



**Media Contact:**

Kylie Vonnahme, Vic Gutman & Associates: (402) 345-5401 ext. 117, kvonnahme@vgagroup.com

**HOLIDAY LIGHTS FESTIVAL SHINES BRIGHT FOR 20<sup>TH</sup> YEAR**  
*Celebration Features Series of Five Community Activities in Downtown Omaha*

(OMAHA, Neb.) Nov. 14, 2019 – The Holiday Lights Festival, produced by Mayor Jean Stothert and Downtown Omaha Inc. Foundation, will celebrate its 20th year with a new twist in the downtown lighting display. Due to construction at the Gene Leahy Mall, this year’s lights will illuminate the Old Market and surrounding streets with white lights and garland from November 25 through January 5, with added special events as part of the *Holidays in the Old Market*. The display will be accented with LED snowflakes, window decor, and illuminated leaping reindeer in the heart of the Old Market. This year’s lights will span from 10th to 13th Streets, and from Harney to Jackson Streets.

The lights serve as the focal point of the Festival and stretch throughout the Old Market. The display also covers North and South Omaha along 24th Street. The lights shine nightly for six weeks to awe visitors.

“The Omaha community will enjoy the Holiday Lights Festival’s many family-friendly activities throughout the season,” said Roger Humphries, executive director of Downtown Omaha Inc. Foundation. “Festivalgoers can look forward to the KETV Family Festival, New Year’s Eve Fireworks Spectacular, Holidays in the Old Market, Sounds of the Season, and The Capitol District Ice Rink—with a portion of proceeds supporting the Shine the Light on Hunger campaign.”

An integral part of the Festival is the communitywide campaign to “Shine the Light on Hunger.” The campaign, supported by Conagra Brands Foundation, is a rallying call to leaders, businesses and families throughout the local community to raise food, funds and awareness to impact the issue of hunger in the Omaha metropolitan area. Conagra Brands Foundation set an ambitious goal of raising the equivalent of 1.75 million meals to support the hunger relief efforts led by Food Bank for the Heartland, a goal that can and will be achieved with the support of Omaha’s very generous community.

From November 14 through January 3, community members are encouraged to drop off nonperishable food and household items at collection barrels placed at Omaha-area locations, including Baker’s supermarkets. Monetary donations can be made online. To make a contribution or to learn about additional ways to support the campaign, visit [holidaylightsfestival.org](http://holidaylightsfestival.org).

Conagra Brands Foundation will once again provide a generous \$100,000 match of funds raised during the campaign, which includes a portion of proceeds from admission fees at The Capitol District Ice Rink.

Omaha’s Millennium Lights celebration was originally meant to be a singular, spectacular celebration as the calendar turned to the milestone year 2000. But the celebration endured as the Holiday Lights Festival and became an annual holiday season tradition that has expanded to encompass a series of festive activities and events beloved by the community.

## **Holiday Lights Festival Schedule:**

### **Holidays in the Old Market**

**Nov. 25-Jan. 5**

Holiday lights will be illuminated throughout the Old Market. The display will blanket the brick streets of the Old Market and surrounding streets with white lights and garland, with added accents including LED snowflakes, window décor and illuminated leaping reindeer. The lights will shine nightly from Nov. 25 through Jan. 5. As part of Holidays in the Old Market, special holiday activities, events and caroling will also take place. Visit [holidaylightsfestival.org](http://holidaylightsfestival.org) or [oldmarket.com/holidays](http://oldmarket.com/holidays) for event details.

### **The Capitol District Ice Rink**

**Friday, Dec. 6-Tuesday, Jan. 21**

The Capitol District Ice Rink on 10th Street and Capitol Avenue returns to entertain families and “Shine the Light on Hunger.” The rink will be open seven days a week from Dec. 6, 2019, through Jan. 21, 2020, with special holiday hours on Christmas Eve, New Year’s Eve, and during OPS winter break. The rink is closed Christmas Day. Visit [holidaylightsfestival.org](http://holidaylightsfestival.org) or [omahaicerink.com](http://omahaicerink.com) for a complete schedule and hours.

A \$10 admission fee includes skate rental, although patrons may bring their own skates. As part of the Shine the Light on Hunger campaign, a portion of the admission fee will be matched by a \$100,000 gift from Conagra Brands Foundation to support Food Bank for the Heartland.

### **Sounds of the Season**

**Saturdays, November 30-New Year’s Eve**

As part of Holidays in the Old Market, Sounds of the Season showcases local choral groups ranging from school-based youth choirs to seasoned professionals. Performances take place in the Old Market at various locations. A schedule of performances is available online at [holidaylightsfestival.org](http://holidaylightsfestival.org).

### **KETV Family Festival Sponsored by Lincoln Financial Group**

**Sunday, Dec. 1, noon-5 p.m.**

The Family Festival features an afternoon of free family fun. Six downtown arts and cultural institutions offer free admission and hands-on activities for the entire family from simple crafts to horse rides to a visit with Santa. Visitors of all ages can also enjoy refreshments and family-friendly entertainment. Free trolley service provided by Ollie the Trolley connects all participating locations.

### **New Year’s Eve Fireworks Spectacular Sponsored by Wells Fargo**

**New launch and viewing location!**

**Tuesday, Dec. 31, 7 p.m.**

The last signature event of the 2019 Holiday Lights Festival is the New Year’s Eve Fireworks Spectacular. Due to the Gene Leahy Mall construction, the fireworks spectacular has a new location near CHI Health Center and TD Ameritrade Park. Free parking to view the show is in lots A, B and C of the CHI Health Center (lots open to the public at 6 p.m.). For additional viewing areas, visit [holidaylightsfestival.org](http://holidaylightsfestival.org). The show features a professionally choreographed display of fireworks designed by J&M Displays to a themed “One-hit Wonders” musical accompaniment. Viewers can tune in as they watch the show from the warmth of their vehicles. After the show, head to The Capitol District Ice Rink to skate – a portion of proceeds benefit Food Bank for the Heartland.

### **Sponsors**

The Holiday Lights Festival is produced by Mayor Jean Stothert and the Downtown Omaha Inc. Foundation with media sponsors KETV Channel 7 and STAR 104.5.

*Event sponsor* Conagra Brands.

*Shining Star sponsors* include Douglas County Board of Commissioners; Lamar Outdoor Advertising; The Sherwood Foundation; Union Pacific; City of Omaha, Lincoln Financial Group and Wells Fargo.

*Radiant Glow sponsors* include Ag Processing Inc.; Anonymous; Applied Underwriters, Inc.; Big Red Keno; Broadmoor; Centris Federal Credit Union; Daake; Fiserv; Gavilon; Jacobs; Kiewit Companies Foundation; The Lozier Foundation; Mammel Family Foundation; Moglia Family Foundation; Omaha Public Power District; Pinnacle Bank; Valmont Industries, Inc.; and WoodmenLife.

*Bright Light sponsors* include Baird Holm LLP; CHI Healthcare; Circo Enterprises; Gallup, Inc.; Great Western Bank; Greater Omaha Chamber; Kutak Rock LLP; Lund Company; MECA; Noddle Companies; Physicians Mutual; Security National Bank; Tenaska; and Wade Trim.

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

### **About Holiday Lights Festival**

The idea of decorating Omaha with holiday lights had been discussed by downtown advocates for many years. The occasion of the millennium provided the impetus for the project. In 1999, a coalition of city officials, corporations and foundations chose to present a legacy gift of holiday lights to the City of Omaha as the Millennium Lights celebration. That first year, more than 60,000 people came downtown to witness the lighting ceremony. Because the lights were so well received by the public, the Downtown Omaha Inc. Foundation was established the following year to continue Millennium Lights as the Holiday Lights Festival. The Shine the Light on Hunger campaign, sponsored by Conagra Brands Foundation and in partnership with Food Bank for the Heartland, was added to the Holiday Lights Festival in 2007.