



MILWAUKEE HOLIDAY LIGHTS FESTIVAL

2020 Milwaukee Holiday Lights Festival Recap

For 22 seasons, the Milwaukee Holiday Lights Festival has made spirits bright with its animated sculptures, interactive displays and twinkling street décor. Despite the challenges of COVID-19, this festive backdrop continued to deliver oohs and aahs in a safe, “snowcially-distanced” environment, November 19, 2020 – January 1, 2021. Visitors created holiday memories by dropping letters into Santa’s Mailbox, picking up Jingle Joy bags, and enjoying self-guided Jingle Bus tours. Here are a few highlights from the 2020 season.

200 LAKEFRONT SPECTACLE BY FIREFLY DRONE SHOWS CREATES BUZZ 200 DRONES FILL THE SKY, CAPTURING 1.5 MILLION VIEWS

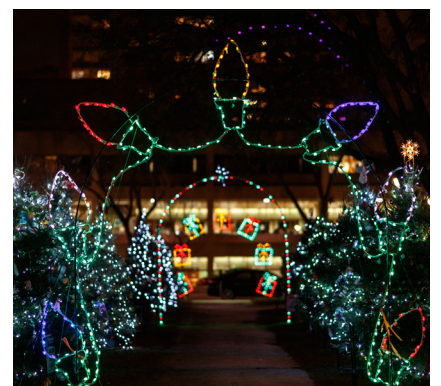
In a creative pivot, a 200-drone show was filmed at Lakeshore State Park on Nov. 7. The show featured holiday symbols programmed to music by Detroit-based Firefly Drone Shows. Filming was kept under wraps to build momentum for the Festival’s kickoff finale on WISN 12. Following its premiere, the show garnered over 1.5 million views across social media platforms. A behind-the-scenes video of the production netted over 79,000 views.

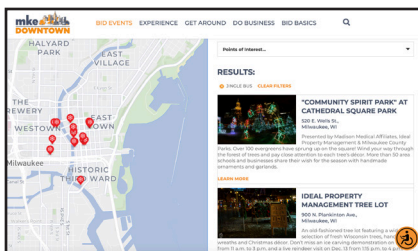
64,000 KICKING OFF THE SEASON SAFELY THROUGH PRE-RECORDED PROGRAMMING 64,000 AT-HOME VIEWERS TUNE IN TO RING IN THE SEASON

The Milwaukee Holiday Lights Festival Kickoff continued to amaze at-home viewers with a special broadcast on WISN 12 presented by Stein’s Garden & Home. The show’s lineup included performances from past shows, plus the pre-recorded drone show as the finale. More than 56,850 viewers tuned into the broadcast on Nov. 19. Meanwhile, an encore showing on Dec. 24 netted an additional 7,100 viewers.

500,000 DECORATIONS REMAIN THE TOP ATTRACTION 500,000+ LIGHTS SPRINKLED THROUGHOUT DOWNTOWN

“Community Spirit Park” at Cathedral Square Park, “Tinsel Town Express” at Pere Marquette Park and “Polar Plaza powered by We Energies” at Zeidler Union Square continued to delight guests with larger-than-life sculptures and a collective half million lights. Wisconsin Avenue shone bright with its succession of cascading chandeliers. Meanwhile, the mood at “Community Spirit Park” carried on as over 55 trees were decorated by schools and community organizations. New in 2020, four storefronts were decorated by Retailworks to tout retail uses for the vacant spaces.





VIRTUAL & SELF-GUIDED JINGLE BUS TOURS LINK MUST-SEE SCENES WITH SUGGESTIONS FOR SAFE ACTIVITIES

2,625 JINGLE BUS TOUR DOWNLOADS

Visitors were acquainted with downtown's lights and sights via a free, self-guided audio tour available on the iHeartRadio app where five episodes were available in English and Spanish. The podcast netted 12,450 impressions. Over 2,500 downloads occurred on the English podcast and 65 downloads occurred on the Spanish version. Must-see destinations were also available for exploration on an interactive map at www.milwaukeeholidaylights.com, which had over 6,600 pageviews.



JINGLE JOY BAGS PROVIDE FAMILIES WITH A LIGHTS AND SWEET DELIGHTS EXPERIENCE

465 JINGLE JOY BAGS PURCHASED

The Festival partnered with Milwaukee Food & City Tours to create grab-and-go treat bags, which featured goodies from local businesses. Bags were \$15 and were available for pre-order or day of, while supplies lasted. 465 Jingle Joy bags were distributed Thursdays through Saturdays, December 3 – 19, at the pop-up drive-thru at Zeidler Union Square.

SANTA'S MAILBOX CONTINUES TO CONNECT GENERATIONS

1,900 LETTERS PERSONALIZED TO BOYS & GIRLS

Thanks to Educators Credit Union and Serving Older Adults, over 1,900 letters were personalized and mailed to children in our community. Letters were received at Santa's Mailbox in Cathedral Square Park and at a new North Pole PO Box for families who could not make it downtown.



DOWNTOWN LANDMARKS PRESERVED IN ORNAMENT SERIES

557 HOAN BRIDGE ORNAMENTS PURCHASED, 48% INCREASE FROM PREVIOUS YEAR

Milwaukee Holiday Lights Festival ornaments continue to be one-of-a-kind keepsakes. Each year features an iconic downtown landmark cast in pewter. The 2020 edition was the Hoan Bridge. Over the course of the season, 830 ornaments were purchased from the 20-edition collection.

44-PAGE GUIDE HIGHLIGHTS SHOPPING, DINING AND ENTERTAINMENT DESTINATIONS

5,000 BROCHURES DISTRIBUTED

The Festival continued to produce a comprehensive events guide that also detailed shopping, dining, and entertainment destinations. The new horizontal format was made available online and mailed to Milwaukee Downtown's database of stakeholders, past fest goers, and friends of the organization.

SANTA, MRS. CLAUS, AND LOCAL ARTIST SARAH FIERKE

ADD TO DOWNTOWN'S MERRIMENT

2 CAVALCADES WITH THE CLAUSES

Festival goers received a socially distanced glimpse of Santa Claus aboard the Historic Third Ward firetruck on select nights in December.

PAID MEDIA REACHED FAMILIES AT HOME, IN THE CAR, AND AT WORK

3.6+ MILLION PAID MEDIA IMPRESSIONS

The Festival continued to partner with WISN 12 and 95.7 WRIT as its official media partners. Other print, digital and out-of-home outlets were utilized to target women 35 – 64 within a 15-mile radius of downtown.

PUBLIC RELATIONS BUILDS CONFIDENCE IN SAFE PRACTICES

3.7+ MILLION EARNED MEDIA IMPRESSIONS ACCRUED

Throughout the six-week festival, over \$389,600 in earned media coverage was obtained through broadcast, print and web outlets, accumulating more than 3.7 million impressions.

SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENTS SOAR AS FAMILIES SEEK WINTER ACTIVITIES

2.6+ MILLION IMPRESSIONS GENERATED

4,341 FOLLOWERS GAINED

598,637 VIDEO MINUTES VIEWED

74,482 REACHED IN THE LATINX COMMUNITIES

837 ENGAGEMENTS IN THE LATINX COMMUNITIES

Social media is a vital tool for informing consumers and demonstrating safe, socially-distanced activities. During the course of the season, the organic campaign generated 2,693,938 impressions and 311,592 engagements! In addition, the Festival partnered with Estamos Unidos to develop a vlog series geared toward the Latinx communities. The videos delivered 57,080 views, 416 shares, and 837 engagements.



More information available at www.milwaukeeholidaylights.com. For sponsorship opportunities, contact info@milwaukeedowntown.com.

