



News Release

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GAHANNA'S HOLIDAY LIGHTS! FESTIVAL
PRESENTED BY gridSMART® From AEP Ohio
Kick-off a Season of Fun and Join in the Grand Tree Lighting
With NEW Energy-Efficient LED Holiday Lights!
Friday, November 26th

GAHANNA, Ohio – Here it comes—ready or not—the holiday season! Gahanna is ready and will officially launch the Holiday Lights! Festival and Season on Friday, Nov. 26, with the support of gridSMART® From AEP Ohio. The Festival begins on the day after Thanksgiving at 8 a.m. and will culminate with the illumination of the Grand Tree and Winter Wonderland at Creekside Park at 6 p.m. This year, for the first time, the tree's branches and the Holiday Village will sparkle with energy-efficient LED lights throughout the Holiday Lights! Festival Season, Nov. 26, 2010 - Jan. 3, 2011.

Gahanna has a history of supporting environmental and conservation initiatives for the community. Continuing that tradition during the upcoming holiday season, Gahanna will showcase energy-efficient holiday lighting, at the time of year when lights are burning overtime.

"We are honored to sponsor the Gahanna "Holiday Lights! Festival" and to play a role in the city's innovative use of energy-efficient LED lights for its holiday displays," said Karen Sloneker, project director, AEP Ohio gridSMART Demonstration Project. "Gahanna continues to be a leading edge community in terms of environmental and energy awareness, and AEP Ohio applauds its focus."

Although the holiday event, formerly known as the Gahanna Holiday Lights! Parade & Festival, has placed its parade component on hold in order to conserve funds, the new holiday lights festival season will be shining brightly with a broad array of holiday attractions for the entire family.

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“What started as a creative approach to doing ‘more with less’ has evolved into a spectacular holiday offering, not just for Friday, November 26, but throughout the holiday season. We are thrilled that our partners, business owners and community have rallied to present, what I believe to be, an amazing season of merriment and treasured memories,” said Karen Eylon, Director of the Gahanna Convention & Visitors Bureau.

Mayor Becky Stinchcomb will officiate at the “Flip the Switch” lighting of the Grand Tree and Winter Wonderland at Creekside Park, along with festival favorites Dr. Seuss characters and AEP’s Louis the Lightening Bug. The winner of the “Flip the Switch” Coloring Contest will also be there to give the mayor a helping hand (details and contest rules at www.gahannaholidaylights.com).

The festivities will begin at 8 a.m., Friday, Nov. 26. Here is a sampling of Friday holiday fun:

- *Holiday Story Time Character Breakfast*, presented by Benchmark Bank (8 a.m.-noon)
 - Children can celebrate the season with Dr. Seuss characters and enjoy an all-you-can-eat pancakes breakfast by Chris Cakes and holiday stories read by special guests.
(Olde Gahanna Sanctuary, 82 N. High St.)
- *Free Children’s Activities* (9 a.m. – 6 p.m.)
 - Festive holiday crafts and activities for all ages.
- *Visit with Santa* (9 a.m.-8 p.m.)
 - Bring your camera! Picture taking and wish making will be available with the Jolly Old Elf himself. Drop your letters to Santa into the express North Pole mailbox for quick delivery.
- *Healthy Holiday Fun Run*, presented by Mount Carmel
 - Walk or jog off those Thanksgiving calories at this festive run. The course winds through beautiful Creekside Park. The run begins at 10 a.m., the Kid’s Run at 9:30 a.m., with registration at 9 a.m.
- *Holiday Mystery Pizza Party*, presented by Donatos (2:30-5:30 p.m.)
 - Calling all junior sleuths—it’s time for the second annual Mystery Pizza Party with new mysteries for family teams to solve, along with an Amazing Race-style scavenger hunt.
(Olde Gahanna Sanctuary, 82 N. High St.)
- The following is presented by the City of Gahanna Department of Parks & Recreation:
 - *Holiday Village*
 - The Holiday Village is a kid-sized community featuring four, three-dimensional buildings: a toy store, hobby/hardware store, a post office and a bank. The village is located on Creekside Plaza near the Grand Tree.
 - *Skating Rink* on Creekside Plaza
 - *Grand Tree Lighting*
 - *Winter Wonderland at Creekside Park*
 - *Holiday classic, “A Christmas Story,” presented on an outdoor screen*

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There are more Friday activities and more fun to be had throughout the *Holiday Lights! Festival season*. Check the Web site for the entire schedule and for changes and new activities that will be posted daily on www.gahannaholidaylights.com. Additional festival activities include: holiday décor and fun at the Ohio Herb Education Center, Santa's Gift Shop, free horse-drawn carriage rides, entertainment, the Olde Gahanna Community Partnership Festival of Trees Silent Auction, unique offerings at a variety of downtown businesses and more.

For all the latest updates, be sure to check in daily at www.gahannaholidaylights.com or call (614) 418-9114.

The Gahanna Convention & Visitors Bureau (GCVB) is a 501(c) (6) non-profit organization funded by a local hotel tax and partner support whose mission is to promote Gahanna as a vibrant destination by connecting the people and places of our community which contributes to economic prosperity. The GCVB annually presents the Creekside Blues & Jazz Festival and Holiday Lights! Festival. We are grateful for the support given to Holiday Lights by the event sponsors listed on our Web site: www.gahannaholidaylights.com.

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