The smell of caramel corn and sound of bluegrass music filled the air Saturday as growers brought their giant pumpkins to the 2022 Skagit Valley Giant Pumpkin Festival at Christianson's Nursery west of Mount Vernon.

This is the 12th year the festival has been held at the nursery, which is also an official weigh-in site for the Giant Pumpkin Commonwealth, an international organization sanctioned to submit giant pumpkin world records.

The festival featured food and drink vendors, children's face painting, carnival games, a live food exhibit and, of course, giant pumpkins. Other giant vegetables included squash, tomatoes and gourds.

"Obviously the giant pumpkins are amazing, but it's really a family event," Christianson's Nursery Owner John Christianson said.

This year's giant pumpkin competition had 11 entries. Before the weighing portion of the day, all of the pumpkins underwent a visual inspection for blemishes to ensure there were no cracks. A cracked pumpkin could mean disqualification.

"A crack could allow one to inject weight theoretically, so they want to avoid anything like that," Christianson said.

The pumpkins were on display throughout the day and weighed from 1 to 4 p.m.

"You never know which is the heaviest pumpkin. Sometimes the biggest pumpkin isn't the heaviest pumpkin, so we've had big surprises before," Christianson said. The winner of this year's festival was Joel Holland. He's a pumpkin capitalist," Christianson said. "He does not grow one giant pumpkin, he has multiple pumpkins. It's always exciting when he shows up." Holland, who holds the record for the largest pumpkin in the state, had a pumpkin that weighed in at 6,634 pounds. Christianson's Nursery announced on its Instagram page. The giant pumpkins will be on display at Christianson's Nursery for the next week or two before heading to their sponsors, according to their Instagram page.

By JAKE ISOM
goskagit

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The state reached a settlement with three drug companies — McKesson, Cardinal Health, and AmerisourceBergen Drug — for backing the market with highly-addictive painkillers, said Sarah Hinman, assistant director of county Public Health.

In total, the companies agreed to pay the state $83 million over the next 17 years. About $430 million must be used to combat the opioid epidemic, and the rest will cover administration and lawyers' fees.

Ahead of Monday's unanimous vote, Commissioner Lisa Janicki thanked the county staff and community members in the hearing room for their support over the years.

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