



Summary of project objectives/participating agency:

Traditionally, the Canton Parks & Recreation Department offers a holiday light-up display in Stadium Park towards the end of November until January of the New Year. In order to enhance the holiday light-up experience, our department sought to offer horse-drawn carriage rides to our community, which is comprised of primarily low income families. Thus, the Horse-Drawn Holiday Ride program provided a unique opportunity for our residents to experience the thrill of an old-fashioned horse-drawn carriage ride through Stadium Park while being able to savor the sights and sounds of the holiday season.

Initially, the participating agencies in this project were two local horse-drawn carriage providers, Hitch-and-Time and Carriage Limousine. However, once we initially promoted the event through Facebook, it sold out within a matter of two days, and our office was continuously bombarded with phone calls. To further accommodate the community, we then put a sponsorship package together for local businesses and organizations to either provide funding for an additional carriage (we charged \$5 per rider for the event and the fees that we already had taken in would not have covered another carriage) or items, such as cookies, drinks, etc. In the end, Rice's Nursery, a landscaping company, donated \$700 towards the addition of another carriage, Carpe Diem, a local coffee shop, provided hot chocolate, and Deli Ohio, a local delicatessen, provided chocolate chip cookies. Overall, the event was a huge success, and we were able to provide a new service—horse-drawn carriage rides—to our community during the month of December, 2016.

Description of project activities/final timeline:

- **July 2016:** Once we were notified that we would be receiving an OPRA Grant, we were able to finalize the program and put it in our program guide (the event was scheduled for **Friday, December 9th, 2016 at Stadium Park, and it ran from 6-9 PM; we charged \$5 per rider**). Next, we started recruiting the necessary partners that we would need to make the event a success.
- **Monday, August 1st:** I contacted Hitch-and-Time about the possibility of partnering with the department on our event. I then arranged a meeting date with vendor's owner.
- **Thursday, September 1st:** We met in-person with Hitch-and-Time and surveyed Stadium Park while discussing/finalizing the route the horses would take through the park. We then asked the owner about getting another carriage provider involved. Payment details were also discussed.
- **Friday, September 9th:** Hitch-and-Time was able to get another carriage provider, Carriage Limousine Service, involved in the event. This particular vendor was already familiar with Stadium Park, and we did not need to take them out to the park or go over the route. Payment was then discussed/finalized with Carriage Limousine Service. Once we had the carriages arranged, we determined time slots for the event and the number of people we could move throughout the course of the entire event (the program ran from 6-9 PM, and we shuttled people every half hour, starting at 6 PM; people registered for their desired time slot). Lastly,

contracts were finalized with carriage providers and deposits were paid to reserve vendors' services.

- **Friday, September 30th:** A Facebook event was created for our program and an ad was placed in the local paper. Within a matter of two days, the event was sold out, we had people on waiting lists, and our office was receiving tons of phone calls. We then determined that it was not necessary to market the event any further and looked into getting sponsors involved to either provide additional funding for another carriage or free items, such as cookies and hot chocolate.
- **Wednesday, October 12th:** A sponsorship package was finalized (see attached in email), and it was distributed to a list of past and current parks and recreation sponsors. Luckily, we had three sponsors—Rice's Nursery, Deli Ohio, and Carpe Diem—donate funding, cookies and hot chocolate for the event!
- **Monday, October 24th:** Once we had our additional carriage in place, I contacted people on our waiting list to come in and register for the added time slots. I then put together a finalized roster of the times families and couples were getting on the carriage and what particular carriage they were supposed to get on (we had a sleigh, a carriage limousine, and an oak carriage on-site for the program). We then posted a notification on our Facebook page and website that the event was sold out.
- **Friday, December 2nd:** Participants were emailed a reminder of the event and to call into the office if they forgot their time slots.
- **Wednesday, December 7th:** Participants were again emailed a reminder and carriage providers were contacted to go over any last minute details for the event.
- **Friday, December 9th:** Our staff picked-up the cookies and hot chocolate from the sponsors, and we set-up for the event at Stadium Park at 5 PM. Carriage providers arrived at 4:30 PM to get ready for the program. The event ran from 6-9 PM, and after all of our pre-registered customers took their ride, we then accepted walk-ups (they were charged \$5 per rider as well), and were able to service another 30-40 people.

Evaluation of outcomes and impact:

Overall, for this program, we were able to service 105 pre-registered participants, plus an additional 30-40 walk-ups. Yes, we did have to turn people away during the first few hours of the program, because we wanted our pre-registered participants to have the opportunity for their ride first. However, we feel that this project was not only able to expose our light-up display in the park event more, but to alert the public that we offer this service to them! Many people asked about this program for the following year, and the feedback from riders was positive, with families taking pictures with the horses and of the lights. Lastly, we were able to highlight our event sponsors and carriage providers throughout the entire process, and we were able to assist them in gaining positive recognition as well!

Description of subsequent plans:

Moving forward, we will have to charge participants a higher rate than \$5 per rider in order to cover the carriage costs. Also, we most likely will have to get either the same or a different sponsor involved to provide some monetary donation for the program. We may also look into getting another horse-drawn carriage provider involved so we can service more people. With marketing the

event, we will probably have customers come into our office to sign-up their families instead of having people register for the event online. Lastly, all event sponsors and carriage providers have been contacted and thanked for their services and donations.

Summary of expenses incurred:

Item	Expenses	Funding Agencies/Income	Total
Hitch-in-Time (carriage provider; one horse-drawn carriage)	\$1,225.00	\$2,500.00 (OPRA Grant)	
Carriage Limousine Service (carriage provider; two horse-drawn carriages)	\$1,950.00	\$700.00 (Rice's Nursery donation)	
Walmart (supplies for event—napkins, plates, etc.)	\$25.00	\$525.00 (Program registration fees; 105 participants X \$5 per rider)	
Deli Ohio (cookie donation)	\$0.00		
Carpie Diem (hot chocolate)	\$0.00		
Total	\$3,200.00	\$3,725.00	\$525.00

*OPRA Grant covered Hitch-in-Time carriage provider (**\$1,225.00**), Walmart Supplies (**\$25.00**), and a portion of the Carriage Limousine provider (**\$1,250.00**) for a total of **\$2,500.00***

*After a portion of the Carriage Limousine provider was covered, the department still needed another **\$700** to cover the expense; Rice's Nursery donated **\$700.00** in sponsorship money to cover the final carriage expense*

*Once the final **\$700** was paid to Carriage Limousine Service, additional carriage rides were able to be offered, and the department made **\$525.00** in profit from total program fees*