



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **T-MOBILE LIGHTING CEREMONY THANKSGIVING EVENING COMMENCES 2017 HOLIDAY LIGHTS FESTIVAL** *North Omaha, South Omaha Historic Districts Also Illuminated*

(OMAHA, Neb.) Nov. 9, 2017 - One of Omaha's most anticipated events of the holiday season, the annual Thanksgiving Lighting Ceremony, will take place this year on Thursday, Nov. 23, in the Gene Leahy Mall at 14th and Farnam Streets. The awe-inspiring illumination 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 the Omaha Children's Choir beginning at 5:40 p.m.

At 6 p.m., Omaha Mayor Jean Stothert will lead the crowd in a countdown to the 2017 lighting display. Trees throughout the Gene Leahy Mall and neighboring streets will be lit. Inspired by the display, downtown businesses and residences traditionally bring out their own holiday lighting and decorations to add to the festive atmosphere. Those needing or requesting accommodations are welcome to view the lighting from the fourth floor of the W. Dale Clark Library at 215 S. 15th St. The lighting display will be subsequently turned on each evening from 5 p.m. until 1 a.m. through Jan. 1, 2018.

### **Making Spirits Bright Holiday Concert presented by Lincoln Financial Group**

Following the Thanksgiving Lighting Ceremony, the Making Spirits Bright Holiday Concert, presented by Lincoln Financial Group and supported by the Mammel Family Foundation, will take place 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 and “Omaha’s most versatile singer,” Camille Metoyer Moten, accompanied by the Nebraska Wind Symphony and directed by Keith Davis.

### **NRG Energy Ice Rink in The Capitol District**

Following the concert, attendees are encouraged to help “Shine the Light on Hunger” and skate at the NRG Energy Ice Rink at its new location in The Capitol District on 10th Street and Capitol Avenue. For the first time, the rink will be open Thanksgiving evening from 6 to 10 p.m. An \$8 admission fee (plus tax) includes skate rental with a portion of proceeds benefiting Food Bank for the Heartland. The NRG Energy Ice Rink in The Capitol District will be open November 21 – February 14, 2018.

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

Many of the Old Market’s finest shops, restaurants and pubs will be open after the Thanksgiving Lighting Ceremony. In addition, horse-drawn carriage rides by Magical Journey’s Carriage Service will also be available for a fee. Old Market merchants and restaurants open Thanksgiving evening are listed on the Festival’s website ([holidaylightsfestival.org](http://holidaylightsfestival.org)).

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

For the seventh 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. The North Omaha lighting ceremony will take place Saturday, Dec. 2, at 5 p.m. near 24th and Lake Streets. The South Omaha lighting ceremony will also take place on Dec. 2, 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 with media sponsors KMTV 3 News Now and STAR 104.5.

For more information, visit [www.holidaylightsfestival.org](http://www.holidaylightsfestival.org).