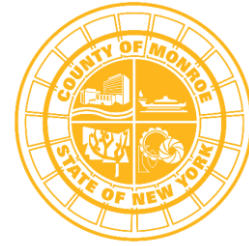




News from the Office of
Adam J. Bello
Monroe County Executive



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MONROE COUNTY EXECUTIVE ADAM BELLO ANNOUNCES ROCHESTER LILAC FESTIVAL UNITY PARADE AND THE BIG SING

Celebrate More Bicentennial events at the Lilac Festival presented by Wegmans

ROCHESTER, NY Monroe County Executive Adam Bello today announced the Lilac Festival parade theme and a new community event to mark the Monroe County Bicentennial.

Under the Monroe County Bicentennial theme of Celebrate More, the 2022 Rochester Lilac Festival will feature the Lilac Unity Parade and the Big Sing, a new event featuring 200 gospel singers from across Monroe County performing at the festival site immediately after the Lilac Parade. Both the parade and Big Sing are made possible and presented by Wegmans.

“What better way is there to celebrate coming together again than the Unity Parade at the Lilac Festival?” said Monroe County Executive Adam Bello. “Following the Unity Parade, the Big Sing brings 200 gospel singers from all over Monroe County to not just perform — but lead festival goers in a huge singalong. We begin our next 200 years all singing from the same hymnal! Thank you to Wegmans for presenting these unity events and to all who made this happen.”

Both events have an overarching focus on a message of unity. These events are designed to bring together residents of Monroe County to celebrate the County’s history, while recognizing the promising potential of the future.

“As home to our area’s signature festival, The Rochester Lilac Festival is the perfect setting to celebrate Monroe County’s Bicentennial,” said Mayor Malik Evans. “The City of Rochester is proud to partner with Monroe County on signature events and the celebration of the County’s Bicentennial. The Unity Parade and Big Sing are fantastic additions to the world-class lineup that is scheduled for the Lilac Festival this year. I encourage everyone to come out and celebrate in unity at Highland Park this May.”

The Rochester Lilac Festival is the largest free festival of its kind in the country. The 2022 festival runs May 6-8, 12-15 and 19-22 at Highland Park. Highland Park, designed by Frederick Law Olmsted, is home to the largest collection of lilacs in North America, and this annual festival celebrates the blooming of the lilacs, along with free national music headliners, food, drink, arts and crafts, a 5k/10k race and many more activities and events.

Visitors to the Rochester Lilac Festival can stop by the Visit Rochester booth at the festival for special *Celebrate More* giveaway items, and a *Celebrate More* photo-op.

“The Lilac Festival has always been an event focused on celebrating community, togetherness, and the arts while appreciating the beautiful natural wonders of Rochester’s Highland Park,” said Jeff

Springut, Producer of the Lilac Festival. "With that in mind, the festival is the ideal environment to kick off Monroe County's bicentennial events, and we're so grateful to be hosting this year's Unity Parade and Big Sing celebrations!"

Lilac Festival Unity Parade, Presented by Wegmans – Saturday, May 7, 10:30 a.m.

The 2022 Lilac Parade offers a new lens for an iconic event. Returning in 2022 after a two-year hiatus, the Lilac Parade is a parade with a purpose. The 2022 Lilac Parade, presented by Wegmans, will highlight Monroe County's rich history, community organizations, drum and bugle corps and more. Several marching groups will channel Monroe County's history, including the **Excelsior Brigade of Fifes & Drums**, a living history military field musicians unit, **Reynolds Battery L** 1st New York Light Artillery civil war reenactment group, and several groups from the National Susan B. Anthony Museum & House.

Many musical groups will have a presence in the parade, but several new organizations will be joining in 2022. New musical groups for the 2022 Parade include Rochester Gay Men's Choir, the Pride of Rochester Marching Band, the Greece Marching Band and the Mark Time Marchers.

Rochester Native and 2022 Olympic Gold Medalist Chris Lillis will serve as the Grand Marshal of this year's Lilac Parade. Lillis, who grew up in Pittsford, is a professional freestyle skier that secured Team U.S.A. the gold in the mixed team aerials event at this year's Winter Olympics in Beijing, China. Chris is also the youngest man ever to win a FIS aerials World Cup at age 17 and the first American to perform a quintuple stunt during a competition since 2010. Following the parade, Lillis will be at the Visit Rochester Booth on Highland Avenue to autograph items. Individuals wishing to do so may make a donation to Bristol Mountain, a fund raiser to help improve the ski area for current and future Olympians.

In addition to these new highlights in 2022, the Rochester Lilac Parade will feature traditional parade favorites including additional marching bands, dancers, costumed characters, and the popular Damascus mini cars.

The "Big Sing", Presented by Wegmans – Saturday, May 7, approximately 12:05 p.m.

Immediately following the Lilac Parade, visitors to the Rochester Lilac Festival can enjoy the Big Sing presented by Wegmans, a performance featuring 200 gospel singers from across Monroe County. The Big Sing celebrates the Monroe County Bicentennial, and will unite singers from across Monroe County on the main stage at the Lilac Festival to perform. The collaboration will feature a powerful spiritual finale to the Lilac Parade with a Purpose. Visitors of all ages and religious denominations are encouraged to attend to celebrate both the history of Monroe County and its promising future.

The 200-person strong choir will be led by Wardell Lewis, and will feature singers from a number of different churches across Monroe County.

Monroe County will continue to celebrate its Bicentennial anniversary throughout the year ahead under the theme of *Celebrate More*, a community-wide celebration of events tied to the Monroe County Bicentennial, *Celebrate More* will bring people from across the community together in celebration of all that Monroe County has to offer, from historic, cultural, and educational festivals, to family-friendly activities and special events.

The next *Celebrate More* special event includes a full week of programming in recognition of the 200th birthday of famed landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted, who designed several parks in Monroe County – including Highland, Genesee Valley, Maplewood and Seneca Parks. Monroe County

Executive Adam Bello will make a series of announcements beginning on Monday, April 25 as part of “Olmsted Week,” celebrating the 200th anniversaries of both Frederick Law Olmsted and Monroe County.

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