

Lighted parade will kick off holidays

By Erica Pennington epennington@beloitdailynews.com | Posted: Monday, November 11, 2013 4:00 pm

Holiday decorations are now gracing the windows of some downtown Beloit businesses — a sure sign that it is nearly time for the 21st annual holiday lighted parade on Nov. 29.

Crystal Buhmeyer, program coordinator with the Downtown Beloit Association, says the organization hopes to have an even bigger and better event this year, and there are lots of activities planned for the entire family.

“We’re always looking to grow and we’re hoping to have at least 40 floats in the parade,” she said. “The event kind of sparks off the holiday season in the Stateline Area.”

Holiday music will begin playing downtown with help from Tim Bremel of 1230AM at First National Bank Plaza at the corner of State Street and Grand Avenue around 5 p.m. At 6 p.m. Santa Claus will arrive for the tree lighting ceremony.

This year’s parade is anticipated to begin at about 6:15 p.m. with the route beginning at Third Street and following Grand Avenue to Horace White Park.

Floats will be put together by non-profit organizations, businesses and individuals.

Entry forms for floats will be accepted at the Downtown Beloit Association, 500 Public Ave., through Nov. 15.

“Just give us a call at 608-365-0150 and we can help with the registration,” Buhmeyer said.

Entry “fees” for non-profits will be five non-perishable food items to donate to Caritas. Businesses will donate a total of 10 items.

“Any members of the public who want to make a food donation are welcome to do so,” Buhmeyer added. Items can be dropped off at the staging area on Third Street.

For the first time in several years a contest will be held to determine the best floats. Participants will be able to win a cash prize for their dazzling displays.

A first place prize of \$100 and second place prize of \$50 will be awarded in both the non-profit and business categories.

“We’re hoping the contest encourages more people to participate and put emphasis on creating some really wonderful floats,” Buhmeyer said.

Following the conclusion of the lighted parade, Santa and Mrs. Claus will visit Turtle Creek Bookstore, 444 E. Grand Avenue, for pictures with the little ones.

The holiday lighted parade always takes place rain (snow) or shine. The Salvation Army will have a free hot chocolate station at First National Bank Plaza and those looking for a hot bowl of Chili can visit Sud's O'Hanahans from 4-8 p.m.

"The Stateline Boys and Girls Club will be doing a fundraiser at Suds, 435 E. Grand Ave.," Buhmeyer said.

For more information, visit www.downtownbeloit.com or "Like" the Downtown Beloit Association on Facebook.