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## **Patriot Day Parade Changes Route**

**GRAND RAPIDS, MI, July 17, 2007** – This year’s Grand Rapids Jaycees Patriot Day Parade is undergoing some changes. One of those changes is a new parade route. The parade, which is on Saturday, Sept. 8, will start at 10:15 a.m. on the corner of Division Avenue and Crescent Street near Van Andel Institute and will then continue south on Division to Fulton Street where it will turn east on Fulton and finish at Veterans Memorial Park.

The theme for this year’s parade is “Home of the Brave” and the Alpha Company, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 24<sup>th</sup> Marines will serve as Grand Marshals. The Alpha Company Marines, which are based out the U.S. Naval and Marine Corps Reserve Center in Grand Rapids, returned home in late April from a seven month deployment to the Al Anbar province in Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom II. A brief memorial service to pay tribute to those who lost their lives in the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks and in service to their country will be held at Veterans Memorial Park immediately after the parade.

As a result of the change in the parade route, Pre-Parade Parade Activities, which will run 8:30 a.m. until the start of the parade and feature children’s activities and appearances by local sports mascots, will move from in front of the Van Andel Arena to Veterans Memorial Park. The “Be a Hero” Blood Drive for Michigan Community Blood Centers will also be held from 8 a.m. until 1 p.m. next to Veterans Memorial Park. A food drive to benefit ACCESS of West Michigan Food Pantry Program will also be held during the parade.

The change in the parade route was made to accommodate the new Grand Cycling Classic, whose route crosses the old parade route. “We are excited about the new parade route and the opportunities it will provide the community to be more involved in the parade,” said Parade Chair Amy Howell.

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The Patriot Day Parade, which has been organized and operated by the Grand Rapids Jaycees since 2004, seeks to honor community heroes and pay tribute to those who lost their lives in the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. Entries for the parade will be accepted until Aug. 24. Additional information about the parade is available on the Grand Rapids Jaycees website at [www.grjaycees.org](http://www.grjaycees.org) or by calling the Jaycees office at 616-954-9409.

The Grand Rapids Jaycees, also known as the Grand Rapids Junior Chamber of Commerce, is an organization that provides young people between the ages of 21-40 with opportunities to meet new people, network for business, build their personal and professional skills and help the community. The Grand Rapids Jaycees organize a number of community events such as the Santa Claus Parade, Children's Holiday Shopping Tour and the Michigan Special Olympics State Basketball Tournament.

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