



Staff Report

TO: City Council
FROM: Doug Story, Community Services Director
DATE May 6, 2025
SUBJECT: Direction on the Preferred Format for the 2025 Freedom Festival

Description Consideration of proposed event structure and entertainment options for the 2025 Freedom Festival, including a potential date adjustment to accommodate a fireworks display in addition to the already scheduled drone show.

Background and Analysis:

The City of Beaumont hosts its annual Freedom Festival on July 4, featuring live entertainment, vendors, and a fireworks display. Traditionally held at Stewart Park, the 2024 event was relocated due to ongoing park renovations and the commencement of the Beaumont Nights series at Town Center.

In 2024, the Freedom Festival was held on July 4 from 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., with vendors set up along Beaumont Avenue (Sixth to Eighth Street) and a concert stage on Seventh Street in conjunction with the Beaumont Nights format. For the first time, the City introduced a drone light show, followed by the traditional fireworks display. Although construction had not yet begun at Stewart Park, spectators were limited to the viewing area from the middle section of the park (between Ninth and Tenth Streets) only. Drones launched from the upper section (Tenth to Eleventh), and fireworks from the lower section (Eighth to Ninth). Additional viewing was available at the Palm Elementary field.

The event drew large crowds, with attendees lining up the streets surrounding Stewart Park, Beaumont Avenue, and nearby areas including the Palm Avenue medians.

2025 Considerations

For 2025, Pyrospectaculars, the City's fireworks provider, has informed staff that they cannot provide a fireworks display on July 4 due to a statewide shortage of certified pyrotechnic operators. This shortage, ongoing since the COVID-19 pandemic, is attributed to aging professionals, retirements, and limited new operator certification due to stringent training and background requirements. For reference, becoming certified for a medium-sized show (such as Beaumont's) typically requires at least seven years of

experience and participation in a minimum of eight shows under five different technicians. This shortage is affecting numerous agencies including:

- City of Fontana
- City of Chino
- City of Fountain Valley
- City of Jurupa

City staff contacted three additional Southern California firework operating companies and all three were unavailable on July 4 for similar reasons.

In response, many cities have shifted their fireworks displays to dates other than July 4 to secure operator availability. Agencies affected by the shortage and choosing to hold their shows on July 3 include:

- City of Baldwin Park
- City of Costa Mesa
- City of Cudahy
- City of Duarte
- City of Fillmore
- City of Hawaiian Gardens

Pyrospectaculars is available for Beaumont on July 3, should the City choose to adjust the date.

Drone Show

The City has contracted with Open Sky to produce a drone show on July 4. However, Open Sky is unavailable on July 3 or 5, requiring a decision between a Freedom Festival with drone-only or a combination of both shows over two nights.

Drone shows are gaining popularity for their creative and customizable visuals, lower environmental impact, and enhanced safety (especially in fire-prone regions). Beaumont's 2024 drone show lasted 12 minutes and featured animations such as the City logo, high school mascot, and traditional Independence Day imagery.

2025 Event Options

Option 1: Single-Night Event (As Advertised)

- Friday, July 4: Beaumont Nights with Drone Show *Only*, no firework show in 2025.

Option 2: Two-Night Celebration

Thursday, July 3:

- Fireworks Show Only

Friday, July 4:

- Drone Show + Beaumont Nights

The benefit of this option is offering expanded programming and accommodates traditional fireworks viewing; supports larger crowds with staggered attendance.

Key Considerations

- All core Beaumont Nights elements, with the exception of the drone show (vendors, stage, entertainment, equipment) are flexible and can be rescheduled to July 3, 2025.
- The Community Services Department does have the capacity to staff a two-day event option.
- Stewart Park will be under construction in 2025, further limiting traditional viewing space to Palm Elementary or surrounding streets. Allowing the traditional crowd size for a firework show and concert/vendors to be spread over two days may be beneficial.
- The Palm Elementary field may be reduced due to the school district construction project.
- All marketing materials currently promote Beaumont Nights on Friday, July 4.
- Drone shows require a central viewing audience for optimal effect. (Palm Elementary)
- Fireworks can be viewed generally citywide, allowing greater flexibility in crowd distribution.

Fiscal Impact:

All event considerations and options (rentals, entertainment, drone show, firework show etc.) are included in the FY 2024/25 operating budget for 100-1550-7046.

The anticipated costs of the event are as follows:

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| • Fireworks | \$40,000 |
| • Drone Show | \$45,000 |
| • Rentals | \$12,000 |
| • Entertainment | \$15,000 |
| • July 4 th Overtime (PD and CS) | \$9,000 |
| • July 3 rd PD Overtime | \$2,500 |

Recommended Action:

Staff recommends City Council direct staff to host a two-night celebration (Option 2) as follows:

Thursday, July 3:

- Fireworks display only

Friday, July 4:

- Drone show combined with Beaumont Nights (as originally scheduled).

Attachments:

- A. Map of Event Areas