

Charlestown transforming into Christmas City, Light Up set Friday

Written by Janna Ross

Wednesday, 27 November 2013 09:32 - Last Updated Wednesday, 27 November 2013 09:33

The anticipation is mounting as the event is getting closer and closer. Charlestown Mayor Bob Hall has kept his Facebook friends up to date on the countdown, now just a couple days away, the excitement is in overdrive! Light Up Charlestown is set to kick off the Christmas season in Charlestown this Friday in Greenway Park. This year the Christmas fun in Charlestown will bring new options for families to make memories including ice skating and train rides. The ever popular traditions of carriage rides and the spectacular animated light display on the city square are returning plus the second annual Christmas parade.

LIGHT UP CHARLESTOWN

Light Up Charlestown will begin at 6 p.m. in Greenway Park on Friday, November 29.

Festivities leading up to the Light Up at 7 p.m. will be entertainment by David Broughton, Pleasant Ridge and Jonathan Jennings Elementary School Choirs, Jenna Daniel and the community countdown of Christmas Carols leading up to the lights!

This is the 13th year for Light Up Charlestown. The event has grown from a small Light Up on the city square when Mayor Bob Hall and Clerk Treasurer Donna Coomer worked with the Charlestown Beautification Committee to begin the Christmas tradition to the largest Christmas Lights Display in Southern Indiana.

“This year new on the square for the computerized Christmas Lights Display is the Peanuts Gang. Angry Birds are back along with other favorites,” stated Rhonda Davidson, Director of the Charlestown Parks Department. “We have added to the event and it is bigger and better than ever!”

And, of course, Light Up would not be complete without the arrival of the special guest. Santa Claus will again visit Charlestown and arrive all the way from the North Pole during Light Up

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festivities. After Light Up, Santa will be in his house on the city square to talk to local children every Thursday, Friday and Saturday thru December 21 from 6 to 9 p.m.

During Light Up Charlestown and the remaining nights of family fun, the Concession Stand in Greenway Park will be open selling hot chocolate and hot cider.

After Light Up, the Christmas lights display will be on nightly thru January 3 from 6 to 11 p.m.

Carriage Rides will also be available on Light Up night on a first-come, first-served basis. The first carriage ride on Light Up, Friday, November 29, will leave at 7:20 p.m. Rides will continue to 10 p.m.

Also, during Light Up the Charlestown Middle School Cheer Squad will be hosting a bake sale to raise money for competition and the Charlestown High School Boys Basketball team and Coach Sean Smith will be volunteering/helping during Light Up for the fifth year.

Another addition to this year's Christmas spectacular in Charlestown will be at the new Family Activities Park.

FAMILY ACTIVITIES PARK

The Family Activities Park will be decorated with lights and Christmas music will be playing in the background as local families add a new tradition to their yearly Christmas memories in Charlestown. The skating rink has a new theme as ice skating will be offered for the first time this holiday season.

"We are very excited to offer ice skating this year. We can't wait to see all the kids learning how to ice skate," Davidson added.

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The cost for ice skating will be \$5 including skate rental while children two years and younger will be free.

Ice skating will be offered nightly from 6 to 9 p.m. For additional hours please check the City of Charlestown website at www.cityofcharlestown.com.

The new Charlestown Express Train will be departing and returning to the Family Activities Park. The new train will offer a new way to view the beautiful Christmas Lights displays throughout the city. Train rides will be held nightly from 6 to 9 p.m. Rides depart every 30 minutes. The ride will depart the Family Activities Park and travel down Park Street, up Market Street to the city square and back down Market Street, up Park Street, back to the Family Activities Park. The cost of a trip on the Charlestown Express will be \$5 per person with children two and under free. Tickets are sold at the Family Activities Park.

The Charlestown Beautification Committee has worked to complete the decorating at the Family Activities Park. The concession stand will also be open during the Christmas season selling cold weather favorites. A new offer for the season will be S'mores kits so families will be able to purchase the kits and make their own S'mores to help make lasting family memories.

CARRIAGE RIDES

Carriage Rides have become one of the most popular events during the Christmas season in Charlestown. Carriage rides will be available on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays through Saturday, December 21 from 6 to 10 p.m. Reservations are strongly recommended and available at www.cityofcharlestown.com

The cost of the Carriage Rides will be \$5 per person with children two and under free. Tickets will be sold at the Concession Stand in Greenway Park. Rides will depart and return to Greenway Park.

ADOPT-A-LOT

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Motorists traveling along Market Street in Charlestown may have noticed vehicles parked along the sidewalk on Market Street toward Greenway Park. The location used to host the beautiful larger than life Christmas Cards from local businesses and families. This year a new idea has replaced the Christmas Cards. Now this prime location leading to the Christmas display in Christmas City will be separate 40 foot sections designed and decorated by local businesses, organizations and families. The themes for the lots have been chosen by the different groups and families. Each group is vying for a vote in a little Christmas decorating fun. The Adopt-A-Lot fun will allow citizens to vote for their favorite lot following Light Up thru December 15. Votes may be made by visiting the city website.

CHRISTMAS PARADE

The second annual Charlestown Christmas Parade will light the night on Saturday, December 14. The parade will feature whimsical lights on all entries. Some will also include beautiful Christmas music and possibly even animation! The parade will begin at 6 p.m. from Charlestown High School, 1 Pirate Place in Charlestown. The parade route will be down Park Street to Market Street toward the City Square.

If you would like to participate in the Christmas Parade please contact Rhonda Davidson at 812-256-3422, ext. 328 or e-mail Rhondad@cityofcharlestown.com.

Participants in the parade must arrive at Charlestown High School by 5:30 p.m. on parade day, Saturday, December 14.

“With everything happening in Charlestown now through the end of the Christmas season, we are truly the Christmas City!,” Davidson added. “We are wanting to help families make lasting memories for their kids. Mayor Bob (Hall) always says the best thing about Christmas in the City is to help create family memories. That is the motto for the Parks Department, Creating Family Memories, that is what we are trying to do with everything we do in town.”

Davidson concluded, “You can bring your family to Charlestown for a Family Fun Night. A family of four can spend the entire evening in town and ice skate, enjoy a train ride and carriage

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ride for just \$60. That is a great deal that will create lasting memories!”

Charlestown is ready to help make your Christmas memories and traditions continue this year. Light Up this Friday will only kick off the celebration in the Christmas City. For up to date information and scheduling of special events such as the carriage rides, please visit the City of Charlestown website at www.cityofcharlestown.com.