

Macomb County high school bands part of Detroit parade

- By Nicole Tuttle For Digital First Media
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Chippewa Valley High School's marching band and color guard are among the Macomb County student bands that will participate in America's Thanksgiving Parade in Detroit on Nov. 22. Pictured is the CVHS marching band participating in a prior America's Thanksgiving Parade.

PHOTO COURTESY OF TIMOTHY HOEY



Several Macomb County high schools will have marching bands participating in the America's Thanksgiving Parade in Detroit on Thanksgiving Day. Pictured is the marching band from Chippewa Valley High School participating in a prior America's Thanksgiving Parade.

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Dedicated band students at several local high schools will put marching before a family meal on Thanksgiving Day in order to participate in America's Thanksgiving Parade.

"We are thrilled to have a number of outstanding bands from Macomb County and across metro Detroit in America's Thanksgiving Parade presented by Art Van," The Parade Company President and CEO Tony Michaels said. "We are grateful to the schools, students and parents who share their Thanksgiving morning to help make the parade shine each year."

Marching band and color guard students from the following schools will participate in this year's parade when it steps off at 8:45 a.m. including:

- Warren Mott High School in Warren
- Fraser High School in Fraser
- Chippewa Valley High School (CVHS) in Clinton Township
- Dakota High School in Macomb Township

America's Thanksgiving Parade, presented by Art Van, is a Detroit tradition dating back to 1924. Each year, hundreds of thousands of spectators line Woodward Avenue on Thanksgiving Day morning to watch the floats, helium-filled balloons, marching bands and specialty acts. The parade is televised live locally on WDIV-TV, Local 4 and is syndicated nationally. This year's parade, set for Nov. 22, will kick off from the corner of Kirby and Woodward.

All band applications are turned in to The Parade Company by the end of May, and selected bands are informed by mid-July, Bridget Burns of lovio george, a communications firm that works with The Parade Company, said.

Videos of bands performing are sent and reviewed by a committee headed by a former marching band instructor and The Parade Company, which Burns said sets the following standards for selected bands:

- Prior to the parade, an orientation is held by The Parade Company in order to explain the logistics to selected bands.

- Bands can perform a variety of songs of their choosing along the course of the parade route, but when in the TV Zone, play a specific and agreed upon piece of music.
- Bands are informed of when to begin playing prior to entering the TV Zone, and also play and march all along the parade route.

Timothy Hoey, the music teacher and band director at Chippewa Valley, said this year will mark CVHS's 18th consecutive performance in America's Thanksgiving Parade.

"We perform a mix of holiday favorites and pop tunes," Hoey said. "We started on the music early in October and are practicing three times in November before the parade."

CVHS color guard instructor Lisa Passmore also creates a custom routine to each selection performed. The 145 students of the CVHS marching band spend about an hour marching in the parade and performing continuously.

"We send The Parade Company a list of songs in our repertoire, and from that list they select the song we'll perform in the TV Zone," Hoey said. "The zone is towards the end of the parade. Our escort alerts us when we get close."

The CVHS band and color guard performs in several parades, and so must develop music and routines different from what they perform for halftimes shows at football games.

"The music we perform for our halftime show is tailored to the formations we create on the football field, and would not be suitable for parade," Hoey said. "We do several parades in late August and early September, and except for the holiday selections we perform in this parade, it's pretty much the same."