



## Staff Report

**TO:** City Council  
**FROM:** Doug Story, Community Services Director  
**DATE:** September 2, 2025  
**SUBJECT:** Annual Freedom Festival 4th of July Celebration Recapitulation and Analysis

---

**Description:** Event summary and analysis for the 2025 Freedom Festival 4<sup>th</sup> of July Celebration.

### **Background and Analysis:**

On May 6, 2025, staff provided an update to City Council on the annual 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebration regarding the pyrotechnic operator shortage in Southern California. This shortage, ongoing since the COVID-19 pandemic, stems from an aging workforce, retirements, and limited certification opportunities due to stringent training and background requirements.

In response, the City reallocated the fireworks budget to produce an enhanced drone show, one of the first in the region to use overlapping drone sequences for an extended performance. The result was a re-branded event, *Red, White, and LIGHTS at Beaumont Nights*, featuring a 22-minute aerial display with animations of Beaumont landmarks, local sports, first responders, and traditional Independence Day imagery. The drones launched from the Stewart Park construction area, with primary viewing at Palm Innovation Academy's field and throughout the Beaumont Nights event area.

### **2025 Event Overview**

The 2025 Red, White & Lights event featured 53 vendors across two downtown blocks, along with live performances by Acme Time Machine ('50s-'60s rock revival) and the Grand Junction Band (country hits), plus a DJ at the drone viewing site. Event setup included portable restrooms, trash receptacles, and light towers to support safety and accessibility. Additionally, the City's Parks & Recreation booth distributed thousands of branded patriotic giveaways, including canine bandanas for event-going dogs.

Data from the City's contracted software, Placer.ai, indicates the estimated attendance at the stage and vendor area was approximately 4,000 people. Placer.ai's privacy policy

prohibits the use of its platform to generate data about K–12 schools or any populations primarily composed of individuals under the age of 18. Due to this policy, and the fact that the viewing location is within Palm Elementary School, the City was unable to capture the full attendance in the viewing area. Staff estimates that an additional 1,000 people were present in the viewing area, bringing total attendance to approximately 5,000.

### **Public Safety**

The Beaumont Police Department staffed the event with nine (9) police officers, including one police sergeant, from 4:30 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. Their primary responsibilities included ensuring public safety, providing security inside the venues, and managing traffic control for street closures. All staffing was comprised of overtime personnel. There were no significant incidents reported at either venue.

Given the recent increase in illegal fireworks activity during the 4th of July, the Beaumont Police Department supplemented patrol operations with overtime personnel dedicated to fireworks enforcement. This enforcement team included ten (10) police officers and one police sergeant/drone operator, working from 6:00 p.m. to midnight. Two fire incidents were reported during the evening: a large brushfire of approximately two acres near the Amazon warehouse on 4th Street, which was extinguished within 45 minutes without damage to structures, and a small fire in the 1100 block of Orange Avenue, possibly caused by fireworks, that was quickly extinguished by neighbors.

#### **Calls for Service and Citations**

- 911 calls related to fireworks: 175 (compared to 57 in 2024)
- Citations issued: 9

#### **Public Safety Staffing Costs**

- Freedom Festival staffing: \$5,217.26
- Fireworks enforcement staffing: \$5,368.23
- Total Public Safety staffing cost: \$10,585.50

### **Community Feedback and Next Steps**

While community feedback was positive for the drone show, many residents expressed a desire for the return of traditional fireworks alongside drones in future celebrations. In response, staff have begun working to restore the fireworks for the 2026 4<sup>th</sup> of July Celebration while maintaining the high-quality drone experience. A Request for Proposals (RFP) for pyrotechnic services was released on August 29, 2025, and published on the cities public bidding software Planet Bids. The proposal due date is set for September 29, 2025. A second RFP for drone show services will also be released later this month to ensure the City continues to deliver top-tier holiday programming. It is

expected that vendors for both services will be selected in October, and the City will have executed agreements by the end of November, well in advance of the 2026 event.

**Fiscal Impact:**

The annual Freedom Festival 4<sup>th</sup> of July Celebration was included in the FY 2025/26 operating budget in General Ledger account 100-1550-7046-0000. Total operating expenditures for the 2025 event were approximately \$98,552. Additionally, deposits for the FY 2025/26 celebration are included in the budget.

The cost to prepare this staff report is estimated to be \$480.

**Recommended Action:**

Receive and file.

**Attachments:**

- A. Police Department After Action Report