



parades@oktoberfestusa.com | 608.784.3378 | oktoberfestusa.com

2026 Parade Information

September 24 – September 27, 2026

Commercial, Political, and Non-Commercial

Torchlight Parade

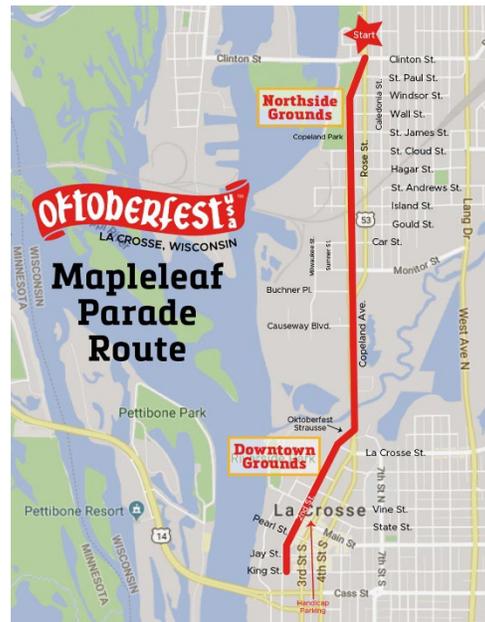
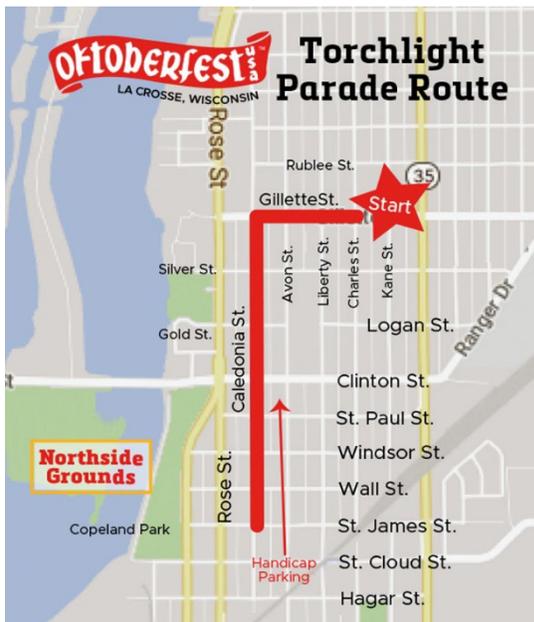
Thursday, September 24, 2026, at 7 pm

Oktoberfest’s illuminated event, the Torchlight Parade, brings sparkle and lights to La Crosse’s northside. Fantastic floats, marching bands, and unique specialty units combine to transform the quiet northside neighborhood into a magical showpiece of color and excitement.

Maple Leaf Parade

Saturday, September 26, 2026, at 10 am

The crisp, fall air and the turning of leaves brings a Coulee Region tradition...the Oktoberfest Maple Leaf Parade! 60 years later, thousands of families and friends get together, lining the two-mile route in La Crosse with their lawn chairs, snacks, and refreshments as the 2-hour parade winds through the city.





Torchlight & Maple Leaf Parades

Rules & Regulations

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Please make sure all your unit's participants are fully aware of these rules and regulations.

Order of Appearance

- The Oktoberfest Parade Review Committee will determine the order of appearance for Float or Specialty Units in the Maple Leaf and/or Torchlight parades. The order is determined to establish variety, as well as best utilization of the participants.

Inclement Weather Policy

- The Oktoberfest Parade Review Committee plans to proceed with the parade, rain or shine. Should inclement weather occur prior to a parade, then the Festival Officials will determine if it is sufficiently severe to cancel or delay the parade.
- You may decline to march your Float or Specialty Unit when weather threatens to damage uniforms, props or instruments.

Vehicles

- Floats and tow vehicles cannot exceed height 20' from ground level.
- It is strongly suggested that all motorized units provide at least two volunteers to walk alongside your unit. These volunteers should monitor the parade route to ensure the unit can proceed safely without interference.
- Training - all drivers must be licensed and adequately trained to drive their assigned unit.
- At least one 4-pound dry chemical or one 10-pound carbon dioxide fire extinguisher must be placed within easy reach of the driver of the unit.
- No "go cart" type vehicle, miniature race cars, or school buses will be allowed in the parades (prior approval required).
- **Vehicles must be illuminated for acceptance in the Torchlight Parade.**
- Schools are allowed one support vehicle following their marching unit and should visually represent their school and/or community.

Unit Appearance (Maple Leaf Parade only)

- **All motorized units in the Maple Leaf Parade must incorporate the use of parade decorations on their individual unit as much as possible. Decorations include, but are not limited to, fringing, skirting, garland, etc.**

Lighting (Torchlight Parade only)

- **All units that appear in the Torchlight Parade must incorporate the use of lights wherever possible. This includes portable lights or lighting for costumed marchers and equestrian units as well as lighting for the vehicles.**

Code of Conduct

- Individuals and organizations participating in Oktoberfest parades are expected to perform courteously, in good taste and with safety in mind at all times during the assembly, execution, and dispersal of the parades.

Distribution of Materials from the Float / Specialty

- **Torchlight:** No samples of materials of any kind can be distributed in any way during the Torchlight Parade. **Units that are non-compliant will be banned from participation for one year.** If your organization is set to participate in the Maple Leaf Parade on Saturday, you will be removed, and your application fee will not be returned.
- **Maple Leaf:** No samples of materials of any kind can be thrown, tossed, presented, given, or otherwise distributed from the float/specialty unit. **Any and all items must be handed directly to people at the curbs. NO EXCEPTIONS.** Compliance is very important for the safety of all parade attendees and the other parade units. Units in violation of this rule will be banned for future parades for one year and will not be entitled to a refund.

Alcoholic Beverages

- No alcoholic beverages of any kind will be allowed on or with the unit either in the staging area or along the parade routes. The consumption of any alcoholic beverage by any participant is strictly prohibited.
- Violators will be prosecuted by the City of La Crosse Police Department under Wisconsin State Statutes. If this happens, the unit will be pulled and towed from the parade, and the operator will also be arrested.
- The insurance company will be informed, and the unit will not be asked back by the Oktoberfest Parade Review Committee. (Please note: Oktoberfest will not issue any refunds if your unit is not allowed to participate or is removed from the parade route.)

Assembly Area

- Once the float or specialty unit is in position in the line-up area, the driver must be in attendance at all times and available to move the unit as necessary.
- Your float or specialty unit should report to the assembly area two (2) hours prior to the parade start time. This information will be emailed along with your acceptance notice prior to the festival as to the time and location for your arrival.
- Float or specialty support vehicles such as cars, buses, trucks, and trailers must be promptly unloaded and proceed to the dispersal parking area.
- First aid kits are accessible in the line-up area, as well as at dispersal.

Parade Movement

- The Oktoberfest Parade Review Committee works to ensure that the parade route is free of interruptions. Therefore, there will be no counter marching or maneuvering in any form by any unit which will create any type of gap.
- All maneuvering, choreography, and marching styles must be performed while moving forward. Any special effect drills that comply with the above statement must also be executed at a speed necessary to maintain the specified distances between parade units.
- **All motorized units are to keep the same speed for the duration of the route. Do not speed up over the viaduct. This causes gaps as marching bands are not able to change their pace.**

Dispersal Area

- Continue moving through the dispersal area until parade personnel show you where to stop. There are no exceptions for the dispersal process. Float or specialty members should not walk or march back through the parade route after disbanding.
- A First Aid tent will be on hand at the parade finish should any of your members require medical assistance.
- Water is available at the dispersal area for Marching Bands.



Torchlight & Maple Leaf Parades

Judging Information

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Torchlight Parade

Parade Awards / Judging Categories

Best Lighted Overall Unit	\$100.00 cash award
Best Illuminated Float	Commemorative Plaque
Best Illuminated Marching Unit	Commemorative Plaque
Best Illuminated Critter Unit	Commemorative Plaque

The peoples choice award, will be voted on by the community and take place the day of the parade. Share the QR code sent with your acceptance to spread the word!

Maple Leaf Parade

Parade Awards / Judging Categories

The Maple Leaf Parade float entries will be judged in the line-up area beginning at 8:30 a.m and will continue throughout the parade route.

Plaques will be awarded for multiple categories including: Education, Theme Music, Community Spirit etc.

The peoples choice award, will be voted on by the community and take place the day of the parade. Share the QR code sent with your acceptance to spread the word!