

For Immediate Release November 16, 2006

Attention Assignment/City/Community/Entertainment/Photo Editors

Downtown Toronto Welcomes the Holiday Season

TORONTO – Residents and visitors to Toronto will experience a highly animated festive season downtown. The Downtown Yonge area presents the “Urban Lights” Holiday Lighting Ceremony in conjunction with Toronto’s Cavalcade of Lights, and features the “Festive Sights” regular weekend holiday entertainment at Yonge-Dundas Square. The lighting ceremony, free events and holiday décor will enhance the public’s shopping and entertainment experience.

Holiday Lighting Ceremony

The festive season begins with the Downtown Yonge Holiday Lighting Ceremony on Saturday, November 18, 2006, 6:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Giant three-dimensional starbursts of multi-coloured lights will be suspended high above Yonge-Dundas Square. A new awe-inspiring 35 foot sculptural light tree with 52,000 blue and white LED lights will also grace the square through the support of Yonge-Dundas Square and Tourism Toronto’s Cultural Enhancement Program.

The entertainment will start at 6:00 p.m. with the screening of the animated classic “A Charlie Brown Christmas.” Then, be entertained with highly visual street performers from Zero Gravity Circus, an innovative performance-based company.

Household name on the Canadian Music Scene, Farley Flex and radio personality K.J. from 97.3 EZ Rock will be the Master of Ceremonies. Beginning at 7:10 p.m. greetings from the Provincial government will be delivered by the Honourable Deputy Premier and Minister of Health & Long-Term Care, George Smitherman. City Councillor Kyle Rae will then bring holiday wishes from the City of Toronto. Mr. Arron Barberian, Chair of Downtown Yonge Business Improvement Area, will also be on stage to illuminate the holiday décor at 7:20 p.m.

At 7:40 p.m., celebrated female vocal ensemble Madrigaia will deliver a performance of world-infused holiday music with a unique blend of perfect harmony.

Holiday LED Light Exchange

During the Holiday Lighting Ceremony, in partnership with Toronto Hydro, anyone can bring in two old strings of seasonal lights to the Toronto Hydro Booth located in Yonge-Dundas Square, and they will be exchanged for one new string of LED lights. 500 strings will be available; one string per family.



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November & December Events

Yonge-Dundas Square is host to regular weekend holiday entertainment “Festive Sights”, which features the screening of holiday films, and diverse cultural shows programmed by the Community Folk Arts Council. Events are scheduled every Saturday and Sunday, from 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. through to December 24, 2006.

The Downtown Yonge area offers a variety of holiday events and experiences which can be found in the new *Downtown Yonge Holiday Guide*. This includes entertainment at Toronto’s historic theatres, shopping centres, places of worship, and attractions, along with special offers from area members.

Additional Holiday Decor

In addition to holiday events and holiday décor at Yonge-Dundas Square, additional holiday decorations are being installed to enhance the shopping experience on Yonge Street. Seventeen garlands of LED lights will be suspended across Yonge Street (from Queen to Grosvenor). Twenty-two trees at the Yonge median south of College Street will be illuminated with colourful LED light sticks.

Cavalcade of Lights

The Cavalcade of Lights, a City of Toronto program, now includes nineteen of Toronto’s famous neighbourhood Business Improvement Areas. This joint effort profiles Toronto’s growing reputation as one of the hottest shopping destinations in North America. It is another step towards achieving Toronto’s Beautiful City goals. This innovative partnership includes the launch of specially designed energy efficient neighbourhood lighting displays and a hop-on, hop-off guided tour bus conveniently linking the shopping, dining and entertainment experience offered by each of the participating neighbourhoods.

About Downtown Yonge

The Downtown Yonge Business Improvement Area (B.I.A.) is an association of 2,000 business members. It is dedicated to maintaining Downtown Yonge as Toronto’s premier business shopping and entertainment destination and is committed to improving and promoting the district through investment and advocacy. The Downtown Yonge B.I.A.’s contribution to the holiday experience downtown includes the venue sponsorship of Yonge-Dundas Square which offers free holiday entertainment and cost sharing of holiday décor through a partnership with the City of Toronto Economic Development Department.

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