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Milwaukee Holiday Lights Festival brightens downtown visits November 17, 2011 – January 1, 2012

MILWAUKEE, Wis. – The 13th Annual Milwaukee Holiday Lights Festival will illuminate downtown streets and parks Nov. 17 to Jan. 1. Thousands of lights, dozens of animated displays, sparkling rooflines, brilliant wreaths and a stretch of Moravian stars along Wisconsin Avenue will electrify the city for the six-week festival.

“Downtown Milwaukee is a premier holiday destination,” said Beth Nicols, executive director of Milwaukee Downtown, Business Improvement District #21. “The Milwaukee Holiday Lights Festival bundles all the season’s happenings and accents our outdoor environment with brilliant light displays. From performing arts and sporting events to concerts and exhibitions, not to mention unique retail destinations and restaurants, downtown Milwaukee offers a little something for everyone,” said Nicols.

Mickey Mouse Makes His Way To Milwaukee

The Milwaukee Holiday Lights Festival will kick off its season with an exclusive appearance by Mickey Mouse on Nov. 17 at the Milwaukee County Historical Society, 910 N. Old World Third St., in Pere Marquette Park. Radio Disney AM 1640, part of the #1 radio network for kids, tweens and families, will distribute 450 wristbands beginning at 2:30 p.m. Everyone meeting Mickey Mouse, including moms and dads, must have a wristband. The meet and greet will take place from 3:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. and include dancing and singing from the Radio Disney Road Crew.

Following the meet and greet, the Milwaukee Holiday Lights Festival Kick-Off Extravaganza will light up the night with a ceremony in Pere Marquette Park. As the official start of Milwaukee’s holiday season, the night includes a festive family fashion show at 5:30 p.m. and a holiday variety show complete with fireworks at 6:00 p.m. After the ceremonial switch-flipping, fest-goers are invited to tour the sights with free Jingle Bus rides. For more information on the Mickey Mouse Meet & Greet, visit www.RadioDisney.com/milwaukee. Entertainment may be subject to change without notice.

Ever-Changing Themes Transform Three Downtown Parks

Each season, three parks beam with a kaleidoscope of color. Cathedral Square Park, located at North Jefferson and East Wells streets, will again host “Community Spirit Park” as over 60 metro Milwaukee schools adorn fresh evergreens with handmade ornaments reflecting a class theme. The energy efficient LED lit trees will surround a 50-foot tree of ever-changing red, blue and green lights.

Pere Marquette Park, located at West State and Old World Third streets, will host “Let Us Entertain You” with circus-themed decorations and Zeidler Union Square, located at West Michigan between 3rd and 4th streets, will offer “Holiday Sweet Treats” with gingerbread men and candy canes. Both are new themes for the parks.

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Annual Jingle Bus Connects Guests to Festive Décor

From storefront decorations and roofline lighting to park and harp lamp decorations, visitors can experience the Festival's myriad of color aboard the convenient Jingle Bus. For \$1 per person, this Coach USA bus will take visitors on a 40-minute tour throughout downtown. A friendly Public Service Ambassador will also be on board to acquaint visitors with downtown attractions.

The Jingle Bus will operate Thursdays through Sundays, Nov. 18 through Dec. 30 from 6 to 9 p.m. from the Plankinton Arcade at The Shops of Grand Avenue, the Festival's Warming House location at 161 W. Wisconsin Avenue.

Hot cocoa, coffee and cookies will be served to awaiting Jingle Bus riders. Coloring books will also be distributed to the little ones. Discounted parking will be available at The Shops of Grand Avenue attached parking structure with a Jingle Bus ticket validation. *Please note the Jingle Bus will not operate Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year's Eve or New Year's Day.*

Wisconsin Avenue – A Stunning Stretch of Starry Sights

Wisconsin Avenue, downtown Milwaukee's grandest stretch, will shine bright with double wreaths adorned in blue and white LED lights on the avenue's harp lamps, and 6-foot Moravian stars suspended above each intersection.

Official Holiday Ornament Preserves History

For the eleventh year in a row, the Milwaukee Holiday Lights Festival has preserved a historic piece of Milwaukee with a timeless, limited edition ornament of a downtown Milwaukee icon. The 2011 edition will feature the Gas Light Building. Past editions in the series include the Milwaukee Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse, Milwaukee County Historical Society, Northwestern Mutual, Milwaukee Public Central Library, a Downtown Trolley, Milwaukee's City Hall, the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist, Milwaukee Art Museum, Pabst Theater and Cudahy Tower.

The cost of the Gas Light ornament is \$19.95 plus shipping and handling. Past editions in the series are available for \$24.95 plus shipping and handling. Call 414.220.4700 or visit www.MilwaukeeHolidayLights.com for details.

For additional information on the Milwaukee Holiday Lights Festival, visit www.MilwaukeeHolidayLights.com or call 414.220.4700.

To obtain images of the Milwaukee Holiday Lights Festival or arrange interviews, contact Rachel Wezek at 414.224.9424 or Rachel@ebadvertising.com.

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About Milwaukee Downtown, BID #21

Milwaukee Downtown, Business Improvement District #21, is an organization established in 1998 to support the interests of the downtown Milwaukee business community. Created through private sector leadership, Milwaukee Downtown is a management district organization that oversees 120 square blocks representing approximately 400 property owners in the center of downtown Milwaukee. The organization funds specific initiatives aimed at creating a clean, safe and friendly downtown.