

Grand Marshal – Gary Meling

Gary Meling has been a Lindsay native his whole life. His family arrived in Lindsay in 1912 and have been farming citrus since 1920. He attended college but returned back to his hometown to continue his family's legacy of citrus farming. Outside of farming, he is involved in many different groups, clubs and committees and has received different honors in the community. He is the founder and curator of the Fire Museum, the vice president of the Lindsay Cultural Arts Council, a founder of the History Museum, Lindsay's representative for the Tulare County Oversight Committee for TCAG, the Mural Tour Guide for the Orange Blossom Festival and was the vice president of the Lindsay Senior Housing. He was chosen as Lindsay's Man of the Year, not once, but twice! His involvement with the Fire Museum started back in 2003 when he started the "Restore the Fire Truck" committee. Although he's involved in many things, his involvement with fire trucks runs as far back as to when he was 4 or 5 years old. One of his fondest memories is riding on the the old fire trucks in the OBF parade as a kid. Gary has kept the tradition of driving fire trucks through the OBF parade since 1977 – he'll be hitting 45 years this year!

The Orange Blossom Festival is a time that Gary expresses as a representation of what a small town is supposed to be and a time for the community to get together – people from the present, future and past coming together to celebrate such a big event in our town's history. Gary concluded with the following message, "I have been very happy growing up in a such a community and have always thought it's important to give back."