



NEWS RELEASE From Mayor Dean DePiero

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Contact: Jack P. Marschall
(440) 885-8181 or (216) 346-9935 (cell)

PARMA TO HOST SECOND ANNUAL POLISH CONSTITUTION DAY PARADE MAY 1

(PARMA) – Another big crowd along Ridge Road is expected this year for the City of Parma’s second annual Polish Constitution Day Parade on Sunday, May 1. Legendary TV celebrity “Big Chuck” Schodowski will join a long list of participants in the parade, promising to be bigger and better than last year’s inaugural event. This year’s parade grand marshal is Halina Junak of Cleveland, a survivor the Warsaw Uprising of 1944 against the Nazis during World War Two. Channel 3 meteorologist Bruce Kalinowski will handle announcing duties at the parade reviewing stand.

“We’re outdoing ourselves this year to help make the Polish Parade a fun tradition that our residents can look forward to,” said Parma Mayor Dean DePiero. “Our ethnic diversity is something we embrace in Parma, and the Constitution Day Parade is an ideal way to show-off our pride and everyone’s heritage.”

The parade will begin at 2 p.m. in the Parma Circle area of Ridge Road and will feature high school marching bands, floats, Polish dancers, members of the Cleveland Polka Association, local dignitaries and several elected officials. Marchers will head towards Snow Road where stores and business owners will be selling food and refreshments.

There will also be an after-parade celebration “under the tent” in the parking lot behind the Little Polish Diner Restaurant and the Parma Café. Ethnic foods such as kielbasa and kraut sandwiches, pierogies, cabbage rolls and cabbage and noodles will be served.

The parade is organized by members of the Cleveland Society of Poles in partnership with the Union of Poles, the Alliance of Poles and the Ohio Division of the Polish American Congress.

“We are excited and looking forward to another successful parade just like we had in Parma last year,” said John Borkowski, president of the Ohio Division of the Polish American Congress, the umbrella organization for the region's Polish American groups. “The city and local businesses are working as a team to make the parade a true celebration of everyone’s heritage. We sincerely appreciate the effort.”

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The parade comes at a time when Parma City Council is considering legislation to designate nearly a mile long stretch of Ridge Road as Polish Village. A formal dedication ceremony will be held at the conclusion of the parade. The span borders Pearl Road to the north and Thornton Drive to the south. The City of Parma has supported the Polish Village concept along with several area business owners and the Polish American Congress.

The Polish Constitution Day Parade will also coincide with the beatification of Pope John Paul II, one of the final steps taken by the Roman Catholic Church before an individual is canonized as a saint. The formal ceremony for the late Pope is expected to draw hundreds of thousands of worshipers to the Vatican in Rome.

The annual Polish Constitution Day parade in cities across the county is the official observance of Europe's first modern constitution in 1791 and has long been a catalyst for independence celebrations around the world.

“Calling the parade a celebration would be an understatement, said Mayor DePiero. “It’s a prime opportunity for people of all ethnic backgrounds to celebrate our independence that we, too often, take for granted.”

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