

With Fireworks Cancelled, Steamboat to Launch Lighted Man into Sky

Written by Pop Goesboom
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After struggling with how to replace this year's cancelled fireworks show for the 4th of July, Steamboat Springs has settled on a new draw that should mildly light up part of the evening sky: tossing The Lighted Man up and down in the air from a giant blanket.



The Lighted Man, a longtime tradition of the town's Winter Carnival fireworks celebration, won't be allowed to shoot off his trademark roman candles, as they would violate current fire restrictions, but his entire suit of blinky lights will be powered up and flashing. Organizers are hoping that this lightshow, enhanced by having The Lighted Mass flung up and down from a blanket as many times as volunteers can take, will satisfy the visual desires of locals and tourists on Independence Day.

"OK, so it's not ideal," admitted Steamboat City Council President Kart Beforehorseski. "But it will be safe. There's very little chance of The Lighted Man sparking a forest fire that burns down half of Steamboat, which was pretty much our only request. And he is a Steamboat icon--whatever that says about our town."

The move culminates a difficult few weeks for all of those involved in the traditional 4th of July fireworks celebration. After announcing that the fireworks had to be cancelled for fear of being forever known as "the jackasses who lit Steamboat on fire," City Council and the various authorities involved in the festival weighed several alternatives before settling on a hoisted grown man in a suit of LEDs.

"We looked at erecting a giant TV screen four hundred feet in the air, and showing a replay of last year's fireworks," noted Beforehorseski, "but the budget was several million dollars short on

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that one. Someone also suggested dropping huge buckets of confetti from a helicopter, but the only such aircraft are a little busy fighting forest fires, so requesting one of them to drop colored paper on tourists seemed a little inappropriate.

"But The Lighted Man apparently was available," he added. "After he checked his fake calendar and found no fake conflicting appointments, he agreed to be the centerpiece of our celebration. After that, it was just a matter of quilting together a big-ass blanket to chuck him up in the air."

The "Freak Flinger," as the giant blanket has become named, was built by local outdoors business ZAP! The company normally is busy manufacturing tents and sleeping bags, but with the fire ban at most Colorado camping grounds, and few people willing to camp in the dark and cold, ZAP! has been faced with a lot more free time than hoped.

Also chipping in with the improvised celebration is a hastily scheduled Beatles tribute band, which promised to modify and play such favorites as "Help!" and "Loonie in the Sky with Lights On" during the man tossing.

The Lighted Man himself, Smoky Stanks, was excited about his impending aerial maneuvers, although he admitted that practices haven't gone as planned.

"I keep getting dumped on my ass," noted Stanks. "We get two or three good heaves in there, which are fun, but then one side gets lazy and I go flying off in that direction. It's a lot less painful crashing in the snow. But it's a light show people want, so a light show they'll get."