

2026 IRIS FESTIVAL PARADE INFORMATION

The Evening Optimist Club invites you to participate in the **2026 Iris Festival Parade** to be held on **Saturday, May 16th**. We are excited about working with you to share the spirit and beauty of our community as part of the annual Iris Festival, one of the Southeast's top-rated events. Please familiarize yourself with the information outlined below. We remind you that due to time constraints and the size of the Parade, there can be **no stopping** for performances. Thank you for your cooperation!

Theme

The theme for the 2026 Iris Festival is **"Red, White & Bloom,"** as we celebrate the 250th anniversary of American Independence, and the breathtaking beauty of the many varieties of Japanese Iris for which Swan Lake Iris Gardens are famous. We encourage you to incorporate this theme in decorating your entry. Use your creativity to showcase the stunning natural beauty of the Iris Gardens.

Standard Parade Rules

- No candy or other items may be thrown from any vehicle. If you wish to distribute candy, you may have members of your group walk **quickly** alongside your unit to hand out candy.
- All Parade entries are responsible for their own vehicles and signage. (Parade Committee will provide signs and towing vehicle for commercial floats rented from the Committee.)
- **All units must keep pace with other units ahead.** Any entry which causes a gap may be asked to exit the Parade.
- All traffic laws must be obeyed before, during, and after the Parade. **All drivers in the Parade must have a valid driver's license. All motorized vehicles participating in the Parade must have liability insurance coverage.**
- All flags, signs, banners, or insignias must be in good taste and must meet with the approval of the Parade Committee. **The Parade Committee reserves the right to refuse entry to any unit deemed inappropriate for this family-oriented event.**
- Lineup will be along University Drive, and Theatre Drive. Lineup instructions will be forwarded with your parade confirmation, which will be emailed (please include an email address) or postal mailed no later than May 5th. **Lineup is at 9:00 AM. Please allow yourself time to be in position by 9:00 AM. The Parade will begin moving at 9:45 AM, in order to reach the starting point of the Parade by 10:00 AM.**
- Only vehicles in the Parade will be allowed in the lineup area. **Instructions on dropping off participants will be included in your confirmation letter.** Every effort will be made to ease traffic flow and provide an orderly staging of the Parade. **Please pass along this information to the parents of your group members!**

- **The Parade begins at the corner of Alice Drive and Miller Road at 10:00 AM.** This is approximately three-tenths of a mile from the lineup position of unit #1. Therefore, as stated above, **all units will begin moving from your lineup positions at 9:45 AM.** The Parade will proceed south on Alice Drive at 10:00 AM, then east on Liberty Street, and end at the Sumter County Civic Center.
- All horses participating in the Parade must wear a **manure bag**. There can be no exceptions. The City of Sumter no longer provides a clean up crew for horse droppings.

Participants hereby agree to indemnify the Evening Optimist Club of Sumter, the City of Sumter, Sumter County, the Parade Committee, the Iris Festival Commission, and their members, subsidiaries, sponsors, and associates in case of damage, injury, or illness. All fees are considered final, and no refunds will be given in the event of inclement weather.

If you need additional information, please contact the Parade Committee at 803-983-3916. The Parade Committee and its Sponsors thank you for your participation!

Thank you.

The Evening Optimist Club of Sumter

DEADLINE FOR APPLICATION IS FRIDAY, APRIL 24th, 2026.
Applications may not be accepted after this date due to size limitations. A \$25 Late Fee will be due if a Late Entry is accepted.

2026 IRIS FESTIVAL PARADE APPLICATION

Saturday, May 16, 2026 Lineup 9:00 AM Parade 10:00 AM **(begin moving at 9:45 AM)**

Name of Entry: _____

Contact Person: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

*****E-Mail address:** _____

Phone Number:

(D) _____ (N) _____ Cell: _____

Type of Unit (s): _____ **Length:** _____ **Number of people participating:** _____

(ex. car, truck, van, float, etc.)

Detailed Description for Media Coverage: _____

Participation is free (up to 10 vehicles) for all non-profit organizations, schools, churches, Scout Troops and civic clubs, unless renting a float. The fee for non-Profit organizations in excess of 10 vehicles is \$10 per vehicle.

Other entries: check the appropriate box below and **return fee with application by April 24th.**

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| <input type="checkbox"/> \$595 Float Rental | <input type="checkbox"/> \$15 Car Clubs (per car) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 Standard Business Entry (1 car, truck, van, or SUV) | <input type="checkbox"/> \$15 Antique Cars (per car) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 XL Business Entry (2 vehicles, or 1 oversized vehicle >30 ft.) | <input type="checkbox"/> \$10 Beauty Queens (per queen) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 Motorcycle Clubs | <input type="checkbox"/> \$10 Horse Clubs (per horse, must wear manure bag) |

Return of application indicates acceptance of all terms and conditions of the attached "2026 Iris Festival Parade Information," including the Standard Parade Rules. Failure to adhere to any Parade Rules or traffic laws will result in immediate removal of the entry.

Representative Signature _____

Return application to: gailhyatt@sc.rr.com or Mail to:

Evening Optimist Club Parade Committee
c/o Gail Hyatt
PO Box 2742
Sumter, SC 29151

Make checks payable to The Evening Optimist Club
IF RENTING A FLOAT, PLEASE SUBMIT BY APRIL 10th, otherwise,

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