

**Application for
Best New Event**

**Dogtoberfest,
City of Duluth, GA**

Judges' score: 9.33

Detailed description of the event:

Dogtoberfest: A Fall Celebration for Dogs & Their People Dogtoberfest combined the best elements of Oktoberfest and all things canine, creating the ultimate fall celebration where traditional Bavarian themes blended seamlessly with a dog-friendly atmosphere, and every guest—two- and four-legged alike—felt welcome. This spirited take on a traditional Oktoberfest brought together live music, themed activities, local food and beverage offerings, pet-focused vendors, and adoptable dogs for a community event that was equal parts festive and fur-filled. The event kicked off on the main stage with live music by the Sugarloaf Polka Band, whose rhythms set the tone for the evening. Their traditional polka sound—driven by accordion melodies, lively brass, and foot-tapping tempos—created an authentic Oktoberfest atmosphere that encouraged guests to dance, clap along, and embrace the old-world charm of the celebration. The music carried across Town Green, welcoming guests as they arrived and creating an authentic soundtrack for the evening’s activities. Oktoberfest Fun for Humans Throughout Town Green, guests found a wide variety of Oktoberfest- and dog-themed activities designed to keep both people and pups entertained. At the Duluth Tent, attendees could collect supplies to create their own pretzel necklaces, a playful nod to classic Oktoberfest traditions and the perfect complement to the beer specials offered by local downtown bars and restaurants. Offerings included a wide variety of Oktoberfest beers, German pilsners, and smooth helles lagers—giving guests plenty of reasons to raise a glass and celebrate the season. Axe throwing added a dynamic, interactive element to the event, with participants stepping up throughout the evening to test their aim and challenge friends in a casual, come-and-go format. The activity maintained a steady line of participants throughout the night, offering guests another engaging way to experience the festival beyond the stage and vendor areas. Nearby, food trucks served up classic German-inspired fare including schnitzel, sausages, and—of course—pretzels, giving guests plenty of fuel for an evening of fun. Treats & Tail-Wagging Finds While humans sipped and snacked, their four-legged companions were treated just as well. Dogs visiting the Duluth Tent received a free whipped cream pup cup, ensuring no one felt left out of the indulgence. Dogtoberfest featured an impressive lineup of vendors catering specifically to canine companions. Guests browsed fresh food options from Four Legged Foodie, specialty treats from Pet Wants, handcrafted dog cookies, and even elevated “Barkuterie Boards” from Wag Boards, which quickly became a fan favorite among pampered pups. Additional vendors offered stylish dog collars and clothing, customized dog bowls, and unique pet accessories. Explore Gwinnett added a personal touch by creating free customized bandanas using a heat press and letter badges—ensuring dogs left dressed to impress. For pet parents, local businesses were on site sharing information about services including dog training, boarding, veterinary care, and other pet-focused resources. Guests interested in adoption, fostering, or supporting animal welfare organizations had the opportunity to connect with pet rescues including Pine Forest Pet Care, FurKids, and Planned Pethood, who showcased adoptable dogs and offered both education and opportunities to donate much-needed supplies or funds. For the perfect photo-op, eventgoers and their pups posed beneath a festive balloon arch decorated in traditional Oktoberfest colors along with pretzel and playful dog-bone balloons—creating a backdrop worthy of any “puparazzi” moment. Adoptable Dog Showcase: Spotlighting Local Rescue Dogs On the main stage, Jessica It’s All Good hosted adoptable dog showcases at both 6:00 PM and 7:00 PM, featuring dogs from FurKids and Pine Forest Pet Care. The stage quickly became a focal point of the evening as each dog strutted—or happily trotted—across to enthusiastic oohs, ahhs, and applause from the crowd. Children sat wide-eyed at the front of the stage, cheering, while adults smiled as tails wagged and personalities shined. One standout was Mama, a 3-year-old American Bully with a heart as big as her story. Mama overcame a difficult start and emerged as an incredibly loving companion. With her compact “little hippo” build and striking silvery-grey coat, she immediately captured attention. Calm, well-mannered, and confident on stage, Mama proved she’s as comfortable in the spotlight as she is snuggling with kids—showing why she would make an amazing addition to almost any family. Also winning hearts was Dunn, an 8-month-old Husky-Catahoula mix with soulful eyes and a knack for melting hearts. Dunn confidently made his way across the stage, stopping for pets and soaking up the love, quickly earning cheers from the audience. His cerebellar hypoplasia, which gives him a slightly wobbly gait, doesn’t slow him down or dampen his joyful spirit. His confidence, resilience, and sweet nature left a lasting impression, reminding the crowd that every dog deserves a loving home exactly as they are. Pup Parade & Canine Showmanship Following the 7:00 PM showcase, dogs and their owners gathered at the stage to kick off the Pup Parade, a joyful procession through Town Green. Dogs of all sizes strutted their stuff—some in festive costumes, others proudly showing off their new bandanas—as owners laughed and snapped photos. Tails wagged, paws pranced, and the parade became a moving celebration of canine personality and community spirit. At 6:30 PM and again at 7:30 PM, guests gathered at the top of Town Green for performances by Gail and the Dynamo Dogs. Their act delivered a high-energy, family-friendly canine variety show that captivated audiences of all ages. The Dynamo Dogs—varying in size, breed, and skill—showcased impressive trick dog performances, hoop jumps, rolling barrel tricks, high jumps, and fast-paced Frisbee dog acrobatics. Many of the dogs, adopted or rescued themselves, demonstrated the powerful bond between handler and canine while highlighting what patience, training, and trust can achieve. Oktoberfest Games & Crowd Favorites At 8:00 PM, guests gathered at the main stage for a lively round of Oktoberfest-themed games that ignited competitive spirits and delivered plenty of laughs. Locally sourced gift cards and Oktoberfest-themed gifts served as prizes, adding friendly competition and energy to the crowd. Attendees competed in Stein Races, Sausage Toss, and a Beer Stein Holding Contest, each drawing cheers from the crowd. During the Stein Races, contestants raced uphill across Town Green, carefully balancing their steins to avoid spilling “beer” and risking disqualification. At the City Hall steps, racers paused mid-competition to perform a brief dance before sprinting back toward the finish line. The Sausage Toss brought out fierce competition as participants stretched to catch flying sausages, while spectators laughed and cheered them on. The Beer Stein Holding Contest tested strength and endurance, with one impressive winner holding a full stein straight out for nearly seven minutes, drawing cheers from the crowd. Polka Finale & Cultural Celebration After the game winners were crowned, the Mazury Polish Dance Ensemble took the stage to close out the night with vibrant performances of traditional Polish folk dance. Mazury delivered a dynamic presentation featuring authentic costumes and international folk dance styles, bringing energy, color, and cultural depth to the evening while creating a meaningful bridge between past traditions and modern audiences. Over in Parsons Alley, Sherri & Larry kept the celebration going with additional polka tunes, ensuring the sounds of Oktoberfest echoed throughout Downtown as guests danced, laughed, and enjoyed one final round of festivities. Dogtoberfest proved to be a welcoming and memorable fall event, celebrating community, culture, and canine companionship in a way that felt both festive and inclusive—leaving guests already looking forward to next year’s celebration.

Will it become an annual event?

Yes

Estimated number of attendees?

Approximately 5,500 visits during event hours, based on Placer.ai foot traffic data for Downtown Duluth during the event window.



































SEPTEMBER 13, 2025
5-9PM

MAIN STAGE

5-7PM SUGARLOAF POLKA BAND
6PM ADOPTABLE DOG SHOWCASE
7-9PM DJ JESSICA ITS ALL GOOD
7PM ADOPTABLE DOG SHOWCASE & PET PARADE
8PM OKTOBERFEST GAMES

PARSONS ALLEY

6-9PM LIVE MUSIC BY SHERRI & LARRY
FREE PUP CUPS (WHILE SUPPLIES LAST)

TOWN GREEN

5-9PM PHOTO OPS
5-9PM AX THROWING
6:30 & 7:30PM GAIL AND THE DYNAMO DOGS STUNT SHOW



DOGTOBERFEST: AT A GLANCE

- **SEASONAL SIGNATURE EVENT**
A fall festival blending Oktoberfest traditions with dog-friendly programming, welcoming both two- and four-legged guests into a shared community celebration.
- **LIVE MUSIC & CULTURAL PERFORMANCES**
Featured traditional polka music, Polish folk dance, and continuous live entertainment across multiple Downtown locations, creating an authentic Oktoberfest atmosphere.
- **PET-CENTERED EXPERIENCES**
Included pup cups, pet vendors, customized bandanas, canine demonstrations, and adoptable dog showcases hosted on the main stage.
- **ADOPTABLE DOG SHOWCASES**
Rescue dogs from FurKids and Pine Forest Pet Care were featured in engaging, family-friendly stage presentations that emphasized personality, story, and connection.
- **INTERACTIVE GAMES & ACTIVITIES**
Guests participated in axe throwing, Oktoberfest games, pup parades, and hands-on activities designed for casual, drop-in participation.
- **STRONG VENDOR & PARTNER PRESENCE**
Combined local food trucks, downtown beer specials, pet-focused vendors, and animal welfare organizations into a cohesive event experience.
- **MULTI-SPACE ACTIVATION**
Programming spanned Town Green, the Main Stage, and Parsons Alley, encouraging movement, exploration, and sustained attendance.

WHY DOGTOBER FEST STANDS OUT

- **A FAMILIAR TRADITION, THOUGHTFULLY REIMAGINED**

Dogtoberfest modernized a classic Oktoberfest celebration by incorporating pet-friendly design without compromising cultural authenticity, expanding its relevance and audience reach.

- **ENTERTAINMENT WITH PURPOSE**

By placing adoptable dog showcases at the center of the event—not on the sidelines—the festival transformed awareness into meaningful engagement with animal welfare organizations.

- **DESIGNED FOR COMFORT AND CHOICE**

Guests could participate actively or casually, staying for a full evening or stopping in briefly, making the event welcoming for families, dog owners, and first-time attendees alike.

- **NATURAL COMMUNITY INTEGRATION**

Local businesses, performers, pet vendors, and nonprofits were seamlessly embedded into the event, creating a collaborative atmosphere rather than a transactional one.

- **STRENGTHENED SENSE OF PLACE**

The event reinforced Downtown Duluth as a gathering space where culture, celebration, and community identity intersect—encouraging repeat visitation and civic pride.

- **AN EXPERIENCE WITH HEART**

Dogtoberfest created moments of genuine connection—between pets and potential families, neighbors and performers, and guests and the Downtown environment—leaving an emotional impact that extended beyond the event itself.

EVENT BUDGET

Dogtoberfest: \$7,674 Total Budget

Budget	Description	Vendor
1,000	DJ	Jessica Its All Good
200	Polka Dance	Mazury Folk Dance Ensemble
700	Parsons Alley Music	Sherri & Larry
86	Oktoberfest Game Supplies	Publix
120	Pup Cups	Publix
52	Dog Parade Balloons	Amazon
215	Oktoberfest Game Prizes	Amazon
350	Yiftee Gift Certificate Prizes	Yiftee
665	Balloon Arch	Bubble and Bash
1,317	Axe Throwing	Moving Target
309	Pretzel Necklaces	Amazon
260	Staff Meal	Publix
900	Main Stage Polka	Sugarloaf Polka Band
1,500	Dog Stunt Show	Gail and the Dynamo Dogs
0	Adoptable Dogs Showcase	

DOGTOBER FEST: REVIEWS AND FEEDBACK

“Perfect fall evening, happy dogs everywhere, great music, and just an all-around good vibe. What a fun night!” – Facebook comment by F. Clara

“Hi Jessica!

Thank you so much for inviting us to be part of Dogtoberfest. It was such a welcoming, positive environment for our volunteers and the dogs we brought. The adoptable dog showcase was a highlight for us. It gave our dogs the chance to be seen in a fun, supportive setting and sparked some meaningful conversations with attendees who were interested in learning more about what we do.

We truly appreciate the City’s support of rescue organizations and loved being part of an event that celebrates dogs while also helping them find homes. We’d be happy to participate again in the future.

Perrin Chunta
Pine Forest Pet Care”