



City of Arts & Innovation

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Nov. 17, 2016

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New Rides, Attractions Added to Award-Winning Riverside Festival of Lights

24th annual event kicks off Nov. 25, continues through Jan. 7 in historic downtown Riverside

RiversideFestivalofLights.com

RIVERSIDE, Calif. – New rides and attractions will be featured during the 24th Annual Riverside Festival of Lights holiday program, which kicks off Friday, Nov. 25 with a spectacular fireworks display and continues through Jan. 7 in beautiful downtown Riverside.

Anchoring the event once again this year is the annual Festival of Lights Switch-On Ceremony, which marks the beginning of the holiday season. The ceremony, produced by The Mission Inn Hotel & Spa, the Greater Riverside Chambers of Commerce and the City of Riverside, is scheduled to kick off at 4:30 p.m. Nov. 25, the Friday after Thanksgiving.

The event draws more than 75,000 visitors from all over Southern California to the corner of Orange Street and Mission Inn Avenue, in the shadow of the historic Mission Inn Hotel & Spa. After a welcome and brief remarks from local dignitaries, the millions of holiday lights spread out around the Mission Inn and the surrounding area are switched on, and the downtown sky erupts in a massive fireworks show.

“The Festival of Lights is one of the many things that make Riverside such a special place,” Mayor Rusty Bailey said. “The Switch-On Ceremony is an annual tradition for many Riversiders and Inland Southern California residents who gather with their family and friends for an illuminating night of fun, fellowship and holiday cheer.”

Photos and video of past events can be found at: <http://www.riversideca.gov/fol/connect.asp#gallery>

The Festival of Lights has taken Riverside to a new level in the past few years, attracting people of all ages from across the region. Riverside's Festival of Lights has won top honors as America's Best Holiday Festival (2015) and America's Best Public Lights Display (2014) by the USA TODAY 10Best Readers' Choice Contest.

In an effort to continually improve the event, new attractions for 2016 include:

- Timeless Train Rides -- Take a train ride through Downtown Riverside on this new attraction! With 24 seats and a unique route along the pedestrian mall, this will definitely become an annual tradition.
- Century Wheel -- Take in all the sights of the Festival of Lights from atop a 15-gondola Century Wheel. The wheel is covered with more than 100,000 lights, but because they are LED lights, it only takes 7 amps to light it up – that is less than a toaster!
- A Colorful Carousel -- You'll see a variety of animals as you enjoy a ride on this beautiful 36-animal Carousel. Lions and tigers and bears – oh my!

“The Festival of Lights is a hallmark of the holiday season every year in Riverside,” Mayor Pro Tem Andy Melendrez said. “It’s exciting to see this event grow and improve every year as it becomes an even bigger draw around Southern California.”

Other returning favorites this year include:

- Magical Moments with Santa Claus -- Treasure the memories you'll make this year at the Festival of Lights with a commemorative photo with Santa Claus.
- Tasty Treats and Holiday Drinks to Satisfy Your Taste Buds -- From delicious donuts, tasty popcorn, savory crepes and gourmet candies, we have a delectable delight for every member of the family!
- Seasonal Music and Entertainment to Warm Your Heart -- From a children’s choir to solo performances, these special acts will fill the air with seasonal favorites.
- Art Is Alive In Downtown Riverside -- The Artisan Collective will be back for the 2016 season! This innovative arts market provides the community with an opportunity to purchase original art from local artists, hear local musicians and participate in free art workshops. The Artisans Collective will begin Nov. 26th and be available Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights.

Reserve your Festival of Lights parking at ClickAndPark.com or at RiversideFestivalofLights.com. Parking will be \$10 for a reserved space and \$5 on the day of the event in public structures and lots.

Sponsorship opportunities with the Festival of Lights are still available. With more than 480,000 event visitors, the Riverside Festival of Lights provides extraordinary opportunities for business exposure through sponsorship. Through various sponsorship opportunities, businesses can benefit from event signage, print distribution, radio and online promotions.