



"Greatest Free Show on Earth"

Held Annually Since 1903

Starts the Third Wednesday of October Each Year

159 East Franklin Street • Circleville, Ohio 43113

(740) 474-7000

www.pumpkinshow.com

March 16, 2021

Good morning/afternoon. I'm Barry Keller, Vice-President of the Circleville Pumpkin Show.

The Circleville Pumpkin Show dates to the turn of the 20th century and is credited as the idea of then Mayor George Haswell. It was in 1903 when Mayor Haswell organized a small display in front of the waterworks office on West Main Street. His original idea was to provide an opportunity for farmers to come to town, besides their annual trip to pay their taxes, to exhibit their produce since there was no county fair at the time. That first occasion occupied 30 feet of table space along the dusty unpaved street. The Mayor had also invited the Old Yellowbud band to perform so the first parade was formed. Everyone came dressed up to view the biggest pumpkin and see what kind of corn, beans, and other vegetables the neighbor on the adjoining farm was growing.

In 1904 the merchants in downtown got involved setting up displays and draping their storefronts with red, white and blue bunting. The event known as "Circleville's Big Pumpkin Show" included prizes for the largest pumpkin or squash which was won by George Fridley with an 88-pound pumpkin. Mrs. Pearl England won for "Largest Pumpkin Entered by a Lady" with her 76-pound pumpkin.

In 1905 the Show went from 1 to 2 days and the streets were lighted with 3000 incandescent light bulbs. The Scioto Valley Traction line was completed and visitors to the show increased with over 18,000 in attendance on Saturday. The first merry-go - round also appeared at the show. Animal displays were added to the show since there was no county fair.

Hogs, cattle, chicks and other farm animals were displayed in tents. Concessions soon took their place along the midway. In the 1940's county fairs were reactivated, and the animals left the Pumpkin Show.

In 1909 the three-day event was described as "the best show on earth and everything absolutely free". The fall exhibit was so well accepted that a permanent organization was formed composed of entirely volunteers.

In 2019 the Circleville Pumpkin Show celebrated the 113th Circleville Pumpkin Show on the streets of downtown Circleville beginning on the third Wednesday in October and running through Saturday. The Circleville Pumpkin Show is entirely self-supporting even to the point of reimbursing the City of Circleville and the county sheriff for the additional expense for police, fire, ems, and other staff who assist with the Pumpkin Show. The Show will have seven parades, approximately 400 vendors of food and retail merchandise, 30 amusement rides, over 350 volunteers and will cover 9 blocks of downtown Circleville. Dr. Robert Liggett showed the largest pumpkin ever shown at the Circleville Pumpkin Show weighing in at 1964 pounds. The Pumpkin Show is a 501 © 3 non-profit organization.

The idea for the License Plate Logo that we are requesting came from some of our volunteers. They were traveling on vacation and began noticing all the license plates dedicated to specific causes, military and organizations. After doing some research on Ohio license plate programs, they presented the idea to the Pumpkin Show Board of

Trustees and it was agreed that the Trustees, volunteers and community members would solicit signatures for the petition to establish an organizational license plate for the Circleville Pumpkin Show. Once we had our signatures, we submitted the information to the Bureau of Motor Vehicles and a request for the legislation to our Representative Brian Stewart. We believe that sharing our logo all over the state of Ohio with the many who attend the festival and delight in joining us year after year, we will give them and Circleville and Pickaway County something to show their support for the Show.

While the next Pumpkin Show will be much larger than the 30 feet that made up the 1903 Pumpkin Show, we are still dedicated to promoting Circleville and Pickaway County's roots in agriculture through our many departments and displays. Thank you for the opportunity to share with you a little about the Circleville Pumpkin Show. Thank you for your consideration of our Organization License Plate request. We invite you to join us on the third Wednesday in October and enjoy "The Greatest Free Show on Earth".

Thank you

Baugh D. Keller