



City of Arts & Innovation

News Release

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Popular Switch-On Ceremony Returning to Festival of Lights in Riverside

Fireworks and festivities the day after Thanksgiving kick off celebration of holiday cheer

RIVERSIDE, Calif. – The Festival of Lights will once again kick off with fireworks and an exciting switch-on ceremony at the Mission Inn Hotel & Spa at 4:30 p.m. on Nov. 25 to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the event and mark the beginning of the holiday season.

Visitors will enjoy millions of holiday lights at the historic hotel and holiday-themed decorations in the downtown area at what has become one of the nation’s most popular holiday events. This annual tradition draws visitors from around the globe.

“The Festival of Lights has been a joyous occasion for Riverside families for three decades,” Mayor Patricia Lock Dawson said. “It is gratifying to see that Riversiders will once again be able to gather together for the switch-on ceremony.”

Information about the Festival can be found [here](#).

Guests can meet and take free photos with Santa Claus before his return to the North Pole on Dec. 24 every Thurs-Sun. from 5-10 p.m. during the duration of the event. Santa can be found on Main Street between University Avenue and Mission Inn Avenue along with City-sponsored holiday décor around the downtown area. Decorations include holiday-themed selfie stations, holiday trees, large ornaments, a sleigh, bows and garland on lights and bridges, and an assortment of holiday light displays.

A limited number of food and craft vendors will be present. Vendors, entertainment and artisans will continue through Dec. 31. Holiday décor and lighting will remain on through Jan. 6.

Past switch-on ceremonies, complete with the exciting countdown to the fireworks display, have attracted 75,000 people. Once the lights are switched on, they are a nightly attraction at the Mission Inn, drawing thousands of visitors to Riverside throughout the holiday season.

“Riverside families have looked forward to the return of the switch-on ceremony throughout the pandemic, so it is rewarding to see that patience rewarded,” Mayor Pro Tem Ronaldo Fierro said. “Our city is looking forward to another exciting event.”

The switch-on ceremony will be the first since 2019. The 2020 and 2021 ceremonies were not held because of concerns about the potential public health impacts of COVID-19. The Mission Inn Hotel & Spa continued its holiday lights display, which gave revelers from around Southern California a chance to enjoy the lights from their vehicles or while observing social distancing. The City of Riverside also reduced its programming during those years.