

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**5TH ANNIVERSARY - BARABOO BIG TOP PARADE HONORS
RINGLING BROS. AND BARNUM & BAILEY CIRCUS WORKERS**

BARABOO, WISCONSIN; February 8, 2017 –

The Baraboo community opens its heart to the former artists and employees of the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus. This July, the 5th Anniversary **Big Top Parade and Circus Homecoming** in downtown Baraboo will honor all of these people by naming them the parade's grand marshals.

Responding to the January announcement that the Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey touring circus will close after 146 years, the Baraboo community wanted to recognize all of the people who have made that show a reality. Baraboo is excited to welcome these people home to the place where the show began.

Wisconsin is famous for being the birthplace of more than 100 circuses, but the Ringling Bros. Circus was the largest in the world. Founded in Baraboo in 1884, the Ringling name became synonymous with the American circus. It was in Baraboo that the brothers lived, dreamed, and worked to build their show, which was then exported throughout America.

Several Baraboo organizations have joined forces with the Baraboo Area Chamber of Commerce to create this year's **Big Top Parade and Circus Homecoming** weekend. The July events will also applaud the timeless art form and Baraboo's contributions to that rich heritage. Circus World, the International Clown Hall of Fame, the Al. Ringling Theatre, Sauk County Historical Society, Al. Ringling Mansion and The Ringling House have collectively created a colossal and captivating celebration complete with a copious cavalcade of colorful capers, crowning cast and crowds in a complete circle of contagious charm and certifiable cheerfulness.

"We are so proud to welcome all of these folks to the Baraboo Area. The response has been tremendous, with numerous new and exciting entries already rolling in" said Nanci Cafilisch, co-chair of the committee planning the event on behalf of the Baraboo Area Chamber of Commerce. "Our community is unique and full of circus history and that is certainly something to celebrate!"

Downtown Baraboo will be all-things-circus the weekend of, July 20-23. The **Big Top Parade & Circus Homecoming** will feature concerts, children's activities, carnival games, food vendors and live performances.

The main event is the **Big Top Parade** on Saturday, July 22, at 11:00 a.m. Along with our grand marshals the parade features over 75 traditional circus parade units and circus-theme entries created by community groups and businesses.

In years past the **Big Top Parade & Circus Celebration** has drawn as many as 25,000 parade spectators to Baraboo's downtown and garnered an estimated \$2.3 million in economic impact for the community. Due to the event's popularity, quality, uniqueness, and its broad appeal to both individual travelers and

tour groups, the American Bus Association named the Big Top Parade & Circus Parade to its list of Top 100 Events in North America for 2016.

“We anticipate that this prestigious Top 100 Events designation will draw even more people to this year’s **Big Top Parade & Circus Celebration**,” Caflich said. “We will welcome them with a colossal celebration to honor the people of the Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus, exciting new pre-parade entertainment, and even more spectacular parade entries.”

For more information about **Baraboo’s Big Top Parade & Circus Celebration**, call the Baraboo Area Chamber of Commerce at 608-356-8333 or toll-free 1-800-227-2266 or visit <http://www.bigtopparade.com>

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