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134 Convention Boulevard • Hot Springs National Park, Arkansas 71901  
1-800-922-6478 • 501-321-2027 • FAX 501-620-5008

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## NEWS RELEASE

February 13, 2012

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Paul Johnson 501/225-5937  
[Pj72205@comcast.net](mailto:Pj72205@comcast.net)

### **All-day Festivities Surround First Ever 9th Annual World's Shortest St. Patrick's Day Parade on March 17**

HOT SPRINGS NATIONAL PARK, Arkansas — For the first time since its beginning in 2003, Hot Springs' internationally famous World's Shortest St. Patrick's Day Parade falls on a weekend this year. As a result, festivities surrounding the First Ever Ninth Annual World's Shortest St. Patrick's Day Parade on March 17 will last all day.

"We have a full day of activities planned for the downtown Entertainment District, and we believe there's five times as much fun in store for our guests," said Steve Arrison, CEO of Visit Hot Springs and one of the parade's founding organizers. "We'll have things going on from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m., including the parade itself at 6:30 p.m."

Here is the schedule for the celebration:

- 11 a.m. — Entertainment District Opens (The Entertainment District encompasses Broadway between Spring Street and Convention Boulevard)

- 11:30 a.m. – Live band, Midnight Parade, will provide live music on the Bridge Street Stage at the intersection of Broadway and Bridge Street
- 2 p.m. – The Irish band, Pickled Beats, will perform on the Bridge Street Stage
- 4:30 p.m. – Romancing The Stone Contest in front of the Convention Center. Contestants compete for cash prizes to determine the most romantic kiss planted on the Arkansas Blarney Stone
- 5:30 p.m. – Pre- Parade Warm Up begins with the Famous Chicken doing his hilarious routines
- 6:30 p.m. – The First Ever Ninth Annual World’s Shortest St. Patrick’s Day Parade begins, with 50 floats, bands, marching societies, etc., and with movie-TV star Tim Matheson as celebrity grand marshal
- 7:30 p.m. – Bridge Street/Broadway intersection reopened to pedestrian traffic
- 8 p.m. – Free street dance featuring classic rock band 38 Special on the Hill Wheatley Plaza Stage
- 11 p.m. – All events end and cleanup begins

The World’s Shortest St. Patrick’s Day Parade, which traverses world-famous Bridge Street – all 98 feet of it – has gained worldwide attention since the first edition was organized in 2003.

Tens of thousands of people flock to the downtown area each March 17 to celebrate the unfettered sense of fun and wackitude that the parade generates.

Leysa Lowery of Visit Hot Springs, who coordinates entries in the parade, said Monday [February 13] that the parade entry list is nearing capacity.

“We have had to impose a limit of 40 entries because otherwise the parade would last all night,” Lowery said. “We’ve had applications from many of our traditional floats, bands and zany marching units, and some new entries have applied to join the 2012 parade. The entry deadline is March 1, but it could be that we reach the entry limit before then. Anyone interested in an application can find one on our website at [www.shorteststpats.com](http://www.shorteststpats.com) or by calling me at 501-321-2027.”

The parade has been recognized worldwide with numerous international awards. Just this year it added another international recognition to its growing list of awards and notices. This time it's *U.S. News Travel*, the online posting by the former *U.S. News & World Report Magazine*, now known as *U.S. News*. The parade is No. 8 on the publication's list of Top 10 America's Best St. Patrick's Day Parades.

- In 2005 it was No. 1 in Off the Beaten Path Parades awarded by *The Irish Echo*
- In 2008 it was named among the Top Ten St. Patrick's Day Parades in the U.S. by AOL
- In 2009 it was named the Quirkiest St. Patrick's Day Parade on Earth by *Smithsonian Magazine*
- In 2009 it was named No. 2 in its list of Celebrating St. Patrick's Day in the Southeast by the *Atlanta Journal Constitution*
- For six consecutive years, it has been selected as one of the Top 20 Events in the Southeast by the Southeast Tourism Society
- In 2010 it was elected No. 8 among the Top 10 Worldwide St. Patrick's Day Celebrations by HotelsCombined.com
- In 2010 the parade received the prestigious Henry Award for Community Tourism Development from the Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism
- In 2010 it was designated an Official Southern Travel Treasure by *AAA Southern Traveler Magazine*
- In 2010 the parade was elected to the list of Top 100 Events and Festivals in North America by the American Bus Association group tour association.
- In 2011 it was named the Arkansas Festival and Event Association's 2010 Event of the Year.
- In 2011 CNN named it No. 1 among Quirky St. Patrick's Day Parades.
- In 2011 it was named Most Unusual St. Patrick's Day Parade by the Irish Echo.
- In 2011 Irish Central named it among the Top 5 St. Patrick's Day Parades in America.
- In 2011 Business Insider listed it among Eight International St. Patrick's Day Celebrations You Probably Didn't Know About.
- The Hispanic website La Informacion.com named it No. 1 among Las Celebraciones Mas Estramboticas del Dia de San Patricio. Estramboticas means weird or extravagant.

For more information about the St. Patrick's Day Parade visit [www.shorteststpats.com](http://www.shorteststpats.com) or call Leysa Lowery at 501-321-2027.

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