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chrysanthemums and other fireworks lit up the night sky.

The multiple explosions from "bombs bursting in air" at the end drew sustained cheers and whistles - plus honking horns from cars whose drivers lined the two eastbound lanes of Eight Mile to watch.

"It was wonderful. Thank you," a woman told Todd Lipa, Children, Youth and Families program director as he headed for home.

Lipa said he heard people saying they liked Founders because they didn't want to go elsewhere to see fireworks.

The size of the well-behaved crowd at the nearly 50-minute-long spectacular - staged by Zambrelli, which also did Hudson's-Detroit June 30 - impressed Hills officials.

"It's a big crowd, bigger than the 26th anniversary of Farmington Hills's incorporation last year," said David Boyer, Hills director of special services, as he synchronized the start of the fireworks a half-mile away with the playing of the National Anthem at the park.

Last year's show, in June, was marred by rain during the last 10 minutes, Boyer said. "This one is truly on the Fourth of July for the first time and it's great," he said of the turnout.

It was 99 degrees around 6:30 p.m., when live bands began playing and cars started pulling

into Founders' 200-car lot and onto the 1,000-car space at Glen Eden Memorial Park in Livonia, just across Eight Mile Road.

The temperature would fall into the 70s, but both lots filled quickly despite the heat. People also parked on side streets and in business and church lots on Eight Mile, from Gill Road on the east to Newburgh/Halsted on the west, and walked to the park.

Some, like William and Betty Walker of Livonia, accompanied by daughter Susan of Redford and grandson Paul of Madison, Wis., watched from the Greenmead lot just down Newburgh.

An enterprising Hills resident, Mark Southerland, put up a "\$5 Parking" sign on his grandparents' property just west of Goldsmith, hoping to "make a little beer money."

Whether he succeeded couldn't be determined.

Hills Police Officer Stacy Swanderski, stationed at the command unit, said the only injuries were a bee sting, a minor puncture wound and a burned hand.

Hills Police Commander Dennis Rochford and Lt. Dennis Green said the Livonia Police



Rocket's red glare: Families enjoyed the colorful and loud entertainment.

Department and the Oakland County Sheriff's Department assisted the 25 Hills police and firemen on hand.

Afterwards, the crowd and the vehicles exited smoothly onto Eight Mile.

Elana Adam of the Hills, who saw a bit of last year's show, enjoyed this one more.



Patience: Michael, Ron, Linda and Stacey Bywalch listen to music and wait for dusk when the fireworks started, heralding the start of the Founders Festival, which will run through Sunday.

Entertain: Anita Fegen and Diane Bonadeo clap to the sounds of the Teen Angels, who performed before fireworks lit up the skies over Founders Sports Park on Eight Mile. The fireworks show at the start of the festival marks an effort to include both cities.



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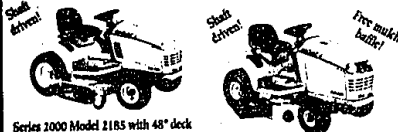
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