

BUTTER AND EGG DAYS PARADE GUIDELINES – PLEASE READ!!

Early Bird applications by March 3, regular deadline March 10, late fee March 11- March 17

Parade Date: Saturday, April 18, 2026 ~ Start Time: 12:00 noon (rain or shine)

Location: Downtown Petaluma, California

Theme: “America’s Birthday – Petaluma Style!”

Celebrating 250 years of independence, ingenuity, and small-town pride.

“Americas’ Birthday – Petaluma Style” celebrates the nation’s 250th Birthday by honoring Petaluma’s deep agricultural roots and hometown spirit. This year’s Butter & Egg Days Parade recognizes the farmers, families, immigrants, makers, entrepreneurs, and creatives whose hard work, imagination, and ingenuity reflect the enduring American Dream. This celebration also pays respect to the Indigenous peoples who first stewarded this land, the courage of our founders, and the dedication of the dairy and egg farming community that shaped our town. Rooted in community, innovation, and independence, the parade celebrates the small-town spirit that continues to make Petaluma a vibrant place to call home. Head to Downtown Petaluma and celebrate with our community on this day of fun, history, and local pride!

Parade Entries: Required to be entertaining, creative, and exciting. Participate with a float, push float, band, costumes, uniformed attire, drill, dance team or comical routines, antique or unique vehicles, etc.

Think out of the box! All parade entries will be selected based on how well they theme their presentations around the Parade theme.

SEE THE ATTACHED LIST OF POTENTIAL FLOAT IDEAS TO FIT INTO THE THEME.

ENTRY APPLICATION FORM

- The entry application form must be completed and signed with an understanding of these general rules and guidelines. Payment is required with entry application.
- Parade organizers reserve the right to reject any application or entry at any time.
- Applicants will receive notification of their acceptance within two weeks of receipt.
- Staging instructions will be emailed approximately two weeks prior to the parade.

The rules and guidelines are for the safety and quality of the parade. Failure to abide by these rules and guidelines will result in removal from participation in this and future parades or events.

Parade Route: One mile – The parade will start at the corner of D Street and Fourth Street. It will proceed on Fourth Street to Kentucky Street, right onto Washington Street, right onto Petaluma Boulevard North to Petaluma Boulevard South, and end at D Street. It usually takes less than 30 minutes to walk the route.

Anticipated Attendance: 25,000 +

Parade organizers will approve applicants. Notification of acceptance will be emailed.

PARADE SPONSORSHIP

Parade sponsorship information is available on ButterAndEggDays.com or call 707.762.9348.

CLOVER KIDS PARADE: Clover Sonoma is again sponsoring a Parade for youngsters. It will start at 11:30 am at 4th and D Streets and move along the regular parade route to the Kids Area in the A Street Parking Lot ~ approx 4 blocks. Only pre-schools, primary grade classes or clubs, mothers’ clubs, and other similar groups will be in this parade.

Non-Commercial entries are parade units entered by an individual, academic school, nonprofit with fewer than 100 employees, service club, or youth group.

Cannot promote commercial or financial businesses.

One non-commercial unit per application.

Commercial entries are parade units entered by commercial or financial businesses and nonprofits with more than 100 employees. A commercial business entry cannot be used as a “major” advertisement.

One business / unit per application.

PARTICIPANT AGE RESTRICTIONS

- Walking participants in the parade must be at least six years old except for the Kids Parade.
- There must be at least one adult escort for every six children under the age of 13 years.
- Young children riding on a float must have adult supervision with and around them.

JUDGING: Judges will be selected by the event Committee. Units can compete in only one category. The judges' decision will be final. In the case where there is only one entrant in a category, that unit will be re-classified. 1st & 2nd Place Awards are offered in each entry class.

JUDGING CRITERIA: Each category will be judged on Entertainment Value, Use of Theme, Skill in Presentation, and Sportsmanship. All judging takes place in front of the reviewing stand on Petaluma Blvd. **No performance stops allowed.**

JUDGING CATEGORIES

High School Marching Band

Jr High Marching Band

Elementary School Band

Band (non-school)

Performance Groups: (Dance, Martial Arts, Musical, etc)

Fire Engine

Float: Commercial / Sponsor

Float: Non-Commercial

Antique or Classic Car: Commercial

Antique or Classic Car: Non-Commercial

Motorized Vehicle (bus, tractor, motorcycle, decorated or art car, work vehicle): Commercial

Motorized Vehicle (bus, tractor, motorcycle, decorated or art car, work vehicle): Non-Commercial

Self-Propelled Vehicle (bikes, carts, scooters)

Veterans Group

Marching / Walking Group: Commercial / Sponsor

Marching / Walking Group: Non-Commercial

Equestrian / Equestrian Clean Up Crew

Golden Hammer - Best Locally Built Non-Commercial

Helen Putnam - Best Use of Historical Theme

Judges' Special - Most Unique / Entertaining

Sweepstakes - Most Outstanding Use of Theme

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS AND SELECTION

- ALL parade entries MUST showcase parade theme.
- Entries are all subject to approval by Parade Organizers
- Entries are selected on their entertainment value, uniqueness, size, and appearance.
- The parade participants must be "family-friendly" / appropriate to be seen by all ages.
- The Parade will not be used as a platform for special interests.
- No entry will be accepted into the parade whose purpose is to campaign for any office or promote any partisan political position or ballot proposal. No unit may solicit funds while taking part in the parade for any reason.
- **Only Sponsors may pass items out. Items must be approved in advance and fit within the "America's Birthday – Petaluma Style" theme.**

THIS IS A FORWARD MOTION PARADE

- All entries are required to maintain a continuous forward motion during the parade. **No stopping.**
- **NO HANDING OUT OF CANDY OR FAVORS UNLESS YOU ARE A SPONSOR AND HAVE PRIOR AUTHORIZATION.**
- Nothing may be tossed from the parade route or curbside due to liability policies set forth by the parade insurance company and the City.
- Parade participants may not encourage spectators to come into the street.

IDENTIFICATION SIGNS

- Identification banners are encouraged for entries in the parade.
- Signs must be for identification purposes only and not as an advertisement or political statement.

MARCHING MUSICAL UNITS

- Musical units are requested to perform the one-mile parade route.
- Unit members are required to be in uniform attire.

WALKING GROUPS

- Participants must be costumed.
- Limited to 50 walkers.

PERFORMANCE GROUPS

- Units will be considered on their entertainment value or uniqueness.
- Entries requiring vehicles to carry sound systems must notify parade organizers on their application. Carts or vehicles accompanying the entry must be decorated.
- **Drill / Dance routines must be choreographed for forward motion. No stopping to perform.**

FLOATS

- Floats cannot exceed 50 feet in length (including tow vehicle), 13 feet in height, and 10 feet wide.
- Float entries must follow the "Parade Float Guidelines" that will be mailed with participant packet.
- All vehicles must be properly insured, papers in the vehicle, and drivers must have a valid driver's license.
- All passengers standing or sitting on the float MUST be wearing a safety belt or have handholds or other support while the float is moving.
- Vehicle and float drivers must have a clear view of the front of the vehicle.
- Floats must be constructed of fire-safe materials and must carry a fire extinguisher.
- Appropriate area for vehicle exhaust must be designed into the float/unit.

ANTIQUÉ / CLASSIC CARS

- Vehicles considered for entry must be antique or unique.
- Old commercial business vehicles such as vans, tankers, farm machinery, tractor-trailers, and other large vehicles will not be permitted if there are safety concerns.
- Vehicles permitted in the parade will be restricted in numbers, no more than three car clubs and clubs limited to limited to 6 cars per club.
- Drivers must be able to have a clear view of the front of the vehicle.
- **No** commercial or private vehicles are allowed without prior written approval by the parade staff.
- **All vehicles must be properly insured, and drivers must have a valid driver's license. (These will be checked on the day of the parade, during Staging)**

EQUESTRIANS / ANIMALS

- No more than 6 horses per entry. No more than three equestrian groups will be accepted into the parade.
- Any animal deemed unsafe in the parade will be removed.
- **All animal units must provide their own "clean-up" crew to follow their unit in the parade.**
- Equestrian riders should be at least 12 years of age and accompanied by an adult trainer.
- All equestrian entries MUST have trainers walking with every two horses.
- ANIMALS MUST BE NOTED ON FORM: If you are bringing animals with your unit, they must be identified on the Parade Entry Form. Horses, dogs, cows, reptiles, and any other wild or domestic animals shall not be in the parade without specific written approval by the Parade Committee. **All entrants with animals must submit proof that there is insurance in place to cover the animal's activity.**

SAFETY FIRST!

Breaking any of the following safety protocols will subject units to immediate removal from the Parade.

Units removed from the parade will not be permitted into the parade line up the following year.

- No airhorns or revving of engines.
- **DO NOT THROW CANDY.** Throwing of any candy, merchandise or other items is prohibited. Items must be handed to spectators. **If we see you throwing items, you may be removed from the parade.**
- **DO NOT HAND OUT** food items or merchandise along the parade route **unless you are a Sponsor** and without prior authorization
- DO NOT proceed in an unsafe manner.
- DO NOT interfere in any way with other units.
- Comply with ALL Parade Marshal requests.
- **ALCOHOL IS PROHIBITED.**
- Equestrian Units MUST have a Pooper Scooper.
- DO NOT Jump on or OFF any moving float or vehicle.

SPECIAL GUESTS / DIGNITARIES

- **ELECTION/ISSUE CAMPAIGNING:** NO participant may advocate, oppose, or depict any political, religious, social or other ballot or political issue or candidate in the parade. The Butter & Egg Days Parade will not permit itself to be used as a platform or advertising vehicle for any candidate or issue.
- **No election signs, themes, or colors** may be displayed. Units discovered to have political advertising, or to be distributing political advertising along the route, will be removed from the line-up. Currently serving elected officials who represent the Petaluma area will be invited to ride in the parade. **Black and white signs will be provided which identify only their name and current status.** They may not campaign for re-election, or for another office, nor may they display or distribute electioneering materials or election colors or shirts on the Parade Route. **Candidates, and others, are invited to rent a booth space in the Festival Area for electioneering purposes.**

CANCELATION POLICY

- This is a rain or shine event. Only a significant act of nature will cancel the parade. All units would be notified.
- If, for some unforeseen reason, your unit is not able to participate in the parade after being accepted, **you must contact the parade staff, prior to the parade date, as soon as possible.**
- Entries absent on parade day without proper notification may not receive future invitations.
- **Entry Fees are not refundable.** If for any reason an entry is not accepted into the line-up, fees will be returned. Once accepted into the line-up, fees are not refundable.

SEE NEXT PAGE FOR FLOAT/UNIT IDEAS THAT FIT THE "AMERICA'S BIRTHDAY – PETALUMA STYLE" THEME

Questions / Contact:

Petaluma Downtown Association ~ 707.762.9348

Parade Entries: Sarah@PetalumaDowntown.com

Sponsorship: Marie@PetalumaDowntown.com

Volunteers: Kathy@VisitPetaluma.com

Festival Booths: Sarah@PetalumaDowntown.com

Food Booths: Sarah@PetalumaDowntown.com

Butter & Egg Days Parade

Theme Inspiration Guide 2026

“America’s Birthday – Petaluma Style” ~ *Celebrating 250 Years of Independence, Ingenuity, & Small-Town Pride*

Participants are encouraged to celebrate what makes Petaluma special - our agricultural roots, river heritage, creative spirit, and strong sense of community - while honoring 250 years of American independence and innovation.

To keep the Butter & Egg Days Parade welcoming for everyone, **political or partisan signs and messaging are not allowed**. We want to focus on the theme of celebration and Petaluma’s heritage only.

Special Judging Categories to think about when you’re creating your entry:

- Golden Hammer - Best Locally Built Non-Commercial
- Helen Putnam - Best Use of Historical Theme
- Judges’ Special - Most Unique / Entertaining
- Sweepstakes - Most Outstanding Use of Theme

Theme Ideas to Inspire Your Entry:

- **The Great Petaluma Barnyard Bash** – Cows, chickens, and sheep in vintage Americana outfits partying for America.
- **America’s 250th Birthday Cake** – Towering Petaluma-themed cake with costumed bakers.
- **From First Stewards to Today** – Timeline honoring Indigenous peoples, settlers, and modern Petaluma.
- **“We the People... of Petaluma!”** – A giant, whimsical unrolling Constitution scroll winds through the float, but it’s been reimagined Petaluma-style.
- **The American Dream, Petaluma Grown** – Family legacy, local success stories, celebrating your own culture, let’s think about who built Petaluma
- **The Butter & Egg Days Hoedown** – Rolling barn dance with musicians and dancers.
- **Petaluma River Parade Party** – Boat float with river animals, bobbing waves, party hats.
- **Punny Floats** – Red, White, & Moo; Red, White, & Bloom; Stars, Stripes, & Soil.
- **Spirit of 1776** – Colonial costumes. What did Petaluma look like in 1776? Generational progression from pioneers to modern creatives.
- **Right to Work & Create** – Makers, artists, and farmers building things; tools and gears.
- **Checks & Balances** – Oversized scale with butter and eggs or other Petaluma themed items.
- **Hometown Heroes** – Petaluma neighborhood with shopkeepers, firefighters, teachers, etc.
- **Tractors Through Time/ Vintage Farm Equipment Showcase** – Wagons transform into modern/futuristic tractor. Restored tractors, plows, milk trucks in historic clothing.
- **Time-Traveling Butter & Egg Machine** –Time machine hopping through decades.
- **The Next 250 Years** – Future-themed float with chickens, robot cows, flying tractors, and solar barns. Or looking ahead with hope. Youth, greenery, recycled materials, future-focused messages.
- **OR WHAT ELSE CAN YOU COME UP WITH???????**

Sustainable Giveaways: If a sponsor, and if approved, all promotional giveaways must be eco-friendly items such as reusable bags, water bottles, or bamboo utensils to promote sustainable living