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68th Annual Downtown Christmas Kick-Off Planned For Friday, November 25th

This is a special year for the annual Christmas Kick-Off in downtown Newark as we plan for a great collaboration with the new Canal Market District (CMD), while at the same time colorfully lighting the grounds of the Courthouse Square!

The community is invited to attend the official start of the Holiday Season on Friday afternoon/evening, November 25th from 4:00pm till 8:00pm. It begins with the CMD's first annual "Christmas Market" with dozens of vendors, decorations, a community Christmas Tree and food trucks. A special feature will be family holiday portraits available from Argyle Photography, at the end of the West Pavilion, at the Canal Market along South Third Street that evening.

Also at the Canal Market, the traditional 'Night After Thanksgiving' Christmas program will feature the annual holiday music program and sing-a-long and the excitement of Santa's arrival. Santa will then bring forth a colorful 'red, white and green' Holiday Fireworks show over downtown Newark. While we are unable to light the Courthouse this year, we are pleased to light all of the traditional Courthouse Square lawn decorations!

The music program begin at 6:00pm with longtime master of ceremonies Dave Lehman. Many of your holiday favorites will be performed by singers Belinda Paisley, Shawna Corder, and Hugh Price. In addition, featured for the 11th consecutive year, will be the Blessed Sacrament Combined Chorus under the direction of Christina Pultz Miller. Also, performing on the holiday stage will be "The Heisey Brass", a local quintet directed by Doug Moran and playing a variety of Christmas songs.

During the program the Lighting Committee will salute the Newark Rodders Car Club for organizing the '2016 Lite the Nite Car Show' in September and supporting the future of Courthouse Lighting Project with a donation.

The Newark Fire Department will assist with the arrival of Santa in downtown, which is anticipated just after 7:00pm. The 'Jolly Old Elf' will extend his best wishes to the community and with the help of the children will kick-off the Christmas Season in Licking County with a Holiday Fireworks Show.

Also, on display at Canal Market will be the local Salvation Army's 'World's Largest Red Kettle'. This trailer mounted, eight foot high Red 'Collection' Kettle, is used to promote the annual 'Salvation Army Red Kettle Christmas Campaign' throughout the community in December.

The 'Elves in Action' will also be at CMD collecting non-perishable food items and donations for those in need this Christmas Season. The Licking County Food Pantry Network will be distributing the food to those in need.

Following the 'festivities' at the Canal Market Place, Jolly Old Saint Nick and his Elves will be at a special Santa House, just south of the CMD Pavilion and along the walkway, to greet families and their children. This Santa House is staffed and sponsored by TrueCore Federal Credit Union.

So, come to downtown Friday (November 25th) afternoon and evening. There will be plenty of parking including the first floor of the County Parking Garage on South Second Street. The second floor of the County Garage will be reserved for the public to enjoy the festivities and fireworks! The Downtown construction will not be a factor as the northwest side of the Square will have reopened, and there is only limited work on the northeast side of the Square. There will be several hundred available parking spots including street parking and off street lots, such as the County Administration Building lot.