

# Santa, songs and sparkle highlight 24th Grand Lighted Holiday Parade

By ZAC BELLMAN Staff writer | Posted: Saturday, November 26, 2016 10:00 am

BELOIT — The 24th Annual Grand Lighted Holiday Parade brought light to Grand Avenue and smiles to the faces of residents young and old, as Santa made an appearance to ring in the transition to the holiday season.

Residents from all over the Stateline Area gathered to experience their first, or in some cases 24th, Lighted Holiday Parade. Visitors to downtown Beloit also enjoyed hot chocolate and a visit with Santa and Mrs. Claus after the parade.

Angela Dickmann brought her children Chase, 5, and Brooklyn, 4, from Rochelle, Illinois, for the first time after hearing about the event on Facebook.

When asked if they were excited to see Santa Claus, both children replied empathetically.

"Yeah!" said Brooklyn and Chase.

Fellow first-timers from Janesville Shannon and Craig Thiesenhusen, brought their kids Savannah, 11, and Cole, 9, and said they were excited to see a parade they had heard good things about.

"It is a perfect night out and we are really looking forward to this," Shannon said.

Although many cheered in response to a request of first-timers to identify themselves by the parade emcee, many more had seen multiple lighted parades and had come back for more.

Martin McCollum of Janesville was born and raised in Beloit, but now with grandchildren full of holiday spirit, decided to bring the family down to partake in a tradition he has enjoyed.

"This is my first time in 20 years, but my first with the grandkids," McCollum said.

Still for others, it was an opportunity to see old friends march among the 33 floats that appeared, featuring area clubs, churches and other organizations.

Julia Rodriguez and Paulo Briano were ready to ring in the new season, but also see the Beloit Bombshells roller derby team roll by among the parade participants.

"I used to be one myself, so I am checking out my old sister girls," Rodriguez said.



## Visit from Mrs. Claus

Iris Rylee Lippitt, 2, is held by Mrs. Claus before the kickoff of the 24th Grand Lighted Holiday Parade Friday. The parade included over 30 floats.

The headliner however was the big man in the red suit himself, who was rescued from a landing atop First National Bank and Trust by the City of Beloit Fire Department.

And with a wink of his eye and a wave at the pine, holiday cheer came to the Stateline Area as the Christmas tree in the downtown plaza sparkled with light.