

Shops at the Old Mill District kick off holiday season

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

Beginning Nov. 23: Celebrity Santas, Trees of Joy, Carriage Rides & more are planned

BEND, Ore. — The Shops at the Old Mill District will open a festive holiday season on November 23 at 10 a.m. as the first of 40 Celebrity Santas are available for pictures with families and children. Wagons Ho will bring in carriages from 2-6 p.m. for rides to view holiday lights and decorations throughout The Old Mill District. Also on the 23rd, the Bend Rotary — Trees of Joy — to benefit children and families in need will be on display. Soon to follow in late November, a 25-foot — Light up a Life — tree to benefit the Hospice Center will be up in Center Plaza, located between the Gap and Anthony's Homeport Restaurant at the footbridge.

Celebrity Santas have been recruited from city, county and state officials as well as local personalities. Children can come for photos with Santa in the space between Jill and Victoria's Secret from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. November 23-24, November 30-December 1, 7-8, 14-15 and 19-23. Photographs by John Dotson's Photography cost \$10 for one and \$15 for two. Pets are welcome.

As part of the November 23 holiday kickoff, Wagons Ho will give carriage rides to shoppers who would like old-fashioned transportation to view the holiday decorations on more than 47 shops and restaurants. Rides will be available from 2-6 p.m. November 23-24, November 30-December 1, 7-8, 14-15 and 19-23. There is no charge for the rides, and tips and donations will benefit the Kids Center, a local non-profit dedicated to the education, treatment and prevention of child abuse.

Trees of Joy are a longtime tradition with the Bend Rotary. Trees will be decorated with tags containing Christmas gift wishes from families in need in the community. Shoppers can take a tag, purchase a gift and return the tagged and wrapped gift to the tent in Center Plaza. Volunteers will collect all the gifts by December 13 and deliver them to the families. Each year, the trees bring Christmas cheer to thousands of families in the Bend area.

A highlight of the holiday celebration will be the — Light up a Life — tree-lighting ceremony

December 6 from 5-7:30 p.m. Glass sculptor Rich Dewilde has created a massive blown-glass star called "The Eternal Flame" to top off the tree as well as several smaller versions of the star which can be purchased to benefit HospiceCenter. Throughout the holidays, ornaments are available at The Ticket Mill, The Lubbesmeyer Studio & Gallery and online at www.hospicecenterbend.org. When an ornament is purchased it is done in memory or in honor of loved ones. Names of the people for whom ornaments have been purchased will be read during the lighting ceremony on December 6. Bagpipers and a children's choir will entertain.

Other holiday events include the Smooth Finish Barbershop Quartet entertaining throughout the shopping area from 3:30-5 pm on December 8 and from 5:30-7 pm on December 13; and the December 8 Annual Jingle Bell Run/Walk to benefit the Arthritis Foundation. The walk begins with a 9:30 registration downtown, passes through the Old Mill District and finishes in Columbia Park. Entrants can register at www.arthritis.org.

Shopping at The Old Mill District is open Monday-Saturday, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Sunday 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. For complete information on The Shops at the Old Mill District, visit www.theoldmill.com.

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