

Controversy Complicates Carnival Location

(KAIR)--Discussion continues as to where to hold the Wagner Carnival this year, a staple of the Amelia Earhart Festival.

The old location for the carnival—400 block of Main Street—is unavailable due to construction of the new Holiday Inn Express.

Atchison Chamber of Commerce Director Jacque Pregont said she and festival organizers have been working on a new location that makes everyone happy.

At Atchison's April 3 city commission meeting, Commissioner Jack Bower voiced concern he'd heard from business owners who would be affected by the carnival's move who fear their business that weekend would be harmed.

“We've regrouped,” Pregont said. “I think we have a location that's going to work for everybody. I do not have all the people signed off yet to do that—there's new policy that we have to get everybody to sign-off if we're going to use parts of a parking lot. So, I'm in the process of doing that. Everybody I've talked to so far is very agreeable.”

Pregont said finding a location to suit all needs is tricky since they need adequate electricity, space and proximity to downtown.

“I think people really need to understand that the carnival is one of the few places that the festival makes some money,” Pregont said. “By doing that, it helps fund all the free stuff we give people. We offer a huge firework show at no cost to anybody. A lot of our stuff on the mall is at no cost to anybody. So, there has to be ways that we can make some money. If it weren't for all the sponsorship that we have, there wouldn't be a festival. We just have to try to end up in the black.”

Pregont said she hopes to have everyone sign off on the new location sometime next week. When that happens, the new carnival location will be released.

Many Signals Communications