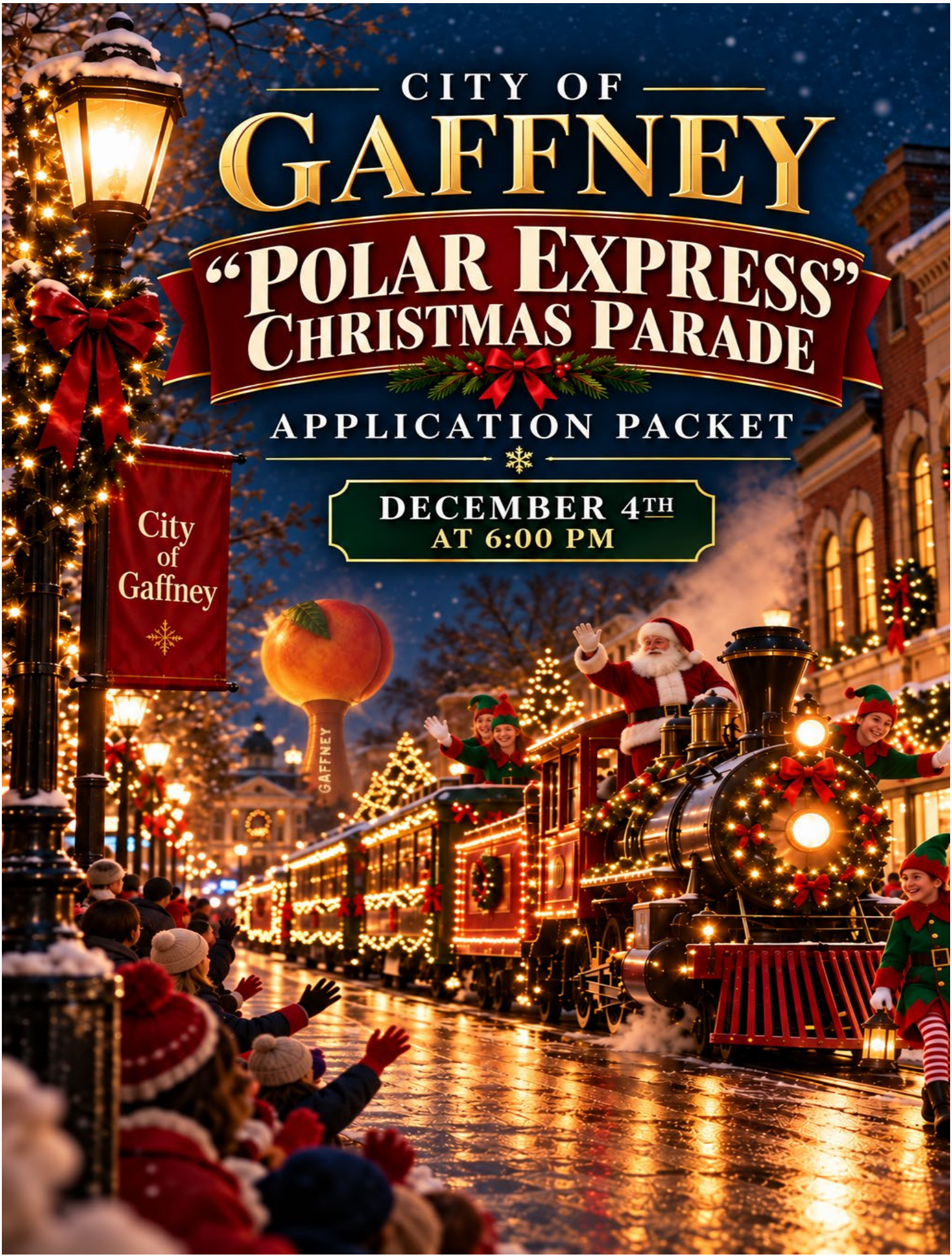

CITY OF GAFFNEY

"POLAR EXPRESS" CHRISTMAS PARADE

APPLICATION PACKET

DECEMBER 4TH
AT 6:00 PM

City of Gaffney
Department of
Marketing & Tourism

Gaffney Visitors Center and Art Gallery
210 West Frederick Street
Gaffney, South Carolina 29341
864.487.6244
www.getintogaffney.com
events@getintogaffney.com

October 8, 2026

Dear 2026 Parade Participant,

The City of Gaffney is thrilled to invite you to join us for this year's "Polar Express" Christmas Parade! The parade will take place in historic downtown Gaffney on Friday, December 4th at 6:00 p.m.

This year, the magic of a Christmas train adventure is coming to Gaffney! Picture golden tickets, cozy pajamas, steaming hot chocolate, ringing bells, and an unforgettable journey to the North Pole. We can't wait to see how you bring this magical and merry theme to life. Think of glowing trains, festive conductors, children awaiting a special Christmas journey, and elves welcoming passengers aboard. Our creative staff at the Gaffney Visitors Center is happy to help with brainstorming or design ideas. Feel free to call or stop by anytime for assistance.

All entries in the 2026 "Polar Express" Christmas Parade will compete for cash prizes! Judging will focus on four categories: Best in Show, Originality, Use of Theme, and Use of Materials and Lights.

Parade applications must be submitted by 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday, December 1st.
Entries are organized to create a balanced mix of floats, bands, walkers, and vehicles. The lineup is determined by the date your completed application is received—so the sooner you apply, the closer to the front you'll be!

Please remember, this is a nighttime parade beginning at 6:00 p.m. All entries must be illuminated so they can be seen clearly along the parade route. Entries without adequate lighting may not be visible to spectators.

We can't wait to see how you bring the magic of the "Polar Express" Christmas Parade to Gaffney!
If you have any questions, please contact us at 864-487-6244, events@getintogaffney.com, or visit us at 210 West Frederick Street, Gaffney, South Carolina.

Wishing you and yours a joyful and safe holiday season.

Sincerely,

Lacey Lemmons

Lacey Lemmons
Visitor Center Manager

PROCEDURES

1. **Every entry must pre-register by completing the parade application form and attaching required documents**

2. Parade is limited to the first 100 entries.

3. **ALL PARADE ENTRIES MUST BE ILLUMINATED!**

4. Fee of $20.00 per entry (Elected Officials not required to pay fee) must be paid at the time of application is submitted.

5. Please note that the City of Gaffney will no longer serve as the intermediary for float rentals. All parade participants interested in renting a float must make arrangements directly with the float rental companies. For your convenience, contact information for these companies is provided below:

   Cline's Floats Inc, 7570 Long Island Rd. Catawba, NC 28609 – (828)241-3133
   Southeastern Float Co, 86 Calhoun Rd., St. Matthews, SC 29135 - (803)917-0644

6. No sirens or loud horns.

7. **No throwing of any candy, favors or handouts of any kind.**
   Failure to comply will result in IMMEDIATE removal and suspension from future participation.

8. ALL entries (motorized and ridden) must remain in the **center** of parade route. No maneuvering and NO riding animals to the spectators for petting, conversing or any other reason.

9. All vehicles must be operated by a licensed driver and proof of insurance is required. This includes golf carts and ATVs. **Proof of current insurance and copy of drivers license for driver must be submitted at time of application.**

10. City will provide traditional Santa at the end of the parade.

11. Floats, trailers, beds, or similar attachments transporting children more than thirty (30") inches from the ground must have side rails. Rails should measure a minimum of three feet from the floor of the unit.

12. To ensure the safety of riders, all children must be unloaded from floats/open units at the end of the parade route.

13. Parents, or other responsible adults (18 yrs. or older), must be at the end of the parade route to pick up their children.

14. The ratio of adult chaperones to children will be no less than 1:10 for ages 6 to 12 or 1:5 for preschoolers.

15. All animals (including horses) must abide by the City of Gaffney Animal Control laws **(including immediate removal of waste)**. Responsible person(s) of animal entries must have someone with the animal throughout the parade (from line-up to parade conclusion) with pooper scooping capabilities. **ALL WASTE MUST BE REMOVED IMMEDIATELY**. **Please see City of Gaffney Animal Control Ordinance on next page**

16. **HORSES:** All horse entries must show proof of liability insurance as respects the horse. If the horse is owned by a farm, you must show a "certificate of liability insurance," if the horse is owned by an individual, you must provide the "declarations page" of the individual's "homeowners policy with liability limits".

    ****All horses participating in the parade MUST be diapered before removal from the trailer. Additionally, the horses must be accompanied with a pooper scooper for the entire duration of the parade to ensure cleanliness along the route.**

17. **PERFORMANCE AREAS:** The ONLY locations permissible for stopped performances are the following intersections: Buford, Floyd Baker Boulevard and Frederick. Stopped performances can last no longer than **30** seconds.

CITY OF GAFFNEY ANIMAL CONTROL ORDINANCE

Sec. 4-2. - Definitions.

The following words, terms and phrases, when used in this chapter, shall have the meanings ascribed to them in this section, except where the context clearly indicates a different meaning:

Animal means all living vertebrate creatures except homo sapiens.

Animal control officer means a person designated by the city as the enforcement officer of the provisions of this chapter, and so designated by the city administrator.

Animal shelter means any premises so designated by the city council for the purpose of impounding and caring for pets found in violation of this chapter.

At large means an animal off the premises of the owner or keeper and not under restraint by the owner or keeper.

Cat means a commonly domesticated member of the feline family, excluding lions, tigers, jaguars, panthers, bobcats, wild cats and the like.

Dangerous or vicious animal means any animal constituting a physical threat to human beings or other animals, or evidencing an abnormal inclination to attack persons or animals without provocation, or having a tendency to do any act repeatedly which might endanger the safety of persons or property.

Dog means a commonly domesticated member of the canine family, excluding wolves, foxes, coyotes and the like.

Euthanasia; euthanize; euthanized means the methods of destruction provided by the South Carolina Code of 1976 for impounded animals.

Exposure to rabies means any person or animal which has been bitten by or exposed to any animal known to have been infected with rabies. This determination shall be made by the state department of health and environmental control as provided for in state law.

Kennel means any person or organization engaging in the business of breeding, buying, selling or boarding of animals.

Neutered pet means any dog or cat which has been operated on to prevent conception.

Owner or keeper means any person who has a right of property in an animal; keeps or harbors an animal, or has it in his care or acts as its custodian; or permits such animal to remain on or about premises occupied by the owner or keeper.

Pet means any dog, cat or member of the canine and feline family.

Running at large means off the premises of the owner or keeper and not under the physical control of the owner or keeper by means of a leash or other similar restraining device.

Stray means an animal at large.

Under restraint. Controlled by means of a chain, leash or other restraining device lead by a person physically capable of restraining the animal, and obedient to that person's commands, or securely enclosed within the real property limits of the animal owner's premises, or securely enclosed within the real property limits of property of another with that property owner's permission, or securely enclosed within a vehicle being driven or parked.

Vicious animal means any animal evidencing an abnormal inclination to attack persons or animals without provocation.

Wild, exotic or venomous animal means any animal that, because of its size, disposition or other characteristic would constitute a danger to persons or property.

Sec. 4-20. - Leash regulation.

(a) It shall be unlawful for the owner or keeper of any dog to permit such animal to run at large or to transport an unrestrained animal in an open truck bed. A dog shall not be considered running at large if:

(1) It is confined to the property of the owner or keeper; or

(2) On a leash not longer than ten feet, restrained by a person as defined in section 4-2; or

(3) A. In a cage or enclosed interior of a vehicle.

B. Dogs which are participating in hunting, obedience trials, conformation shows, tracking tests, herding trials, lure courses or agility trials shall not be considered at large.

Sec. 4-24. - Animal waste*

The owner or keeper of every animal shall:

(1) Be responsible for the immediate removal of any excreta deposited by his animal on any property other than his own;

(2) Prevent the accumulation of animal waste on any property;

(3) Dispose of a pet's waste by either flushing or bagging and depositing it in the garbage or by burial.

**** PLEASE NOTE THAT ANIMAL WASTE PERTAINS TO ALL ANIMALS INCLUDING HORSES. IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE RIDER OF EACH HORSE TO PROVIDE MEANS FOR IMMEDIATE REMOVAL IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 4-24 SHOWN ABOVE.***

Office Use Only
Date Rec'd:_____
#:_____

Parade Position Number:

City of Gaffney Christmas Parade
December 4, 2026, 6:00 p.m.

Submit your completed application with required documents at the Gaffney Visitors Center, located at 210 West Frederick Street. Entry forms will be accepted through Tuesday, December 1st, 2026 or until the first 100 entries are received, whichever is first. Please keep in mind that entries are spaced to allow a mix of floats, bands, walkers, and vehicles – ALL of which are in order then by the date completed application was received.

What is your entry theme? _____

How do you intend to light up your entry? _____

Mark the box that best describes type of unit:

☐ Walking/Marching Group ☐ Golf Cart (must be insured)
☐ Float ☐ Personal Farm Tractors

MUSIC (check one of the following):

☐ Music – includes boom box, radio, loudspeakers, band etc. ☐ No Music

ANIMALS (must comply with Procedures & Animal Ordinance):

☐ Horses **(must be diapered)** ☐ Other:

VEHICLES (must be insured):

☐ Motorcycles or other ATVs ☐ Private Passenger Vehicle (car or pick-up truck)
☐ Large rig/semi-trailer ☐ Emergency Response Vehicle
☐ Other_____(must be pre-approved)

Make_____Model_____Year_____

1. Is your unit ☐ **gasoline** OR ☐ **diesel?**
2. What is the length of your vehicle? _____
3. Will your unit be pulling a trailer, bed, or any similar attachment? ☐ Yes ☐ No
4. If yes, what is the length of the attachment?_____

(Please pay close attention to rule numbers 11-14)

All vehicles must provide proof of insurance and a copy of the license of the person who will be driving the unit in the parade. This MUST be submitted with application.

Sponsoring Organization:_____
(*This is the name your float will be registered as. Use this name when checking in on December 4th.)*

Responsible Person:_____

Address:_____ City:_____State:_____Zip: _____

Email:_____ Telephone: _____

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: Parade Rules have been read, accepted and will be abided by. I, the undersigned, agree that I will notify my participants that they are responsible for any personal injury and/or property damage resulting from participation in the parade. I specifically release and discharge in advance the City of Gaffney from any and all liability. As the applicant, I further understand that if I, or anyone from my organization, fails to comply with all rules, unit/entry will be removed from parade immediately and will be subject to suspension from future participation.

Applicants Signature:_____ Date: _____

ATTN: Christmas Parade Entries

All vehicles **MUST** submit a copy of the unit driver's license and proof of insurance for the unit at the time the application is submitted. Applications will **NOT** be received without required documentation. License must be of person that will be operating your unit in the parade.

DO NOT THROW or TOSS ANYTHING! (this will result and immediate removal from parade and suspension from future participation). Please obey this – a piece of candy is not worth anyone's life.

2026 Christmas Parade

Application Checklist

Please make sure you have the following documents when submitting an application for the City of Gaffney Christmas Parade:

- ☐ **Completed 2026 Christmas Parade application**
- ☐ **$20 parade entry fee (late entries $5 per day)**
  We accept cash, credit card, and check (check made payable to City of Gaffney)

If your entry includes a vehicle (car, truck, golf cart, ATV, etc.) you must submit the following documents in addition to the application and entry fee:

- ☐ **Driver's License of the person operating your unit in the parade.**
- ☐ **Proof of insurance for each unit in the parade.**

Any application missing the listed items above will be considered incomplete and will not be permitted to participate in the City of Gaffney Christmas Parade. All documents must be submitted at one time to be considered a complete application. Should you have any questions regarding the application please contact the Gaffney Visitors Center at 864-487-6244. All application must be submitted at the Gaffney Visitors Center (Old Post Office), located at 210 West Frederick Street.

CHRISTMAS PARADE

ENTRY CONTEST

All aboard the Polar Express! This year's Christmas Parade invites you to bring the magic of a Christmas train adventure to life! Whether you're constructing a float, decorating a vehicle, or marching in costume, this is your chance to spread holiday cheer and win a cash prize. Below are the scoring categories that our judges will be using.

THE POLAR EXPRESS

SCORING CATEGORIES:

1. **Use of Theme:** How well does your entry incorporate the "Polar Express" theme? Judges will look for thoughtful and creative interpretations that align with the festive spirit of the event.
2. **Name Clearly Visible:** Make sure your entry's name is easy to see and read. The visibility and presentation of your entry's name are key to ensuring it stands out and is memorable to the audience and judges alike.
3. **Use of Lights:** Lighting plays a crucial role in enhancing the visual impact of your entry. Judges will evaluate the effective and creative use of lights to bring your design to life, especially during the evening hours.
4. **Utilization of Material and Lights:** How resourceful and creative are you with your materials? This category rewards entries that skillfully combine various materials and lighting elements to create a cohesive and visually striking presentation.
5. **Shows Originality and Creativity:** This category recognizes entries that stand out for their unique design and imaginative approach. We're looking for fresh ideas that showcase your creativity and make a lasting impression.

CASH PRIZES

1st Place — $300 | 2nd Place — $200 | 3rd Place — $100