



P.O. Box 457
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News Release: Ricklefs Named Co-Commodores for 2024 Star Spangled Spectacular

Storm Lake, Iowa (May 11, 2024) – Holly Schipper and Liz Smith, Star Spangled Spectacular 2024 commodores, have selected Matt and Linda Ricklefs as co-commodores for the July 3-4 events.

The Ricklefs will assist Schipper and Smith, Sugar Bowl co-owners, in planning the annual Independence Day celebration in Storm Lake before taking over as commodores in 2025.

“What excites us about being co-commodores is that we get the privilege and opportunity to plan Storm Lake’s biggest event of the year,” says Matt. “We have always enjoyed this celebration as a family, and now it’s our turn to get even more involved and give back.”

Matt refers to his wife Linda as a great event planner and the “brains behind the operation,” while he excels in executing and plans to put his skills to work in creating a great event for the community—a family favorite for the Ricklefs. In fact, Linda has not missed the Big Parade since she arrived in Storm Lake from New Mexico 34 years ago.

“The Star Spangled Spectacular has always been a highlight, and we can’t imagine spending the Fourth of July anywhere but Storm Lake,” she says. As a family, the Ricklefs have made a tradition out of the Kiddie Parade and Car Show on July 3, followed by live entertainment, good food, and holiday favorites on July 4.

“It’s always fun to see how many people the Big Parade brings to our community, but we also love walking from park to park filled with good food, hitting up the waterpark in the afternoon, and ending the day watching fireworks.”

Linda graduated from Storm Lake High School in 2005, followed by working in the healthcare industry for 10 years. She then stayed at home with the couple’s five children before beginning as a business office administrator for Edward Jones in 2021. She has spent time volunteer coaching Community Education sports, as well as serving as coordinator for the local Moms to Moms (MOPS) program.

Linda and Matt both volunteered for RAGBRAI this past summer, and have taken on various roles at church and youth programs such as AWANA, Shine, and KFC.

Matt, a Pocahontas Area Community Schools graduate, has been employed with Central Bank since 2013 where he started as an IT coordinator, and has since been promoted to vice president of deposit services, security officer. He also has an AAS in web technology from Iowa Central Community College.



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As a co-commodore, Matt is most looking forward to seeing familiar faces, meeting new people, and giving back to the town which has afforded him so many opportunities.

“I don’t think people realize how much there is to do in Storm Lake and how lucky we are to live in this community,” he says. Matt is serving his third year as a member of the Storm Lake City Council and his second year as a Buena Vista Regional Medical Center Foundation Board member. He also spent nine years as a board member, including the role of board president, for United Community Health in Storm Lake. Matt has been an active volunteer athletic coach for the last 12 years as well.

“We are excited to work with Holly and Liz this year, and hope to bring events and attractions for the entire family to enjoy,” he says.

The couple, both Iowa Hawkeye fans, spend their limited free time outdoors fishing and gardening, walking around the lake, and attending their children’s athletic and dance competitions. Their children’s names are Bryan, SLHS Class of ’22; Natasha, SLHS class of ’24; Jayda, 13; Sienna, 12; and Josiah, 9.

Both the commodores and co-commodores are encouraging locals to register for the Big Parade for free by June 21 at www.starspangledspectacular.net/get-involved. The annual celebration, Storm Lake’s largest, has also opened art vendor and food vendor registration for non-profits, for-profits, food trucks, and more. Additional information and a schedule of events can be found at www.starspangledspectacular.net.

About the Star Spangled Spectacular

A favorite Northwest Iowa tradition, Storm Lake’s annual Star Spangled Spectacular celebrates Independence Day along the City’s beautiful shores. The family-friendly event is held July 3-4 and welcomes fresh entertainment and returning favorites such as The Big Parade, food and shopping vendors, a classic Car Cruise, the Ride-Run, fireworks, a Patriotic Ceremony, a Kiddie Parade, and more. Visit www.starspangledspectacular.net.

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