



## NEWS RELEASE

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For More Information Contact:  
Rachel Skowronek 903-702-7777

### **Wonderland of Lights restores magic to downtown in its 31<sup>st</sup> year....**

The City of Marshall, Marshall Convention and Visitor's Bureau, the Marshall Main Street are gearing up to celebrate 31 years of Wonderland of Lights. Historic downtown Marshall will once again be transformed into a winter wonderland, this year with a candy twist. Wonderland of Lights will run November 22<sup>nd</sup> through December 31<sup>st</sup>, Tuesday through Sunday nightly from 6 to 9 p.m., and Saturday's from 4 to 10 p.m.. Wonderland of Lights is closed every Monday, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

Wonderland's 2017 season will kick off on Wednesday, November 22<sup>nd</sup> at 6:00 p.m. when Santa Claus arrives downtown. "There is truly no other event like this that I have ever heard of, and we are excited to Celebrate 31 years of one of the longest running Christmas Festivals in the country," Tourism & Promotions Director Carolyn Howard said. "For a town this size to put on an event of this stature is truly awe-inspiring. Marshall is known for the wonderful holiday festivities associated with Wonderland, and this year will not disappoint."

Once again the Harrison County Courthouse will be the shining star of the festival, adorned with thousands of white lights, inviting attendees to step back in time and rediscover the spirit of Christmas. Many long-time favorite light displays will be coming back to life and Downtown Marshall gets a sweet new twist with this year's theme, Candy Wonderland. Following tradition, attendees will be able to enjoy horse drawn carriage and waggonette, train, and carousel rides as well as outdoor ice skating. Attendees can expect to hear live music nightly on Telegraph Stage, in the heart of downtown across from the 1900 J. Riely Gordon Courthouse.

Santa's Village will make its debut in 2017 featuring three themed tiny houses; a bakery, a train depot, and of course a cozy place to take a picture with the big man himself. Santa's Workshop will be open the same dates and times of the festival and will run until December 23<sup>rd</sup>, when Santa will make his return to the North Pole. The village will be located on the Square.

Frosty's Big Bounce is another new addition to Wonderland of Lights this season. This area will feature an inflatable snowman bounce house, face painting, and one of the new photo opportunities- be sure to track down all of the special photo opportunities, designed and created by local artist Carol Pace.

Each week will feature a special event. To kick off the season, Historic Downtown Marshall merchants are making plans to celebrate American Express' Small Business Saturday, the Saturday after Thanksgiving with the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Wassail Walk. Attendees will have the

*Convention & Visitors Bureau  
301 N. Washington  
Marshall, TX 75670*

*Main Street Program  
Ph. (903) 702-7777  
skowronek.rachel@marshalltexas.net*



opportunity to peruse downtown businesses while sampling Wassail, a traditional apple cider. Merchants will be vying for the highly coveted title of Wassail Fest champion voted on by the general public. “Wassail Walk will be an opportunity to bring our downtown businesses together with a little friendly competition, all while celebrating the importance of small businesses, the day after Black Friday,” said Rachel Skowronek, Tourism Promotions & Communications Coordinator.

A heartfelt favorite, the Lighted Christmas Parade kicks off at 6 p.m. on Saturday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>. The East Texas Baptist University Hockey Team will take the rink for Tigers on Ice on Sunday, December 3 at 5 p.m. The team will do introductions and a short scrimmage, followed by autograph signing and an evening of skating with attendees. The Jingle Bell Run returns to a nighttime lit event and is slated for the evening of Tuesday, December 5<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m.

Returning for its second year is the Outdoor Christmas Market, a vendor fair featuring homemade Christmas and holiday crafts, decor and plenty of great "stocking stuffers" will run from 11 am to 4 p.m. on Saturday, December 9<sup>th</sup>. Lastly, mark your calendars to join us for the Wonderland of Sights on December 16<sup>th</sup> from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. for a self guided art, history, and steeple tour.

“Wonderland of Lights would not have made it this far without the contributions and generous support of the community. There is an opportunity for any group, business or individual to get involved this year,” Howard said. “We are still seeking corporate sponsors. For sponsorship and volunteer details contact us at [wonderland@marshalltexas.net](mailto:wonderland@marshalltexas.net) or 903-702-7777. Be sure to follow Wonderland of Lights on Facebook and visit us online at [www.WonderlandOfLights.com](http://www.WonderlandOfLights.com) for up to date details on entertainment and schedule changes.

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