

## Commerce, democracy clash

By Michael Stone

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Two integral parts of the United States, commerce and democracy, will meld into a hodgepodge of traffic today as shoppers and voters both hit the highways.

Tennesseans are going to the polls for Election Day, while people from all over the country hunt for bargains at the World's Longest Yard Sale along U.S. Highway 127.

And officials in three East Tennessee cities that will feel the effects — Signal Mountain, Dunlap and Crossville — emphasize that they're ready.

Signal Mountain Mayor Phil Lusk said police will keep traffic near Town Hall, the city's polling location, "under control." There is a back road to the polling station so voters won't have to sit in traffic on U.S. 127.

"I don't anticipate anything that would interfere with the election," he said. "Our experience would tell us that there will be some fairly heavy traffic (because of the yard sale), but usually that's more concentrated around the weekends."

The World's Longest Yard Sale — a 675-mile jaunt from Gadsden, Ala., to Hudson, Mich. — technically runs from today until Sunday. But some vendors arrived a few days early, including Benny Palmer, of Columbus, Ga.

Palmer said he set up his tent in Walden on Tuesday and had earned \$4,190 by Wednesday morning.

"With the heat, you need a few extra days," he said.

Signal Mountain Police Chief Boyd Veal said vehicle congestion during the sale generally trickles southward from Walden.

"(The yard sale) generally doesn't create much of an issue for us except for the overflow (in traffic) out of Walden," he said. "But that's a significant distance from the polling area."

Twenty-two miles up the road in Dunlap, Mayor Dwain Land said he expects a bigger yard sale this year because vendors and customers already were "packed" into the town by Wednesday. But he said he still hopes for good voter turnout.

"We allot so many dollars to each officer each year for overtime, and (the yard sale) will be a time when we utilize that overtime," he said.

Yard sale customers who drive another hour to Crossville will run into "bumper-to-bumper traffic," Crossville Mayor J.H. Graham joked.

"I live on 127, and it took me 15 minutes to get out of my driveway (Wednesday morning)," he said.

Graham said several Cumberland County precincts are off the highway and shouldn't be hampered by yard sale traffic.

Hamilton County Administrator of Elections Charlotte Mullis-Morgan said she expects between 15,000 and 16,000 voters to hit the polls today to add to the 15,666 who voted early.

Two of those early voters, yard sale vendors Jeannie and Charlie Howell of Red Bank, had their tent ready to go in Walden by Wednesday. They said they expect people to vote, then head straight into the yard sale fray.

"People who get out and vote, it doesn't take all day to do that," Charlie Howell said. "They'll be here."

[Click here to vote in our daily poll: Are you going to the World's Longest Yard sale?](#)

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