

Here's what I think ...

By Ty Ankrom

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If it's October, all thoughts turn to Pumpkin Show in Circleville. It is our All-Star Game and our Rose Bowl Parade, a showcase to spotlight our agricultural roots and our civic pride.

Who doesn't have a favorite guilty pleasure that gets indulged at Pumpkin Show, whether it's pumpkin chili at the Sunrise Rotary booth, pumpkin burgers at DECA's booth or pumpkin pancakes made by the Kiwanis Club.

But don't let the pumpkin scent in the air override the key element of Pumpkin Show: It's about community pride. (Just say "Pumpkin Festival" instead of "Pumpkin Show" and see how quickly you are corrected.)

In a county of about 56,000 residents, it's staggering to learn that Pumpkin Show brings in nearly 400,000 people each year over the four-day event. And because most visitors buy something while they're here – be it food, crafts or a souvenir – Pumpkin Show is an important contributor to the city and county's economic picture.

Many of our local schools, churches, clubs and civic groups realize a great deal of revenue from the items sold at Pumpkin Show and the money raised goes back to projects that benefit the community.

For example, money raised by the Sunrise Rotary Club's chili sales have been used to support youth sports and academics, purchase playground equipment for several of our parks, build a shelter house at Barthelmas Park and, with the Circleville Noon Rotary club, build the Starkey Pavilion at Mary Virginia Crites Hannan Park.

Our community's youth are also active in the week's activities. Besides DECA (an association of marketing students), many of the high school bands from the county school districts perform. Some students also take part working the booths, giving them real-life experience in handling business transactions and providing customer service.

Underlying everything, from the booths to the floats to the parades, is civic pride. Circleville residents have a huge opportunity to share that pride with the hundreds of thousands who will visit our town.

Through our hospitality and kindness we can put ourselves and Circleville in the best light, prompting visitors to make Pumpkin Show an annual destination event.

Ankrom is the superintendent of the Pickaway County Educational Service Center.

