

New Rochesterfest chairman encourages all to 'Live Your Dream'

New chairman and theme announced for the summer 2024 celebration.

by Randy Peterson
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ROCHESTER — Ashok Patel called being named the 2024 [Rochesterfest](#) chairman a “dream come true.”



Kathleen Harrington, former Rochesterfest chair, hands a ceremonial brick to Dr. Ashok Patel to signify the passing over of duties during a press conference held to announce the new Rochesterfest chair on Wednesday, Dec. 20, 2023, at the Rochester City Hall.
Maya Giron / Post Bulletin

With that, the Mayo Clinic physician announced next year’s theme — Live Your Dream — on Wednesday, Dec. 20, as he took the official position in planning the celebration of a city that he’s called home for 35 years.

“It really is a tremendous city that cares, that helps each of us learn to be better citizens and also develop new ways of playing together, shopping together — as my daughters would say — and staying a awhile,” he said.

Patel said accepting the leading role in next year’s Rochesterfest didn’t take much deliberation.

“I only had to think about it because of the other roles I have in the community and at work,” he said, pointing to a variety of other commitments, including being the current Rotary Club of Rochester president.

The 2023 chairwoman, Kathleen Harrington, said she's worked with Patel in a variety of roles, including work with the Salvation Army.

"It is a great honor to pass the brick — the baton, so to speak — to an amazing human, and I say that with a lot of personal experience in collective service," she said during Wednesday's event.

Patel said he's hoping the 2024 theme and the work behind the scenes can help Rochester residents work together to better achieve their individual goals, which is something he said he's seen happen throughout his time in Rochester.

"It's been an honor to work here, connect dots and watch people transform," he said.



Dr. Ashok Patel speaks at a press conference after being announced the new Rochesterfest chair on Wednesday, Dec. 20, 2023, at the Rochester City Hall.

Maya Giron / Post Bulletin

He said work on next year's Rochesterfest, which is scheduled for June 22 through June 30, has already started, but new ideas and venues continue to be sought.

Returning events include the treasure hunt, two family-fun nights, breakfast on the farm, and the grand parade, which will be held at 2 p.m. June 29, using a route similar to this year's.

Wednesday also launched the start of the annual button contest, with organizers seeking designs based on the Live Your Dream theme.

Design submissions will be accepted through Feb. 16, with rules and directions available online at rochesterfest.com.

The winning design will be announced on March 1, with the designer receiving \$300.