

## Bancroft Santa Claus parade something special



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By Chris Drost

The Bancroft Santa Claus parade, organized by the Lions Club and in partnership with the Town of Bancroft, was a huge success and a boost to community morale during this second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic.

A steady stream of cars filed up the hill past the arena and on to Johnston Crescent where homeowners had gone all out to provide a beautiful light display. While the bumper to bumper cars snaked along slowly, it gave ample time for cars full of family members and their children and grandchildren, to enjoy each and every display. A total of 456 vehicles went through the parade between 4:30 and 7:30 p.m. with an average of three people per car.

Once finished the loop at Johnston Crescent, the cars were directed to an impromptu 'street' that had been set up on the side of the North Hastings Community Centre parking lot. This laneway was bordered with a mix of floats representing various organizations around town, North Hastings Children's Services, the Bridge Community Church, the North Hastings Community Cupboard and Viking Sea Cadets, the Bancroft Curling Club, the Bancroft Fire Department, Brinklow's Towing with Santa's sleigh, Leveque Bros, B & G Towing, the Bancroft Rockhound hockey team, and the Lions Club. Of course. Santa was there to offer a ho ho ho to everyone.

Community members dressed in costume or festive gear, and wearing masks, wished everyone a Merry Christmas as they passed by. Some handed out treats for the children. All these people laughing and dancing to the Christmas music coming from the various floats, gave the parade a heartwarming and community feel that made it something special.

Organizers from the Lions Club, Laverne Stapley and Steve Scally said they could have just cancelled the parade but, in their words, 'the community needed it after all these months of COVID-19.' They remarked that the members of the Bancroft Rockhound hockey team really needed it too as they will be separated from their families for the holiday season. Winner of the prize for best commercial entry went to B & G Towing while the winner of the community entry went to the Bridge Community Church.

Scally and Stapley say they will be working with others to consider what the parade will look like next year after seeing such a success they had with this one during such difficult times.