

Left Hand Valley Courier - All Local, All The Time

Sheriff Pelle named Niwot's 4th of July parade Grand Marshal

By [Vicky Dorvee](#)



Courtesy Photo

Boulder County Sheriff Joe Pelle will be honored as the Grand Marshal at Niwot's 4th of July parade.

Nothing conjures up a deeper sense of patriotism and belonging to a community like a 4th of July parade, and Niwot's celebration has a way of elevating that hometown, apple pie feeling to the max. There are kids riding their streamer-adorned bikes, horse-mounted riders carrying flags, well-represented community organizations walking with their banners, all encased in a backdrop of majestic music.

And of course there's the Grand Marshal riding in a spiffy convertible smiling and waving to the crowd.

Each year the Niwot Community Association (NCA) selects an honoree to ride at the front of the parade. They slowly cruise by as onlookers show their great respect and appreciation for what the Grand Marshal has done within the community. This year's Grand Marshal is Sheriff Joe Pelle of the Boulder County Sheriff's Office (BCSO), a man who for 40-plus years has been a steadfast Boulder County peace officer.

Sheriff Pelle and his wife Stephanie are well known and much loved in Niwot. The couple lived in Niwot when their children were little, and while living here, Stephanie started a job working for the Niwot Post Office, which she held for 30 years. Almost 10 years ago, Stephanie was chosen as the Grand Marshal. This time around she'll ride next to Sheriff Pelle while he's being celebrated.

When asked how many parades he's participated in, Sheriff Pelle simply said, "Ahh, a lot."

"We've had horses forever and we had a couple of really gentle horses that were good in parades with all the stress. We used them when I was campaigning, and then after I was elected, I had a few deputies who also had horses and were interested in riding in uniform," Pelle said. "Then we had some of our mounted search and rescue people that were interested in riding in a parade."

They put together a group of riders, each wearing breast collars reading Boulder County Sheriff and the horses would have matching saddle blankets they'd use only for parades. Pelle's parade-able horse has since passed away, unfortunately.

To make it to the rare ranks of being a Grand Marshal of Niwot's 4th of July parade, the NCA board of directors accepts nominations from the floor at a meeting, and members also send in suggestions for the honoree. After some discussion, the board takes a vote to determine the final selection. The decision is kept under wraps until it is announced in the Left Hand Valley Courier.

This year's selection of Sheriff Pelle was extra-special. NCA president David Limbach wrote, "Each year when we consider whom to recognize as our 4th of July Grand Marshal, there are so many candidates to choose from in the large pool of folks that make an impact on Niwot. With his two decades as sheriff and this being his last year in that role, the decision to select Joe Pelle as our Grand Marshal was easy and unanimous."

Pelle is as Colorado as it gets. A graduate of Boulder's Fairview High School in 1977, Pelle went on to earn his undergraduate degree in Criminal Justice and Public Administration from Metropolitan State College, and then a Master's degree in Criminal Justice at the University of Colorado. Pelle worked for the police force and the sheriff's office beginning in 1980 and took the reins of his present elected position as sheriff in 2003.

"The BCSO has always been great to work with...everything from National Night Out, to deputy and cadet ranger support of our downtown parades, to educational programs," Limbach wrote. "I truly believe that the willingness to get engaged and the community outreach stems from Joe's top down leadership."

Limbach wrote, "Joe has graciously agreed to be our 2022 Grand Marshal and will enjoy a place of honor at the head of our downtown parade along with his wife Stephanie, a former Grand Marshal herself. Both Pelles have been part of the Niwot community for so long, it will be great for the whole community to recognize them."

Because Niwot is unincorporated, no police force exists within the community. However, the Sheriff's office has been instrumental in making sure there is a peace officer presence, such as the permanent sheriff's substation located at the Mountain View Fire Rescue Station on Niwot Road, and there are always assigned officers at events like Rock and Rails and National Night Out.

In fact, every event on the streets of Niwot has been supported by Sheriff Pelle's staff, which works in tight coordination with each organization, thanks to the exceptional leadership of Pelle.

"It's a really well organized community," Pelle said. "You know there's the business association and the community association and they always maintain ties. So I've always made it a point to know who to call. I love the community and I love the people and the way they stay organized and the events that they have to build community."

When asked about being in the Niwot 4th of July parade, Pelle said, "It's really a nice honor."

The Pelles' connection to Niwot began in the mid 1980's when the young couple moved into a starter home in Cottonwood Park West. Stephanie Pelle spotted a 'help wanted' sign in the post office window, applied, and worked at the post office until retiring in 2013. After six years of living here, they moved to a home with more land and a more rural setting.

Term limits for the office mean that this year's county elections include voting in a new sheriff in the fall of 2022. Pelle was first elected to the position in the fall of 2002, then re-elected in 2006 and 2010 to additional four-year terms. Faced with a limitation of three four-year terms for the office, Pelle was held in such high regard by the citizens of Boulder County that Boulder County Commissioners asked voters to allow a fourth term in 2011, and the extension passed easily due to Pelle's popularity. After his election to a fourth term in 2014, Boulder County voters were asked to allow a fifth term in 2017, which easily passed again, and Pelle was elected to his fifth term a year later.

For 20 years, Pelle has been on-call around the clock, always on alert for what may happen next, be it a fire or another crisis. But, as of January 10, 2023, Pelle will be on to the next phase in his life. He's looking forward to playing golf, using their camper, hiking, spending time with his three, and soon to be four grandchildren (ages 3-10), and dedicating more time to the church he's active in.

"To not have that responsibility and stress, I think it's going to be good for me as I move into my mid-60's," Pelle said. To kick it off, he and Stephanie will be taking an extended vacation, which will be a first for them. Since it will be winter when he retires, a warm destination is what they're looking forward to.

While he's been in many parades, he's predicting this is his last one as Boulder County Sheriff. It's only fitting that he will be the Grand Marshal in his final parade - hopefully he will be feeling massive kudos from the community for having been a tremendously dedicated public servant who is highly cherished by all who know him.

The parade begins at 11 a.m. leaving from the intersection of Niwot Road and Meadowdale Drive. It proceeds west to Second Avenue and ends at Murray Street. The event is sponsored by the NCA, the Niwot LID, Niwot Market, and the Niwot Business Association. The NCA takes the lead in organizing the event, and will hold a reception to allow the community to personally thank Sheriff Joe Pelle for his many years of service at The Niwot Group - Compass real estate offices at 7915 Niwot Road following the parade until 1 p.m.

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