



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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LIGHTING CEREMONY ON THANKSGIVING EVENING TURNS ON THE CHEER AND 2016 HOLIDAY LIGHTS FESTIVAL *North Omaha, South Omaha Historic Districts Also Illuminated*

(OMAHA, Neb.) Nov. 10, 2016 - One of Omaha's most anticipated events of the holiday season, the annual Thanksgiving Lighting Ceremony, will take place this year on Thursday, Nov. 24, in the Gene Leahy Mall at 14th and Farnam Streets. The illumination of the awe-inspiring display of thousands of white lights is expected to draw approximately 20,000 people to downtown Omaha, who will also be treated to a special performance by local duo Belles & Whistles beginning at 5:40 p.m.

At 6 p.m., Omaha Mayor Jean Stothert will lead the crowd in a countdown to the 2016 lighting display. Trees throughout the Gene Leahy Mall and neighboring streets will be lit, and inspired by the display, downtown businesses and residences traditionally bring out their own festive lighting and holiday decorations to add to the charm. The lighting display will be subsequently turned on each evening from 5 p.m. until 1 a.m. through Jan. 2, 2017.

Making Spirits Bright Holiday Concert

Following the Thanksgiving Lighting Ceremony, the Making Spirits Bright Holiday Concert, supported by the Mammel Foundation, 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 Drew Duncan accompanied by the Nebraska Wind Symphony for holiday classics and sing-alongs.

Old Market Shopping and Dining

Many 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 Journey's Carriage Service. Old Market merchants and restaurants open Thanksgiving evening are listed on the Holiday Lights Festival website.

North and South Omaha Holiday Lights

For the sixth year, the Holiday Lights will expand to North Omaha and South Omaha, thanks to the generosity of The Sherwood Foundation and The Lozier Foundation. Lights will shine along South Omaha's historic 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 the first weekend in December. A North Omaha lighting ceremony will take place Saturday, Dec. 3 at 5 p.m. near 24th and Lake Streets. The South Omaha lighting ceremony will also take place on Dec. 3 at 5:30 p.m. near 24th Street between N and O Streets.

Sponsors

The Holiday Lights Festival is produced by Mayor Jean Stothert and the Downtown Omaha Inc. Foundation, and presented by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska, KMTV 3 and STAR 104.

For more information, visit www.holidaylightsfestival.org.