



Contact:

Christina Schaefer, Public Relations Coordinator
City of Xenia
107 E. Main Street
Xenia, Ohio 45385
(937) 376-8904
cschaefer@ci.xenia.oh.us

Sixth annual “Kevin Sonnycalb Memorial Fireworks” to blast off in Xenia on July 3rd, 2020

Xenia, Ohio (June 19, 2020) - One of the city of Xenia’s most beloved traditions, Xenia Rotary’s “Kevin Sonnycalb Memorial Fireworks,” will blast off as planned in 2020, thanks to the collaborative efforts of our community.

The fireworks show is traditionally held at Shawnee Park in conjunction with a festival; however due to crowd restrictions related to COVID-19, the festival cannot take place. Instead of canceling the display, the City of Xenia, Xenia Rotary, and the Sonnycalb family worked together to come up with a plan to safely present the show.

"The City of Xenia is very pleased to once again host the Xenia Rotary's 'Kevin Sonnycalb Memorial Fireworks,' one of the best displays in the region," said Xenia City Manager Brent Merriman. "This event is significant to our community, drawing nearly 10,000 visitors each year. We felt it very important to work with our partners in Xenia Rotary and the Sonnycalb family to ensure it continued in a safe manner for our citizens."

Xenia Rotary President-Elect Matthew Bennett said the club’s commitment to our community stems from Rotarians such as Kevin Sonnycalb, for whom the fireworks are named. “Kevin was a longtime Rotarian and embodied Rotary’s motto of ‘Service Above Self in all that he did for our community.’”

Following Kevin’s passing, the Sonnycalb Family, through their foundation, worked with Xenia Rotary to bring the annual fireworks back to Xenia in 2015 after more than a decade of having no community fireworks. “The Sonnycalb Family Foundation continues to honor Kevin and his love of fireworks and we’re honored to be entrusted with his legacy,” said Bennett, “Without the commitment of the City of Xenia, we wouldn’t be able to bring their vision to life.”

Fireworks will be launched this year on **Friday, July 3rd** from the Strausburg Nursery property off of West Second Street and Progress Drive.

Organizers researched several potential location options for this year's show and believe the Strausburg Nursery property allows for the most visibility to the public. The public is encouraged to view the show from their homes if possible, or view it from their vehicles in one of the commercial parking lots on the city's west side. For safety reasons, drivers should not park along thoroughfares in town or along U.S. 35 to watch the show.

Greene County Public Health Commissioner Melissa Howell has approved the alternative option for this year's show and urges spectators to be mindful of their health. "COVID-19 remains a threat to the health of our citizens and it is important to take measures such as social distancing and wearing a mask while enjoying this annual event," Howell said. "Greene County Public Health has compiled a list of health guidelines so the public has information it needs to remain safe."

- For optimal safety, families should observe the fireworks from their home, if possible.
- Adults who are older, people who are immunocompromised and people of any age with underlying medical conditions are at higher risk for COVID-19 and should enjoy the show from home.
- Those underlying conditions include: chronic lung disease, moderate to severe asthma, heart conditions, immunocompromised individuals, obesity (bmi >40), diabetes, chronic kidney disease, and liver disease.
- If observing from home isn't possible, family units from the same household are welcome to observe the fireworks from the safety of their car in one of the local public parking lots. If physical distancing allows, the family unit may set up chairs around their vehicle.
- Family units from the same household must maintain a minimum physical distance of 6 feet from other family units
- Facial coverings are strongly encouraged for all family members. No facial coverings for children under age 2, or anyone who has trouble breathing, is incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance
- If you are ill, please stay home.

Leading up to the show, WBZI 'Real Roots Radio' in Xenia will be broadcasting patriotic music during the day on its FM signal, 100.3 WBZI will also feature interviews with organizers from the City of Xenia, Xenia Rotary, and the Sonnycalb family. When the fireworks begin, WBZI will play uninterrupted patriotic music to accompany the show, allowing every resident who tunes in over the air and online to feel connected.

The Xenia YMCA will provide a live stream of the firework show on its Facebook page (@XeniaYmca) for those who do not wish and/or are unable to drive to the show.

We would like to recognize and thank Xenia Nazarene Church and the family and friends of former Rotarian Rock McColaugh for their donations toward this year's display. We also thank the Xenia YMCA, REACH Center, Lighthouse Baptist Church, Rural King, Kroger, Lowe's and Walmart for opening up their lots to the public to park and enjoy the show.