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Rotary Duck Race will float this Saturday



Ducks race to the finish line in the 2010 Roseburg Rotary Duck Race.



Ducks are dumped from a large garbage bin at the start of the 2013 Rotary Duck Race.

if you go...

WHAT: 17th annual Roseburg Rotary Duck Race

WHEN: 8 a.m. Saturday

WHERE: River Forks Park west of Roseburg

TICKETS: \$10 per duck. Available online at <https://ticketriver.com/event/10963> or at the following locations: The Douglas County YMCA, 1st Community Credit Union, Cascade Community Credit Union, Ray's Food Place in Myrtle Creek, Sherm's Thunderbird Market, The Dog House at Kruse Farms, The News-Review, Tim's Appliance & Mattress and the Bi-Mart's in Roseburg, Sutherlin and Winston.

Eleven thousand rubber duckies will hit the water this Saturday, but just one will reach the finish line first, earning one lucky ticket holder the grand prize.

The winner of Saturday's Roseburg Rotary Duck Race will take home a big, yellow 2015 Chevy Colorado truck, courtesy of Clint Newell Auto Group.

More important, though, the real winners of the duck race will be a handful of local organizations that help prevent child abuse and assist children who have been abused.

This is the event's 17th year, and organizers hope to raise about \$120,000. Since 1996, the race has raised more than \$1.7 million for charities that help children. This year's recipients include Court Appointed Special Advocates, Douglas C.A.R.E.S., Family Development Center, Battered Persons' Advocacy, Safe Haven Maternity Home and Healthy Start.

The annual duck race festivities will begin at 8 a.m. at River Forks Park west of Roseburg. Activity booths and a 5K run will be part of the festivities, but the main event will be the duck race.

Each year, a crane lifts a garbage bin full of ducks, tips it and dumps the ducks into the North Umpqua River to race for the finish line. Ten lucky ducks will paddle their way to the front, earning prizes for the people who purchased their tickets. The prizes range from an iPad to a YMCA membership to tires to a mattress set, with the truck as the grand prize.

All prizes are donated, meaning every penny earned through duck sales goes to the organizations that help kids. So how will they use the cash?

- Healthy Start will hire a fourth staff member to make home visits.
- Family Development Center will create a satellite office in South County.
- Safe Haven will pay for a house mother to aid pregnant young women staying in its shelter.
- Court Appointed Special Advocates will train more volunteers to represent abused children at court.
- Battered Persons' Advocacy will be able to hire a child and family advocate to give support to the more than 100 children who occupy the shelter in a given year.
- Douglas C.A.R.E.S. also hopes to be able to hire a child advocate, who will follow each child's progress over the long term, from the initial intake to later home visits.

Funds are also raised through the annual Duck Race 5K Run/Walk, which will start at 8 a.m. Saturday at River Forks.

The agencies also will have booths where kids can play games and do crafts, and adults can pick up information at each booth describing what the agencies do. Battered Persons' Advocacy will encourage kids to create decorative hands, then to sign them, thereby pledging never to use their own hands to hurt others.

Douglas C.A.R.E.S. Director Mike Nores said the whole day is fun.

"I enjoy it. I think it's just a hoot," he said.

It's fun with a very serious purpose, though.

This year, Nores said, the agency had 288 kids come through its doors in the first six months.

"The amounts of kids we're seeing are increasing. We're seeing more physical abuse and probably more aggravated physical abuse," he said.

Battered Persons' Advocacy's housing and family services coordinator, Meredith LaFrance, said the race is "just a fun way for people to show their support, to speak out against child abuse and work toward eliminating it."

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