

N.O. may ban confetti cannons after power outage

BY LEAH CLARK
Staff writer

After a power outage during Friday night's Carnival parades that may have resulted from the shot of a confetti cannon, New Orleans City Council member Joe Giarrusso said he is working on legislation that would ban krewes from using the equipment.

The power outage happened about 9 p.m. during the Krewe of Cleopatra parade. It left almost 1,500 Entergy customers without power until 10 p.m.

Shortly after the outage, videos circulated on social media of a Mylar confetti cannon on top of a Cleopatra float blasting toward power lines on St. Charles Avenue. The video showed sparks flying from the power lines and the surrounding area descending into darkness.

A spokesperson for Entergy said Friday that the electrical failure was caused by a car striking a utility pole. Later, an Entergy spokesperson said that the confetti blast could have contributed to the outage.

Giarrusso said Monday that he reached out to Council President JP Morrell following the incident about creating legislation to ban confetti cannons. The proposed ban would be part of a slew of Mardi Gras revisions Morrell has expressed making.



STAFF PHOTO BY SOPHIA GERMER

The Krewe of Cleopatra parade rolls on Magazine Street on Friday on the Uptown route.

"All the throws do not hurt the power lines, but we do know that Mylar conducts electricity and can and will cause the lines to be problematic," Giarrusso said.

Confetti or balloons made of Mylar, which is flammable, can cause power outages or fires if they make contact with power lines. Entergy advises krewes to keep Mylar balloons secured to weights and to avoid throwing beads onto

power lines.

In 2006, a similar situation occurred in Houma when an air cannon shot aluminum-based confetti into transformers during the Krewe of Hercules parade, causing power outages.

Giarrusso said legislation addressing Mylar confetti cannons would be introduced to the City Council by April or May at the earliest and most likely will take

effect for the 2024 Carnival season if approved. The legislation would be an amendment to a preexisting ordinance about Mardi Gras throws and would specify a ban on releasing anything made of Mylar.

Until legislation can be approved, Giarrusso has asked for krewes to not allow any Mylar materials near power lines.

"Mardi Gras is about having a good time, and even within that

good time you got to do things that make people safe," Giarrusso said. "Messing around with power lines is unsafe, and the parades and the city, everybody involved, including Entergy, wants to do their best to maximize having fun and keeping people safe at the same time."

A representative for the Krewe of Cleopatra did not immediately respond to a request for a comment.

OFFICERS

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Gras.

The remaining 30 officers came from outside agencies, which included sheriff's offices in Jefferson, Lafourche, Washington, St. James and Tangipahoa parishes, as well as the University of Holy Cross Police Department, the City Park Police Department, the Jefferson Parish Constable's Office, the Tangipahoa Parish Constable's Office, the Abbeville Marshal's Office, the University of New Orleans Police Department and Louisiana Probation & Parole.

Sheriff Susan Hutson, whose of-

fice coordinated assistance from outside agencies, said her officers were primarily focused on crowd control and keeping the peace.

"I thought it went great," said Hutson, who marched in Sunday's Krewe of Barkus parade with her beagle Albie and Chihuahua Tiny. "I run a jail. I get calls all the time. I wasn't getting calls all weekend."

NOPD officials said Monday they didn't want to comment on the success of the details until Carnival concludes, and do not share deployment information publicly. But according to department data, police were busier this year along the parade routes and in the French Quarter than they were in 2022.

No one was wounded or killed by

gunfire in those areas, but police reported finding 19 illegal guns. They were also called to one armed robbery, one simple robbery, five fights and nine vehicle burglaries.

In total, police responded to 597 incidents Friday through Sunday, compared to 449 during the first parading weekend last year, according to the NOPD's calls for service dashboard. Those numbers reflect incidents that were within a block of the parade route or in the Quarter.

For at least 50 years, the NOPD has partnered with Louisiana State Police during large-scale events, according to Trooper Kate Stegall, spokesperson for the State Police. Last weekend, 10 troopers on motorcycles assisted with parade needs, including escorting floats

and riders. Starting Friday, State Police will deploy 125 troopers to New Orleans.

They've also occasionally worked with outside agencies during staffing nadirs, including in 2014, when the NOPD's numbers hovered around 1,100 in what was then a historic low. Superintendent Michael Harrison canceled time off for NOPD officers and called in the State Police, the St. John Parish Sheriff's Office, the Department of Public Safety and Corrections and college campus police departments.

In 2016, those agencies assisted with Carnival crowds again, and 100 FBI agents worked alongside police and state troopers screening parade-goers for suspicious behavior via what was then a

newly launched surveillance system. And in 2018, approximately 165 State Police troopers patrolled New Orleans alongside NOPD in the four days leading up to Fat Tuesday.

NOPD Superintendent Michelle Woodfork said in an emailed statement she's grateful to law enforcement officers for the work they've done so far and is looking forward to being "back out on the parade routes ... speaking and meeting with our citizens as they celebrate."

Hutson echoed those sentiments. "Our team is excited to be part of this initiative of public safety for the greatest show on earth," she said.

Martha Carr and Jeff Adelson contributed to this report.



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Prepared by Jill Marie Kenyon (RRCA)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 Strength/Cross Train/ Rest	2 Walkers: 2 mi Joggers: 2 ½ mi Runners: Speed A	3 Rest	4 Walkers: 3 mi Joggers: 3 mi Runners: 8 mi
5 Walkers: 2 mi Joggers: 2 mi Runners: 5 mi	6 Strength/Cross Train/ Rest	7 Walkers: 2 mi Joggers: 2 mi Runners: 4 mi	8 Strength/Cross Train/ Rest	9 Walkers: 2 mi Joggers: 2 ½ mi Runners: Speed A	10 Rest	11 Walkers: 3 mi Joggers: 3 mi Runners: 8 mi
12 Walkers: 2 mi Joggers: 3 mi Runners: 5 mi	13 Strength/Cross Train/Rest	14 Walkers: 2 ½ mi Joggers: 2 mi Runners: 5 mi	15 Strength/Cross Train/ Rest	16 Walkers: 2 ½ mi Joggers: 2 ½ mi Runners: Speed A	17 Rest	18 Walkers: 3 mi Joggers: 3 ½ mi Runners: 8 mi
19 Walkers: 2 mi Joggers: 2 mi Runners: 5 mi	20 Strength/Cross Train Runners: 6 mi	21 Walkers: 2 ½ mi Joggers: 2 mi Runners: 5 mi	22 Strength/Cross Train/Rest	23 Walkers: 2 ½ mi Joggers: 3 ½ mi Runners: Speed B	24 Rest	25 Walkers: 3 mi Joggers: 3 ½ mi Runners: 9 mi
26 Walkers: 2 mi Joggers: 2 mi Runners: 5 mi	27 Strength/Cross Train Runners: 6 mi	28 Walkers: 3 mi Joggers: 3 mi Runners: 5 mi				