

## Holiday Lighted Parade brightens winter night

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A light blanket of snow and the twinkling white lights of this year's First National Bank Plaza Christmas Tree brought holiday cheer to downtown Beloit on Friday night.

The 22nd annual Downtown Beloit Association Holiday Lighted Parade drew hundreds of families, including many whose children eagerly waited for Santa Claus to make his grand appearance.

"We have Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer here and Mrs. Claus too," said Downtown Beloit Association Executive Director Shauna El-Amin as Santa Claus appeared atop First National Bank and Trust.

Elaine Ribarich, branch manager at First National Bank, was pleased with the event turnout and was happy to see many children wearing the glow necklaces the bank provided.

"I have lived and worked in Beloit forever and (First National Bank) is so glad to be a part of this parade," she said. "It is a wonderful community event."

The festive evening kicked off with a Stateline Boys & Girls Club chili and hot dog fundraiser at Suds O'Hanahans, which was followed by music and free hot chocolate for chilly parade goers.

Santa Claus helped light the Christmas Tree at First National Bank Plaza before more than 30 unique lighted floats began traveling along Grand Avenue.

This year's floats ranged from featuring characters of the Disney hit movie 'Frozen,' to gingerbread houses, tap dancers, baton twirlers and even lighted sleds pulled by fluffy white dogs.

Beloiters Mariah Davis and Amos Hummell brought 4-year-old Aubriella to the Holiday Lighted Parade for the very first time this year after having a very busy Thanksgiving.

"We thought we should bring Aubriella and get into the Christmas spirit since we have been out Black Friday shopping since yesterday," Davis said.

Five-year-old Camryn Ritzert needed no help getting into the mood for the holidays.

As soon as the First National Bank Plaza Christmas Tree was lit, Ritzert was ready to dance in the snow and pose in front of the tree.

"I've been good this year and I want to get a drum kit from Santa Claus," he said.



### Hangin' with Rudolph

Beloiter Mariah Davis (left) takes a picture of Amos Hummell and four-year-old Aubriella with Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer at the Downtown Beloit Association Holiday Lighted Parade on Friday night.

First place in this year's parade float awards went to Rising Stars, second place to Marx Dance Academy and third place to Beloit Body & Fender in the business category.

In the non-profit category of the competition, the Beloit Bombshells won first place, followed by Stateline Pregnancy Clinic and Janesville-Beloit Kennel Club in second and third place, respectively.

"The parade is great and brings in the Christmas season while also kicking off the holiday shopping season," El-Amin said. "Small Business Saturday is Nov. 29, so shops downtown will be participating with great deals."