Attleboro

A bang up 4th display

BY MATT ROCHELEAU FOR THE SUN CHRONICLE Saturday, July 5, 2008 1:04 AM EDT

The fireworks show at Hayward Field in Attleboro drew some 14,000 people Friday night. (Staff photo by Martin Gavin)

Skies clear for city's fireworks

ATTLEBORO - Early wet weather did not keep an estimated 14,000 residents from packing Hayward Field Friday night to watch the city's fireworks display.

The estimate from Police Chief Richard Pierce was one of the largest crowds in several years he said.

Just after 9 p.m. as "The Star-Spangled Banner" ended, the bright, thundering fireworks streaked across a clear sky, bursting into an array of colors and patterns.

Away from the field, locals lined sidewalks and lawns along North Avenue and other nearby streets to catch a glimpse of the half-hour-long show.

For some spectators the night continued a long-standing Fourth of July family tradition. "It's like a meeting place for the family," said Marilyn Cronin of Norton.

She and her husband Michael joined four generations of family members at their annual visit to the Attleboro fireworks.

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Jerry and June Crawford of Attleboro brought their daughter Sidney and 4-year-old son Dylan to the show for at least their fifth year.

"I like when the grand finale starts," said Sidney, who turns 7 later this month.

The Crawford family said they watched other fireworks in past years, but it just was not the same.

One reason was they prefer Attleboro is how, "the police do a great job getting everyone out after," said June Crawford.

Others got their first taste.

Sean, Eileen, 10-year-old Connor, and 4-year-old Kathleen Danahey of North Attleboro said they usually watch fireworks at home on TV, but decided to come to the city's festivities for their first time.

"I hope it's a good show," said Eileen about one hour before the start of the fireworks. The event had been touch-and-go earlier in the day with showers predicted in the area. Fire Chief Ronald Churchill made the decision Friday that the event would go on as scheduled, rather than be postponed as last couple of displays were.

Launched by Atlas Pyrotechnic of Jaffrey, N.H., the fireworks cost over $20,000, said Linda Alger, a fireworks committee member. Most of the funds were provided by donations, however about $5,000 was still needed heading into Friday night, said city Councilor Brian Kirby who was taking donations with other volunteers in exchange for miniature American Flags at the field's entrance.

"I think it's worth it. There's not a whole lot people get together as a city to do. It's important for the community," said Rick LaPalme of Attleboro who spent the evening with wife Sherry and sons Ricky, 13, and Ryan, 10.

The night included the appearance of Big Nazo Puppets, a raffle of signed Patriots jerseys, a tribute to the veterans, a speech by Mayor Kevin Dumas, and music by Nate Adams.

An ambulance was called minutes before the start of the national anthem for a man who collapsed in diabetic shock. Officials said there were no other problems.

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