

Chamber leading push for Christmas celebration

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Organizers are hopeful European theme would make festivities unique

Belgium residents who missed not having the annual Christmas parade last year may be in luck in December.

Belgium Area Chamber of Commerce President Jay Lauer said at Monday's

Village Board meeting the group is considering spearheading a Christmastime celebration that could feature a Luxembourg and European theme.

Lauer said the day could include a parade, ice sculpture contest and an European chocolate market, possibly at the Luxembourg American Cultural Society during the first weekend in December around St. Nicholas Day.

"This is something that will probably start out small in the first year and hopefully grow from there," Lauer said.

The Belgium Community Club decided last year not to hold the Christmas parade after volunteer support had dwindled.

Lauer said he would ask other organizations in the community, such as the Lions Club, American Legion and Community Club for help on the event.

"A lot of people asked if we would consider running the Christmas parade, which we consider to be more of a civic thing than something that is business-related," Lauer said. "We wanted to come up with something that would attract people from all over the area, instead of focusing on just our community."

Lauer said the day would be unique to Belgium because of its European heritage.

"A lot of communities can do a Christmas parade, but how many can do a Luxembourg celebration," Lauer said.

Village President Rich Howells said if several groups could pitch in, there would be little extra work.

"We won't be inundating people with a bunch of meetings or anything like that," he said.

Lauer said events like Luxembourg Fest in August and the annual rummage sale in May bring in people from throughout the area. He hopes the Christmas event would do the same.

"This would get people into the community and show us in a positive light," he said. "I would love to hear from anybody who has ideas on how to make this work."

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