Winter Carnival to bring thematic family fun

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HOLOYKE – The city’s third annual Winter Carnival will have more events this year that last, according to Ken Johnston, its director.

The event will run from Feb. 7 through 16 and Johnston told Reminder Publications that most of the featured activities would be free.

The two weekends during the carnival will be centered on a theme. The first weekend, Feb. 7 through 9, will have a sports theme and will feature a hockey tournament, a curling demonstration, a guided family-friendly hike, swim races and Family Day at Holyoke Heritage State Park.

The second weekend, Feb. 14 through 16, is about arts and entertainment in Holyoke with the King Arthur Flour Cake Baking contest, Roaring Chili Cook-Off, a free community pancake breakfast and the night parade.

The night parade and the Family Day are both new this year, Johnston said.

The two weeks of events couldn’t be possible without a group of volunteers, he added.

This year, Johnson said, “We got a greater response from community institutions.” He explained that events such as the opening night luminaria display at community field will be set up by the Holyoke Parks and Recreations Department, freeing volunteers to focus on other events. It will be from 6 to 8 p.m. at Community Field.

The full schedule of events is available at http://holyokewintercarnival.org. Johnston said that events are still being added and the public should check the website for new activities.

When asked for highlights, Johnson noted the dog show at Holyoke High School starting at 1 p.m. on Feb. 9 is a crowd favorite. The event is free, but there is an entrance fee for participating canines.

Another favorite event is a spaghetti supper at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church at 5:30 p.m. on Feb. 12. The evening will not only include a full spaghetti supper but performances from The Raging Grannies and the Zydeco Connection. The cost of the dinner is $8.

The Chili Cook-off will return sponsored by Mayoral Chief of Staff Rory Casey. It will take place at 1 p.m. on Feb. 15 at Gateway City Arts with an admission cost of $6 for adults, and $4 for children.

Family Day at Holyoke Heritage State Park will start at 1 p.m., with a wide variety of free events including a drumming circle, the Cactus Head Puppets, kids arts and crafts and the Forest Park Zoo on the go, among other features.

Johnston said there are still openings for contestants for the King Arthur Flour Cake Baking contest.

The event is produced with Passport Holyoke and is sponsored in part by the Holyoke Credit Union, Holyoke Medical Center, Holyoke Cultural Council, Baystate Health, Health New England, the City of Holyoke, La Veracruzana, MassMutual Center, MAAC 2014 Basketball Championships, Yankee Candle, Ross Insurance, Holyoke Community College, Holyoke Parks and Recreation, C&S Wholesale Grocers, Charles Davignon Real Estate, Ian T. Duryea-Electrician, MIFA, Joe’s Cafe, Bresnahan Insurance Agency, and Taylor Real Estate.