For the second time this year, Indiana Governor Mitch Daniels will visit Pekin.

The first visit was March 3 when Daniels surveyed the damage from the March 2 tornadoes.

This time around, Daniels will celebrate a 182 year Pekin, tradition where he will be Honorary Grand Marshal in the July 4 parade.

Daniels accepted the invitation early last week and said he is looking forward to taking part in the country's longest consecutive celebration marking our country's independence.

"I am tickled pink, as my mom used to say, to be invited," he said. "I am glad we were able to work it out. I talk about Pekin all the time and the streak the town has for the Fourth. I can't think of any place that I'd rather spend my last Fourth of July as governor than with the people of Pekin."

Daniels said it's too early to tell, but he is thinking of riding his motorcycle to town and then driving it in the parade.

The parade's grand marshall will be Buster Crockett.

Crockett is a veteran of World War II and according to Pekin Community Betterment Organization President Anita Temple, is a perfect example of this year's theme, "For those who serve.".

"Buster Crockett is an honored Veteran and icon in Pekin and Washington County," she said. "He is a perfect person to represent our theme. Then to have an Honorary Grand Marshall like Governor Mitch Daniels who was elected by the people is just so exciting for our community celebration for 2012."

This is Daniels second appearance in the parade. He remembers making the route in the vehicle he rode in during his campaign.

"I think I drove my famous RV through the parade and we had a lot of fun and I've enjoyed telling people that we have the oldest Fourth of July celebration in America right here in Pekin, Indiana," he said.

The PCBO has done an outstanding job over the years in recognizing locals who have played a part in the community's history by having them serve as grand marshall. Crockett continues that tradition.

Adding the governor to the festivities though, should bring more notoriety from outside the area, especially considering the devastation parts of the area took during the tornado.

Daniels is entering the stretch run of his eight-year run, but said he isn't spending a lot of time looking back.

"I am trying to look forward and not back," he said. "I was out today (May 24) visiting some towns and people say a lot of very kind things. People tell me they are going to miss me and that's nice to hear. I had a meeting with several hundred members of the highway department today, as well, because we have a lot of big projects we are trying to get finished and I want every department to stay on task.

"I am resisting any temptation on looking back at least for a while."

Daniels was elected as the 49th Governor of the State of Indiana in 2004, in his first bid for any elected office. He was re-elected in 2008 to a second and final term, receiving more votes than

any candidate for any public office in the state's history.

Governor Daniels came from a successful career in business and government, holding numerous top management positions in both the private and public sectors. His work as CEO of the Hudson Institute and President of Eli Lilly and Company's North American Pharmaceutical Operations taught him the business skills he brought to state government. He also has served as Chief of Staff to Senator Richard Lugar, Senior Advisor to President Ronald Reagan and Director of the Office of Management and Budget under President George W. Bush.

Daniels' first legislative success created the public-private Indiana Economic Development Corporation to replace a failing state bureaucracy in the mission of attracting new jobs. In each of its first four years of existence, the agency broke all previous records for new jobs in the state, and was associated with more than $18 billion of new investment. In 2008, Site Selection magazine and CNBC both named Indiana as the Most Improved State for Business in the country, and the state is now near the top of every national ranking of business attractiveness.

On his first day in office, Governor Daniels created the first Office of Management and Budget to look for efficiencies and cost savings across state government. In 2005, he led the state to its first balanced budget in eight years and, without a tax increase, transformed the nearly $800 million deficit he inherited into an annual surplus of $370 million within a year. The governor also repaid hundreds of millions of dollars the state had borrowed from Indiana's public schools, state universities and local units of government in previous administrations, and reduced the state's overall debt by 40 percent. The second biennial budget replicated this fiscal discipline and built reserves equal to 10 percent of annual spending. Today, Indiana has a AAA credit rating (the first in state history) and the fewest state employees per capita in the U.S.

During his first term, Governor Daniels spearheaded a host of reforms aimed at improving the performance of state government. These changes and a strong emphasis on performance measurement have led to many state agencies, including the Bureau of Motor Vehicles, Department of Child Services, and Department of Correction winning national awards.

Governor Daniels' innovations include the 2006 lease of the Indiana Toll Road, the largest privatization of public infrastructure in the United States to date, generating nearly $4 billion for reinvestment in the state's record breaking 10-year transportation and infrastructure program. 2007 saw the enactment of the Healthy Indiana Plan to provide healthcare coverage for uninsured Hoosier adults, and a sweeping property tax reform in 2008 resulted in the biggest tax cut in Indiana history. Both initiatives received overwhelming bipartisan support. Today, Indiana has the lowest property taxes in the nation.

Many organizations have recognized the governor's leadership. In October 2010, Daniels received The Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation's Inaugural Medal for Distinguished Service to Education for efforts to reform education, including improvements to teacher preparation. In January 2011, the governor was one of three recipients selected to receive the first-ever Fiscy Award, presented for leadership and commitment to responsible financial stewardship by the non-partisan Fiscy Awards Committee. That summer, Daniels received the "Real Leader Award" by the national state budget watchdog group State Budget Solutions, which honored Indiana for its fiscal stewardship, long-term financial stability and use of reality-based budgeting. Daniels also received the "2011 Friend of the Family Award" from the Indiana Family Institute, who recognized the governor for his strong record of pro-family, pro-life and pro-faith actions taken as Indiana's chief executive.

The governor's conservation efforts have set aside record acreages of protected wetlands and wildlife habitats. In March of 2011, Daniels was a recipient of Wetland Conservation

Achievement Award from the national conservation organization Ducks Unlimited for “making land conservation a top priority and for preserving thousands of invaluable acres across the state for future generations.

Daniels earned a bachelor’s degree from the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University in 1971 and his law degree from Georgetown University in 1979.

Governor Daniels and his wife Cheri have four daughters: Meagan, Melissa, Meredith and Maggie.