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Uptown Lexington, Inc. Announces Plans for 2010 Christmas Open House

Lexington, NC. Summer has quickly passed and the holidays are approaching even more rapidly—especially in uptown Lexington.

The merchants and Board of Uptown Lexington, Inc. (ULI) are pleased to announce plans for our 2010 Christmas activities including the 3rd Annual Lighting of the Trees and the 17th Annual Christmas Open House. The merchants invite residents and visitors to come catch the holiday spirit with them.

“Both events are truly events for all ages and all of Lexington and Davidson County to come to uptown Lexington. We invite you to come start your holiday season right here at home in historic uptown Lexington!” said Michael Holshouser, President of the ULI Board of Directors.

“This year, we will have some of the traditional activities but with some new touches and some new activities as well,” said Jo Ellen Edwards, Executive Director of ULI.

“This will be the third year we have joined Tony Humphrey as he ‘lights’ all 43 trees along Main Street.” said Edwards. “This event started quite by accident when a few friends and family members followed along with Tony. It was so much fun that we decided to open it to the entire community.” The Lighting of the Trees is Saturday, November 20th. Walkers will start at the Bunce Buildings gazebo in the Conrad & Hinkle square at the corner of North Main and West Center Streets at 6:30 pm. “It is about a 45 minute walk,” said Edwards. “This year we have partnered with our uptown restaurants and Ledford High School and invite you to come uptown for dinner, stay to walk with us and Light the Trees, and conclude your evening with the play, The Crucible at the Smith Civic Center at 7 pm.”

The 17th Annual Christmas Open House is the following day, Sunday, November 21 from 1-5 pm in Historic Uptown Lexington. “With the streets closed from 3rd Street to 3rd Avenue, it is a safe place to enjoy the many activities while strolling the uptown district to shop and eat with our local merchants,” said Holshouser.

A popular activity since the first Christmas Open House is horse drawn carriage rides with Heritage Farm and Carriages. “Steve and Anne Allred have become part of our holidays and many folks look forward to seeing them each year,” said Edwards. “Employees of NewBridge Bank have been our volunteer ‘carriage attendants’ from almost the first Christmas Open House as well.” Carriage rides will start and end in the

square at the corner of East Center and North Main adjacent to Main Street Deli and are \$6 for adults and \$4 for children over 3 years of age.

“We couldn’t have Christmas Open House with Santa and Mrs. Claus,” said Edwards. This year, Santa will have a new backdrop for the photos. Nestled inside the Bunce Buildings gazebo in the Conrad and Hinkle square, the backdrop created by Margaret Sink a popular *Pigs in the City* artist will provide a homelike background for the photos. The photos by David Burris will cost \$5 each. New this year will be Mrs. Claus’ Gingerbread House. Still being created, the setting will include giant pieces of candy. “We just hope the kids will have some fun while Mrs. Claus tells stories of life for her and Santa and the elves at the North Pole as they too get ready for Christmas,” said Edwards. “We’ve heard Mrs. Claus is even bringing some special friends from the North Pole along with her!”

Since 2003, pigs from *Pigs in the City* have been part of the holiday decorations uptown. “Deck the Hogs” will also return this year not only to the square with a fresh look, but they are featured on the 2010 Uptown Lexington collectible Christmas ornament. “Ornaments are for sale in several uptown businesses, but can also be purchased on the street at the intersection of East First Avenue and South Main near Café 35. Event sponsor, Hospice of Davidson County will be under the same tent with their ornament which features the print “December” a winter scene by Bob Timberlake. Uptown Lexington’s ornament supports installation and maintenance of lights along Main Street while the Hospice ornament supports their programs for the terminally ill in Davidson County.

Another popular activity is the North Pole Express, a miniature train that takes children under 12 on a ride up and down Main Street. Starting and stopping in front of Army Navy Store on North Main, the cost to ride is \$3.

After hearing the sounds of the holiday season from two stages, attendees are sure to catch the holiday spirit. Performing on a stage located on South Main in front of Lanier Hardware will be The LeBeaus at 1 pm and Marble Alley Band at 3 pm. “Both of these groups are perennial holiday favorites,” said Edwards. “Carols by the LeBeaus and Tim Ragan’s versions of Rudolph the Red-nosed Reindeer are favorite memories for many.” At a second stage in front of the Lexington Police Department will be the Lexington Middle School Jazz Ensemble at 1 pm, at 2 pm is the Region 11 Girl Scouts from Davidson and Rowan Counties, Rich Fork Baptist Church Choir sings at 3 pm, and at 4 pm is CrossMovement Dance Ministry.

New this year will be Victorian Carolers from Rich Fork Baptist Church in Thomasville. Carolers will be singing on the sidewalks and inside Participating Merchant Partners stores during the afternoon. “This will mark the return of carolers to Christmas Open House and we are so thrilled to have them join us,” said Edwards.

Also new this year will be a Children’s Area on West Second Avenue in front of All About Education coordinated by Arts Untied for Davidson County. There children can write a letter directly to Santa (with

elves wandering around uptown Lexington, they are sure to be delivered to Santa with special care), color a Christmas card or participate in a sidewalk chalk activity. West Second Avenue will also be a craft area with a variety of vendors featuring items plants to jewelry to crafts.

Attendees are invited to visit the Bounce House and Slide area on East Second Avenue of event sponsor, Camp Walter Johnson. Entry is \$3 with all proceeds going to camp scholarships for children.

The staff of Lexington Memorial Hospital will be on hand to staff a first aide area in the square at the corner of South Main and East Center Street. This is also a new component to Christmas Open House.

The Food Drive has expanded to include two drop-off locations: East Center Street at First Reformed United Church of Christ and the corner of West Center and State Streets. Coordinated by First UCC and the staff of Brinkley Walser, this drive will enable Christmas Open House to give back to the community through donations for Pastor's Pantry, a local agency who provides food for seniors.

"Our uptown Lexington merchants are eager to welcome you to uptown to shop and dine!" said Toby Prince, Chairman of the Uptown Lexington Promotions Committee. "You will find holiday decorations, music, specials and always a few surprises with our Participating Merchant Partners." "Our thanks and appreciation to many volunteers, sponsors and Participating Merchant Partners who underwrite some of the costs for Christmas Open House" said Edwards. Our 2010 sponsors are: City of Lexington Utilities, National Wholesale, Turlington & Company, New Bridge Bank, Lexington Investments, Mountcastle Insurance, BB&T, Hospice of Davidson County, Hedgecock Builders Supply, Bunce Buildings, Standell Properties, Lexington Area Chamber of Commerce, Camp Walter Johnson, Bank of North Carolina, Bank of the Carolinas, Evans Properties, Inc, and Lexington Memorial Hospital. Our 2010-2011 Merchant Partners are: Natural Home Life, Main Street Pizza & Deli, The Candy Factory, Red Door Antiques of Lexington, Army Navy Store, Conrad & Hinkle Food Market, Sheets' Dance Academy, Gallery Hall, The Olde Homestead, Catherine's Curtains, Merle Norman Cosmetics, Village Grill, Pandora's Books, Black Chicken Coffee, All About Education, Lanier Hardware, New 2 & Consignments, Magnolia Antiques and Gifts, Café 35, Posh Paws Salon, Spa & Boutique and Memories on Main.

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Want to go:

3rd Annual Lighting of the Trees: Saturday, November 20, 6:30-7:15 pm

17th Annual Uptown Lexington Christmas Open House: Sunday, November 21, 1-5 pm

Both events are in Historic Uptown Lexington from Third Avenue to Third Street