” Rouse said, “and I think that’s what’s special about a festival.”

Ross Leigh, recreation outreach for Daviess County

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Photo by Alan Warren, Messenger-Inquirer | awarren@messenger-inquirer.com

New District Court Judge Brian Quattrocchi holds up his right hand, surrounded by his family, as he is sworn in by Circuit Court Judge Tom Castlen, on Monday at the Morton Holbrook Judicial Center.

Quattrocchi sworn in as District Judge

BY **JAMES MAYSE**
MESSENGER-INQUIRER

Brian Quattrocchi became Daviess County’s newest District Judge Monday afternoon, after being sworn in during a brief ceremony at the Morton Holbrook Judicial Center.

Quattrocchi was sworn in by Circuit Judge Tom Castlen before a full courtroom of family members, friends and colleagues. Quattrocchi, who was an assistant Commonwealth’s Attorney before being appointed to the District bench by Gov. Andy Beshear, choked up at moments while he thanked the audience of well-wishers for their support.

“Obviously, I’m overwhelmed,” Quattrocchi said, shortly after he donned his judge’s robe for the first time. Quattrocchi promised to keep the ceremony short.

“I’ve heard I have a pretty full docket to get started on,” he said.

Quattrocchi is taking the District Court Division 2 seat that was vacated when Judge David Payne was elected to Circuit Court. Quattrocchi is the second judge to take his oath in Daviess County within a week. Last Monday, new Circuit Judge Bryce Caldwell was sworn in as judge in a quick ceremony, so he could get started on the bench.

Quattrocchi was a social worker and public defender

before he joined the Daviess County Commonwealth’s Attorney’s office, where he worked for much of his career, except for a stint in private practice.

Quattrocchi thanked retired Commonwealth’s Attorney Bruce Kuegel, who was in the audience, calling Kuegel, “my former employer, and mentor, who I look up to dearly.”

District Court hears misdemeanor cases, traffic violations and small claims and probate cases. District judges also hear juvenile cases. All felony criminal cases start in District Court.

“The role is a profound responsibility, one which I pledge to uphold with compassion and integrity,” Quattrocchi said.

Quattrocchi said of the move to the District bench, “this has been a journey,” and he has learned from the local judges and attorneys.

“Just watching how you conduct yourself on a daily basis, how you treat people with justice and compassion, is not lost on me,” Quattrocchi said of the judges.

Quattrocchi also credited his family, particularly his mother, for teaching him kindness and compassion.

“I’ve tried to carry that my whole life, and will continue to do so,” he said. “It’s my pledge to you, Mom, I’ll try to make you proud every day I am on the bench.”

ROMP draws visitors from Czech Republic

BY **SCOTT HAGERMAN**
MESSENGER-INQUIRER

The annual ROMP bluegrass music festival being held this past weekend at Yellow Creek Park has long drawn attendees from around the world.

But for Iva and Rosta Capek of Prague, Czech Republic, the weekend was as much business trip as it is social gathering.

While bluegrass music is often thought of as uniquely American, with Ohio County’s Bill Monroe generally considered the godfather of the genre, the Capeks also have a wealth of history with the music.

“It started with my husband’s family — and a little bit my family, too — but my husband is from the family who started bluegrass music in the Czech Republic,” Iva Capek said. “His father was a guitar player and



Photo by Kayden Mulrooney/Messenger-Inquirer

Iva and Rosta Capek of Czech Republic hold bluegrass instruments made by their own business at ROMP on Friday.

singer, and he founded the first all-female bluegrass band in the world in 1971, the first brought on stage. And Rosta’s mother was a banjo player in the band, the first female five-string banjo player in Europe.

“So my husband grew up

in this environment of music, of bluegrass, but he didn’t want to be an artist. He knew how hard it is, how it affects your family, so he decided he would make the instruments, not play them.”

Rosta Capek said the three

biggest things in the Czech Republic are beer, ice hockey and bluegrass music.

“We have smaller (festivals) every weekend through the season,” Iva Capek said.

The couple is celebrating the 40th anniversary of Capek Bluegrass & Jazz Instruments this year, and during that time, the company has made significant inroads with many American artists, including stars such as Ricky Skaggs, Doyle Lawson and Dave Grisman, all of whom have played the company’s mandolins.

But the Capeks acknowledge that, even with their success, it’s a tough market to break through.

“When we are talking about our business in Czech Republic compared to in America, it’s like bringing the wood to the forest, because you have a lot

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