



AT A GLANCE: Pumpkin Festival

1991

THE BEGINNING

The Keene Pumpkin Festival earns the world record for most lit jack-o'-lanterns in one place at one time in the Guinness World Records book.

Nancy Sporborg gets approval from the Keene City Council to put on the first Harvest Festival, which later was renamed the Pumpkin Festival.

1992

THE FIRST WORLD RECORD OF MANY

2010

COMPETITION BREWS

The Keene Pumpkin Festival grows in popularity. The town of Highwood, Ill., starts its own pumpkin festival, publicly challenging Keene's jack-o'-lantern record.

HGTV sends the "Property Brothers" for a television special on the "battle" between Keene and Highwood. Keene wins.

2012

"PUMPKIN WARS"

2013

RUMBLINGS OF CHAOS

Police arrest about 140 people after rowdy parties involving college students and their guests occur for the third straight year.

Riots of drunken students break out in Keene State College student neighborhoods before being met with lines of police. The riots make national headlines.

2014

FESTIVAL RIOTS

2015

MOVING TO LACONIA

The Keene City Council votes against giving an event license to Keene Pumpkin Festival. Festival organizer Let it Shine moves the event to Laconia.

A pumpkin festival returns to Keene in a smaller-scale event.

2017

RETURNING TO ITS ROOTS

2022

BACK FOR GOOD?

After pauses in 2020 and 2021, the Keene Pumpkin Festival is revitalized as a new group of volunteers join Let it Shine.