

## LIGHTING OF THE CHRISTMAS TREE



Sentinel Photo/JOSH JONES

Following the parade, people went to the east side of the Jefferson County Courthouse where the annual lighting of the Christmas tree occurred.

# Downtown Christmas Parade brings holiday cheer

*The annual tree lighting ceremony was held after the parade*

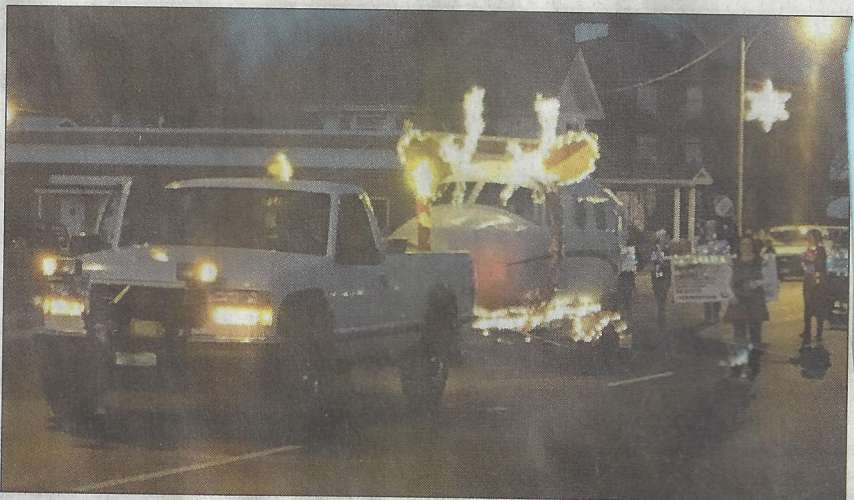
**BY JOSH JONES**

SENTINEL NEWS STAFF

MT. VERNON — The streets of Mt. Vernon were filled with Christmas lights, decorations and floats brought by those who have fully embraced the holiday season as the annual Mt. Vernon Downtown Christmas Parade commenced Saturday.

This year's route started on Main Street from Seventh Street to 10th Street, from 10th Street to Broadway Street, Broadway Street from 10th Street and back to 7th Street. The parade theme was "Christmas

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Sentinel Photo/JOSH JONES

**CREATIVE FLOATS** — There were not shortage of creative floats for this year's Downtown Mt. Vernon Christmas Parade. This float by Mt. Vernon Outland Airport was an airplane made to look like Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer.





Sentinel Photo/JOSH JONES

**MARCHING JUNIOR RAMS** — The Casey Middle School Marching Junior Rams started off the Downtown Mt. Vernon Christmas Parade on Saturday with an assortment of tunes that got everyone in the holiday spirit.

## Parade:

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Through the Ages: 1819-Present.”

Debbie Arning, administrator of the the Downtown Mt. Vernon Development Corporation, gave her thoughts on the turnout for the parade.

“I think it is going to be great. We have got several people that did not sign up that are showing up, and it is going to be a good parade,” Arning said. “Just trying to get the people to come out and see what downtown is all about.”

The winners for the parade included Jefferson County Girl Scouts for Best Theme and Ladies of the Snow for Best Performance. Best Animal was Mocha, and Casey Middle School was Best Youth Entry.

The winners of the annual Downtown Mt. Vernon Christmas Decorating Contest were also announced. Winners included Blossom Shop for Best use of Large Space, Groomingdales for Best use of Small Space and Easton’s Flowers for Best use of Multiple Spaces.

This year’s Grand Marshal was Judge David Overstreet, accompanied by his mother, Ann. A longtime community leader in Mt. Vernon, Overstreet serves on the Fifth District Appellate Court and previously served on the Second Judicial Circuit Court. Overstreet rode through the parade as “Santa” Overstreet in memory of his father, Jack,



Sentinel Photo/JOSH JONES

**WINNER** — Debbie Dixon, owner of Groomingdales, won Best use of a Small Space for the annual Downtown Mt. Vernon Christmas Decorating Contest on Saturday following the parade. Several winners were announced for both the contest and the parade.

who loved to give in the spirit of Christmas by dressing as Santa at several community events.

Melynda Breeze, Downtown Mt. Vernon Christmas Parade chair, noted that Mt. Vernon had a variety of Christmas activities during the weekend.

“Several have gone and visited the Spero Festival of Trees today. They moved that to this weekend, so we are excited for all the downtown activities,” Breeze said. “It is great to provide a variety of

activities for the citizens of Jefferson County to enjoy.”

After the parade concluded, the Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony was held. The Girl Scouts of Jefferson County and the Primary Center Third Grade Choir sang holiday songs during the event. The event finished with various activities including free cookie decorating by the Business Women’s Club as well as make-and-take crafts supplied by the United Way.

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