

Crawford Tech readies its pirate ship

By Mike Crowley

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As smoke emerged from the cannons atop the main deck of the Crawford Tech firetruck, some students adjusted strings of holiday lights strung across the vessel; others arrived with portholes to be affixed to the sides and one checked the treasure chest resting at the rear.

The scene was as busy as the pirate ship Black Pearl readying for an attack on an unsuspecting merchant ship — fittingly so, since the theme for Crawford Tech's float in today's Meadville Halloween Parade is "Pirates of the Caribbean."

"I think this might be our best theme yet," said Nick Shearer, the diesel technology instructor who coordinates student work on the float.

It was quite the declaration, considering the school has taken home honors for



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Smoke emerges from the cannon as Crawford Tech students Peyton Stokes (left) and Gaven Rhodes check the decorations on the school's 'Pirates of the Caribbean' themed float for tonight's Meadville Halloween Parade.

top youth-constructed float each year since the parade was canceled in 2020 due to the pandemic. Crawford Tech also placed second overall among all nonprofit floats in 2021 and 2023.

The students take the

"youth-constructed" nature of the category seriously.

"Almost every one of the props was made in-house," Shearer said.

Students fabricated the cannons and wired the smoke machine attached to them,

he added. They also designed and 3D-printed the many skeletons hanging from the sides of the truck, some with peg legs and eye patches, and constructed the treasure chest and the ship's wheel, among numerous other decorative elements large and small, in addition to shaping the overall design.

And while they didn't make it, they also placed the Crawford Tech flag above the crow's nest, right where the Jolly Roger would typically appear.

The school will be among 124 participants expected to march when the parade, with its "Under the Sea" theme this year, begins at the southern end of Diamond Park tonight at 6:30 p.m.

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