

New pops event, new fireworks location for Collegedale event

A new community orchestra will debut Monday night when the annual Collegedale Independence Day celebration is held in a new location.

The East Tennessee Symphony Orchestra will perform at 8:30 p.m. in Veterans Memorial Park, which is across Apison Pike from the Ooltewah branch of the Bicentennial Library.

Fireworks will be displayed at the concert's conclusion from the newly opened East Hamilton County ball-fields on Little Debbie Parkway, adjacent to the park. This is a change of venue from previous years' location on the Southern Adventist University campus.

This concert/fireworks format will be comparable to the Chattanooga Symphony & Opera's Pops on the River, which also takes place Monday night. Collegedale's "Pops on the Creek" is located on the East Hamilton County Greenway, a popular creekside walking trail that encircles Veterans Memorial Park.

The 74-piece East Tennessee Symphony Orchestra was chosen by audition after being formed in September, said Mathew Miller, symphony vice president. Miller said the majority are musicians who have "passed through the SAU orchestra."

"It is a full orchestra with professional quality and sound," Miller said.

Richard Hickam is the orchestra's conductor. He is band and orchestra director at Collegedale Academy and assistant conductor of the SAU orchestra.

The orchestra will perform four pieces by composer John Williams, including his "Star Wars Suite." The concert will include Tchaikovsky's "1812 Overture" and Wilhousky's "Battle Hymn of the Republic," which will be synchronized with the fireworks display.

Parking will be available at Collegedale City Hall and the Ooltewah library lots. Those who wish to avoid the traffic snarls of two-lane Apison Pike may opt to park further away and ride a golf-cart shuttle to the site. The carts will be provided by Ooltewah businessman Steve Ray. The cost of a ride is a donation to the East Tennessee Symphony.

— Susan Pierce