



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Tomi Johnson
Director of Sales & Events
(903) 935-7868 x16
sales@visitmarshalltexas.org

Marshall, Texas To Debut All New Wonderland of Lights

City Revamps 24-Year-Old Holiday Tradition With Concerts And New Attractions

MARSHALL, TX – August 12, 2010 – Each holiday season since 1987, a small East Texas town transforms itself into one of the most famous Christmas destinations in Texas. And, this year from November 24 through January 2, Marshall, Texas is planning the most spectacular 40-day Wonderland of Lights Festival in its history, according to the organizing committee.

In keeping with its name, the 2010 Wonderland of Lights extravaganza will feature over one million lights and 400 lighted displays in the historic downtown area and throughout the City. Just one of the exciting additions this year will be entitled the Wonderland Experience Light Show, nightly choreographed light performances surrounding Wonderland's crown jewel, the magnificently restored 1901 Harrison County Courthouse.

"The best is getting better," announced J.C. Hughes, a director with newly formed Center Stage Productions. "Marshall's Wonderland of Lights is the granddaddy of Christmas festivals and we're excited to be able to bring a host of new events and expanded programming this year which will have even greater appeal to our visitors and residents alike."

In addition to the proliferation of lights, a highlight of this year's festival will be the addition of a concert and performance series each weekend between November 26 and December 18. The lineup for this year includes the Four Tops, the Charlie Daniels Band, the Double Funny comedy show featuring Carl Hurley, Roy Clark, the Von Trapp family singers from the Sound of Music and a full-day choir competition featuring choirs from around the nation competing for \$15,000 in prize money.

Other new attractions will include a mini-express trackless train ride, ice dancing performances, celebrity chef cooking classes, a 15-foot giant snow globe, Mrs. Claus' kitchen, a petting zoo with reindeer, street performers and much more.

Of course, many of Wonderland's most popular attractions will also return including the fabulously lit Courthouse, Texas' only open-canopy outdoor ice

-more-

skating rink, Santa's Workshop, the popular "lighted" Christmas parade, horse-drawn carriage rides, guided bus tours and Breakfast with Santa.

"This year's Wonderland of Lights celebration promises to be truly special," said Steve Carlile, chairman of the Marshall Convention & Visitors Bureau. "We look forward to welcoming back the thousands of returning visitors to Wonderland of Lights and also to putting on a great show for many more first-time guests."

The 2010 Wonderland of Lights Festival is expected to bring more than 125,000 visitors to Marshall. For a calendar of events, hotel accommodations, tickets or more information, the public may contact the Marshall Convention & Visitors Bureau at (903) 935-7868 x6 or online at visitmarshalltexas.org.

About Wonderland of Lights

A Christmas wish expressed in a 1987 Marshall News Messenger editorial has illuminated an entire city, both literally and figuratively, for over 20 years. The editorial, published during difficult economic times in East Texas, read, "Picture this. Marshall's square, every tree, every bush, decorated with tiny white lights; a gigantic Christmas tree decorated in tiny white lights; businesses around the square participating in the picture-perfect Christmas by decorating in tiny white lights."

Marshall native and former New York fashion model, Wendy Russell Reeves, responded with a generous donation and said to the editor, "Have your wish." That first year the editor, the city's assistant city manager and a small band of other volunteers brought the dream to life stringing lights around the downtown square and on its 1901 courthouse.

In the following years, businesses and neighborhoods caught the spirit and Marshall's Wonderland of Lights grew to be one of the largest Christmas celebrations in the United States. Today, over 125,000 visitors make coming to Marshall a holiday tradition.

###