



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **CENTURYLINK THANKSGIVING EVENING LIGHTING CEREMONY KICKS OFF 2013 HOLIDAY LIGHTS FESTIVAL**

### ***Lights Expanded to North Omaha, South Omaha for Third Year***

(OMAHA, Neb.) Nov. 12, 2013 - One of Omaha's most anticipated events of the holiday season, the annual CenturyLink Thanksgiving Lighting Ceremony will take place this year on Thursday, November 28, in the Gene Leahy Mall at 14th and Farnam. The illumination of the awe-inspiring display of hundreds of thousands of white lights is expected to draw approximately 10,000 people to Downtown Omaha, who will also be treated to a variety of musical performances including the choral group MasterSingers and the Jingle Brass Bells beginning at 5:30 p.m.

At 6 p.m., Omaha Mayor Jean Stothert will lead the crowd in a countdown to the 2013 lighting display, and 3,000 LED votive candles will be distributed to the first arrivals so these spectators can illuminate their candles at the same moment the lights go on. Trees throughout the Gene Leahy Mall and neighboring streets, plus the trees along 16th Street from Howard to Dodge Streets, and 10th Street from Douglas Street to Abbott Drive, will also be lit. Many downtown businesses and residences will feature lighting and holiday decorations as well. The lighting display will be turned on each evening from 5 p.m. until 1 a.m. through January 5, 2014.

“CenturyLink is proud to again be part of this meaningful holiday tradition in Omaha, which some families are now enjoying into a second generation,” Danny Pate, CenturyLink Vice President and General Manager for Nebraska, said. “We’re looking forward to kicking off the holiday season with the lighting ceremony and shining the light on hunger in partnership with ConAgra Foods.”

Coventry Health Care of Nebraska, Inc., is sponsoring the lighting display along Gene Leahy Mall on Douglas and Farnam Streets between 10th and 13th Streets during the Holiday Lights Festival period. The Gene Leahy Mall lights serve as a focal point and are considered the crown jewel of the entire array of downtown lights.

### **North and South Omaha Holiday Lights**

For the second year, the Holiday Lights will expand to North Omaha and South Omaha, thanks to the generosity of The Sherwood Foundation. Lights will shine bright in South Omaha at 24th Street between L and Q Streets and in North Omaha along a six-block area around 24th and Lake Streets. These trees will be illuminated each evening beginning Friday, November 29. A South Omaha lighting ceremony will take place Friday, November 29, at 6 p.m. at La Plaza de La Raza, 24th and N Streets. The official ceremonial tree lighting for the North Omaha displays will take place Friday, November 29, at 5 p.m. near 24th and Lake Streets.

### **Making Spirits Bright Holiday Concert**

Following the lighting ceremony, the Making Spirits Bright Holiday Concert will be presented at the Holland Performing Arts Center located at 13th and Douglas streets. Beginning at 7 p.m., the free concert will feature special guest vocalist Mary Carrick accompanied by the Nebraska Wind Symphony for holiday classics and sing-alongs. TD Ameritrade sponsors the Making Spirits Bright Concert. Mammel Foundation supports the concert.

### **Old Market Shopping and Dining**

Some of the Old Market’s finest shops, restaurants and pubs will be open after the Thanksgiving Lighting Ceremony. Also available will be horse-drawn carriage rides through Magical Journeys Carriage Service. Old Market merchants and restaurants open Thanksgiving evening include:

- 13th Street Coffee Co
- Aromas in the Old Market/Bliss Bakery
- Artists’ Cooperative Gallery
- Barry O’s Old Market Tavern
- Billy Frogg’s Grill & Bar
- City Limits
- Cubby’s Old Market
- CupCakes in Omaha
- Dubliner Pub
- Falling Water Grille at Embassy Suites
- Havana Cigar Bay
- Hollywood Candy
- Le Wonderment
- Liberty Tavern
- Magical Journeys Carriage Service
- Maria Sangria
- Michael's

- Moksha in the Passageway
- Nosh Restaurant and Wine Lounge
- Dining
- Old Chicago
- Old Market Candy Shop
- Passageway Gallery
- Scooters
- S.G. Roi Exceptional Tobaccos
- Tannenbaum
- Ted & Wally's Ice Cream
- The Tea Smith
- Toyko Sushi
- Yi's Designer Jewelry (in the Passageway)

### **Sponsors**

The Holiday Lights Festival is produced by Mayor Jean Stothert and the Downtown Omaha Inc. Foundation, and presented by ConAgra Foods, KMTV Action 3 News and Star 104.5. For more information, visit or [www.holidaylightsfestival.org](http://www.holidaylightsfestival.org).