



2015 Ansonia Harvest Festival - Cancellation in Perspective

Opinion by Ralph Villers, The Valley Voice
Oct. 6, 2015



ANSONIA - Our best intentions are what we hope to achieve - we plan (and hope) for the best and try to mitigate the worst. Of course, the best laid plans can be rendered moot by simple natural events.

As chairman of The Ansonia Cultural Commission, we and the commission spent the Summer implementing changes to simplify the event:

- A shorter Main Street venue
- Reducing the entertainment stages from two to one
- Not having a rain date
- More careful placement of vendors to avoid conflict between vendors and Main Street retailers.

We even created a new winsome mascot, Harvey the Scarecrow King. These were the best of plans.

The best that is, until the day of the event.

We didn't think of the terribly high winds we found on Saturday. When the hearty vendors were setting up their wares and canopies, there was hope of an event, even if sparsely attended.

Then the tents went flying! The commission conferred with Mayor Dave Cassetti, who acted decisively and immediately cancelled the event.

A real leader never dithers when decisions need to be made now. I and the commission truly appreciate the leadership of Mayor Cassetti.

What of the Harvest Festival?

We never second guessed our decision to not offer a rain date for the first time - many vendors we canvassed over the summer indicated a preference for no rain date as they schedule events every for every Autumnal weekend, and would likely not be in Ansonia a mere week later.

The events of the day showed us the many issues that need to be addressed and will be, but these changes will be made:

- A cancellation and postponement process will be instituted
- No vendor will be allowed to use a canopy that is not weighted down.
- We no longer will compete with the Seymour Pink 5K on the same day, so the date will be moved to September
- We may look at alternative venues

One final item, and we have to look at this ASAP, is what the Harvest Festival is to be: is it to showcase outside vendors or Main Street retailers. It seems that the hybrid mix of retail and vendor employed from 2004 until now should be reexamined to further refine to where the event goes from here. We want the Harvest Festival to best showcase the Copper City.

