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FOR RELEASE: IMMEDIATE

11/27/2007

OGS KICKS OFF HOLIDAY SEASON WITH ANNUAL TREE LIGHTING CEREMONY

The New York State Office of General Services and SEFCU will kick-off another festive holiday season at the Empire State Plaza on Sunday, December 2 with the SEFCU Holiday Tree Lighting and Fireworks Festival. The official lighting of the trees takes place at 5:15 p.m. and will be followed with a spectacular fireworks show.

The day will begin with events and activities from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. at the Plaza. Inside the Empire State Plaza, there will be a holiday marketplace featuring seasonal gifts, story telling, a chance to visit with Santa for holiday photos and a special arts & crafts area for kids to make a treat for Mom or Dad.

Outside on the plaza ice skating rink there will be demonstrations by the Albany Figure Skating Club and an interactive demonstration with the Union College Women's Hockey Team. Other activities will include open skating throughout the day with DJ Shawn Gillie, meet Comet the reindeer and caroling with the Voices of Faith Interdenominational Womens' Choir. To cap off a great day, enjoy a free, hot beverage compliments of Dunkin' Donuts while we light the tree and the sky with fireworks by Alonzo.

The donation of New York State's holiday trees is truly a time-honored tradition. Each year the trees are donated by generous New Yorkers who do so with pride in knowing their tree will stand tall as one of the official New York State Holiday Trees.

This year is no different. The Empire State Plaza Holiday Tree is a 30-foot blue spruce tree. It was donated by Nancie Williams of Amsterdam, NY. She donated the tree to honor our nation's men and women serving in the military. Ms. Williams also donated the Holiday Tree placed at the Capitol in East Capitol Park.

Lights for the State Capitol trees have been provided by the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), which is providing energy-saving LED holiday light bulbs. The lights are constructed from solid-state chips that convert electricity into light without using a filament or glass bulb and they can burn for up to 100,000 hours, enough to last through more than 11 holiday seasons.

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The second annual Chocolate Expo and Holiday Gift Market at the NYS Museum (<http://www.nysm.nysed.gov/>), from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., features samples of the finest chocolates and confections the region has to offer. Dozens of high quality craft exhibitors will offer unique handcrafted items, natural bath and body products, homemade foods, and charming seasonal gifts to surprise anyone during the holidays. The entire family will enjoy children's activities and live musical entertainment, as well as the Museum's renowned exhibits.

The Great Train Extravaganza will take place at the Convention Center from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission is \$5 for adults, children under 12 are admitted for free. The Upstate Train Associates hosts its 32nd Annual Great Train Extravaganza (GTE) in the Convention Hall at the Empire State Plaza. The GTE is a meeting of operating O and HO Gage model train layouts and displays with more than 300 tables of model trains, train parts, books and related merchandise for sale.

A tradition continues as the Zucchini Brothers, the region's favorite family rock band returns for their annual holiday show at the Swyer Theater at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$8 for adults and \$6 for children. <http://www.theegg.org/>.

(please see next page)

SEFCU HOLIDAY TREE LIGHTING AND FIREWORKS FESTIVAL LINE-UP

Schedule of Events

INDOOR EVENTS

Meeting Rooms 6 & 7 and Concourse

2 pm - 6 pm	Holiday Marketplace - Gift items for sale including holiday wreaths, jewelry, fleece clothing, leather goods and more.
2 pm - 4 pm	Holiday Photos - strike a pose in front of our winter-wonderland scenery!
2 pm - 4:30 pm	Holiday Arts and Crafts for Kids
2:15 pm and 3:15 pm	Meet and greet Santa Claus - (2) 30 minute sessions
2:30 pm, 3:30 pm and 4 pm	Holiday Story Time – Traditional and contemporary holiday tales

ON THE PLAZA

Empire State Plaza, north end near Capitol

10 am – 1 pm	Free Ice Skating at the Empire State Plaza Ice Rink
1 pm – 2 pm	Rink Closed for Cleaning
2 pm	Open Skate with DJ Shawn
3 pm	Skating Demonstration with Albany Figure Skating Club
3:30 pm	Skating Demonstration and interactive session with the Union College Women's Hockey Team
4:30 pm	Rink Closed for Cleaning
4:30 pm	Holiday Music performance by Voices of Faith Interdenominational Womens Choir
5:15 pm	New York State Holiday Tree Lighting Ceremony and Fireworks by Alonzo
6 pm - 9 pm	Open Skate on the Plaza Rink

ENDS