



City of Arts & Innovation

News Release

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Mission Inn Hotel & Spa Festival of Lights Returns to Riverside Nov. 29

RiversideFestivalofLights.com

RIVERSIDE, Calif. – The 27th annual Mission Inn Hotel & Spa Festival of Lights returns to downtown Riverside on Friday, Nov. 29 with food, entertainment, a fireworks display and the much-anticipated switch-on ceremony to turn on millions of holiday lights at the historic hotel.

Vendors and attractions open at noon. The switch-on ceremony, produced by The Mission Inn Hotel & Spa, the Greater Riverside Chambers of Commerce and the City of Riverside, starts at 4:30 p.m., with fireworks following roughly an hour later. The gathering at the corner of Orange Street and Mission Inn Avenue marks the beginning of the holiday season for Riverside residents.

“The Festival of Lights is a time-honored way to celebrate the kick-off of the holiday season with family and friends,” Mayor Rusty Bailey said. “This beloved event also showcases our historic downtown, which provides an incredible boost to our local businesses.”

At this year’s festival:

- A very large snow globe will be placed on Main Street between University and Mission Inn avenues to highlight the progress and accomplishments of UC Riverside. Visitors can step inside the snow globe and take a selfie with a replica of the UCR bell tower.
- The century wheel and the carousel will move to the parking lot adjacent to City Hall at 10th and Main streets.
- Live music will commence daily at the Entertainment Stage located in the breezeway of City Hall on Main Street between 9th and 10th Streets.
- Horse-drawn carriages will return this year.

- The Artisan’s Collective will highlight artists and craft makers alike Thursdays-Sundays, starting on Saturday, Nov. 30th and continuing through Sunday, Dec. 29th. The collective will be on Main Street between University Avenue and 9th Street from 5 p.m. to 10 p.m.
- Vendors will be back selling holiday-themed sweets and treats.

More than 750,000 people visit Riverside during the festival to gaze upon the historic Mission Inn covered in more than 5 million holiday lights, decorated with 400 animatronic figures and filled with holiday music. More than 75,000 people attend the annual switch-on ceremony, held each year on the Friday evening after Thanksgiving.

After a welcome and brief remarks from local dignitaries, the Roberts family leads a countdown to the switch-on at dusk. The millions of holiday lights spread out around the Mission Inn and the surrounding area are switched on, and the downtown sky erupts in a fireworks show.

“We are very fortunate in Riverside to enjoy the support of Duane and Kelly Roberts, Keepers of the Inn, who work so hard to make the Festival of Lights so successful,” Mayor Pro Tem Andy Melendrez said. “We look forward to another great event this year.”

The Festival of Lights now attracts people of all ages from across the country after being honored as America's Best Holiday Festival (2015) and America’s Best Public Lights Display (2014) by the readers of USA TODAY.