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Mayor

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## The Return of Independence Day Traditions

In my Mayor's Message last July, I lamented the suspension of the Fun Days activities that have been a part of our Independence Day celebration in Murray City for decades. We missed the 5k Run, the Pancake Breakfast, the Sunrise Service, as well as the parade, fireworks, and other activities at Murray Park.

I am pleased that we have been able to return to our traditional Murray Fun Days celebration this year. It is heartwarming to see our community once again joining together in celebration of our nation and state. Much has transpired over the past year, but we are rebounding, and it feels good!

Once again, as we celebrate our nation's birthday, I express my profound appreciation for those founding fathers of our nation, to those who fought and died for the rights that we enjoy, and for those who have served to defend this country since then.

I also express appreciation to the early pioneer settlers that made our valley their home and worked tirelessly to create thriving communities throughout what has since become the State of Utah. Benjamin Franklin once said, "To the generous mind the heaviest debt is that of gratitude, when it is not in our power to repay it."

It has become a tradition for many to celebrate the holidays with consumer fireworks. Many of our residents love them and others not so much. Each year the city receives multiple requests from residents to ban the use of consumer fireworks in Murray. Because of the extreme weather and drought conditions this year we heard from more residents than usual about fireworks.

The fact is that municipalities (including Murray) have not had authority to ban consumer fireworks for the last 10 years. In 2011 the Utah State Legislature passed House Bill 22 which legalized aerial fireworks in Utah. Fireworks proponents argued that legalizing aerial fireworks would capture lost revenue that was going to neighboring states where these fireworks were already legal. Following the new legislation, some municipalities introduced regulations on the newly legalized aerial fireworks. That prompted the legislature to step in and revise the law to prohibit the ability of a county or municipality to regulate the use of these fireworks, except in wildland interface areas and parkways, thus taking the regulatory authority out of the hands of the cities.



In Murray we have restricted fireworks in all areas allowed by state law, along the Jordan River Parkway, near Wheeler Farm, and in Murray Park. Murray City is not allowed to ban fireworks in our residential neighborhoods due to State Law (53-7-225).

I appeal to each of you to be careful and respectful if you choose to use consumer fireworks. With the extreme drought conditions, this may be a good year to skip the fireworks altogether, but if you choose to use them, please follow all instructions and precautions.

I wish each of you a happy and safe July as we celebrate the heritage of our state and nation!