



## Hundreds turn out for Guy Fawkes display

SATURDAY night's public fireworks display at Brook Park in Te Kuiti certainly went off with a bang!

More than 700 people set out their picnic rugs in the park on the summer evening enjoying music, hotdogs and ice cream in the relaxed family festival atmosphere.

Organisers staged the event in a natural amphitheatre a few hundred metres from the main gates so families had a grandstand view of the massive bonfire and professional fireworks display.

### GUY CONTEST

Before the event got underway some adventurous families took the opportunity for a walk in the park, followed by the judging of the 20 entries in the guy competition.

Seven-year-old Jack Higgins won first prize – and an armload of goodies – for his faithful 'Guy Fawkes' complete with hangman's noose, with Finn Hunt's mustachioed French caver 'Bridie' second, Harrison Smith's 'Thor, God of Thunder' third and his 'Joshua Deathwish' was highly commended.

The second, third and highly commended place get-

ters are all members of Te Kuiti Cub and Scout Group.

### BRIILLIANT DISPLAY

Te Kuiti Volunteer Fire Brigade members supervised the lighting of the huge bonfire while the professional fireworks team checked the safety exclusion zone around their "launch pad" and the crowd settled back waiting for nightfall and the fireworks fun.

They were not disappointed.

"Oohs" and "aahs" echoed round the park for about 15 minutes as the brilliant display of coloured starbursts rocketed into the sky lighting up the peoples' faces.

Organiser Guy Whittaker is very happy with the night. "It went very smoothly. I was happy to see so many kids running around having fun in the park.

"The fire was spectacular with lots of clean-burning flame and I was thrilled to see so many guys entered in the competition.

"Brook Park is a brilliant venue and the fireworks were awesome.

"It was a very happy night for everyone."

PHOTOS P5



**FIRE SPRITE:** Five-year-old Sophie Smith of Te Kuiti is fascinated by the flames leaping from the massive bonfire lit for the public fireworks display at Te Kuiti's Brook Park on Saturday night.

## Start date for roundabout

CONSTRUCTION of a "safer" and "more forgiving" roundabout in Hangatiki where two people died in 2012 is set to begin late January.

The current SH3/SH37 T-intersection which is the gateway to the world-famous Waitomo Caves will be replaced by a three-legged roundabout.

It will be built 60 metres north of the current turnoff at a cost of around \$3.6 million.

As part of the project, SH37 will be realigned to improve its link to the new SH3 intersection and a right-turn bay will be built on SH3 for Mangarino Rd.

### "BEST SOLUTION"

NZ Transport Agency principal safety engineer Michelle Te Wharau says NZTA worked closely with the Waitomo District Council, police and the

community to identify the best way to improve safety at the notorious black spot.

The roundabout option was selected after public consultation and feedback last year and an investigation by NZTA traffic safety experts.

"We are delighted to be able to confirm that construction will be getting under way in late January and we would like to thank everyone involved for their input and their patience," says Mrs Te Wharau.

"We know the public wanted us to go faster, but it was important to get the best solution so we can get the greatest safety improvements."

### TRAFFIC NUMBERS

NZTA statistics show 6500 vehicles per day pass the Hangatiki turnoff on SH3, 1300 a day use SH37

to and from the Waitomo Caves and 450 vehicles a day use Mangarino Rd.

Mrs Te Wharau says a roundabout was a safer, more forgiving intersection if people made mistakes. "It is also easier for road users to navigate smoothly through and find their turn off," she says.

"We're committed to reducing the risk of crashes at this intersection, however, we would also ask that motorists do their bit too, by ensuring they travel at safe speeds, take extra care when turning and remain alert for any unexpected vehicle movements."

A temporary 70km/h speed reduction that was introduced in September 2012 will remain in place until the project is completed.

Construction is expected to take three-four months.



**UPGRADE UPDATE:** NZ Transport Agency principal safety engineer Michelle Te Wharau announced yesterday that construction on a safer SH3/SH37 turnoff will begin in late January.

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