

# Holiday season officially kicks off with 21st Annual Tree Lighting Ceremony

by Madelaine Gerard, Staff Writer  
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**ALTON** - What's the best thing one can do to really get into the holiday spirit? Putting up the Christmas tree and adorning it with tinsel, ornaments and candy canes, of course!

Six days shy of Thanksgiving Day, Santa's little helpers and the fine ladies and gentlemen at **Alton Main Street** brought the holiday spirit to **Downtown Alton** just in time on **Friday, Nov. 20**, in the **21st Annual Tree Lighting Ceremony at Lincoln-Douglas Square**.

With the help of the **Alton-Godfrey Rotary Club**, **The Salvation Army** and much more, the gorgeous tree towers over the intersection of **Broadway and Piasa Street** with elegance.

**The Salvation Army Lts. Bryan & Teri Ellison** were pleased to introduce the **Chair-Family** of this year's "**Tree of Lights**" campaign, or the red kettle drive. **Kevin, Julie, Kathleen, Jonathan and KJ Botterbush** welcomed the crowd out to the ceremony and shared their important cause with the audience.

"It is quite an honor for our family to serve as the chair of the Tree of Lights campaign," Kevin Botterbush said. "I would like to ask each and every one of you to participate and take a little time out of your day to volunteer to ring the bell. What you put in the kettle will support your friends and neighbors in need this holiday season."

**Alton Mayor Brant Walker** was on hand to speak to the crowd and light up the marvelous tree that towered over the audience.

After a brief technical difficulty with the wiring, the tree was finally illuminated. The crowd stared in amazement for the beautiful sight.



Carolling, sweet treats and hot chocolate were sure to warm any of the cold onlookers and children at the ceremony. If that didn't warm you enough on this brisk evening, the sight of **Santa Claus and Mrs. Claus** greeting children was sure to warm even the coldest of hearts.

**After the tree was finally illuminated in soft white lights, the crowd was transported by trolley to the RiverBender.com Community Center's Holiday Open House. Plenty of games, a bake sale, another visit and photo opportunity with Santa and Mrs. Clause, prize giveaways, and more were all available for folks to get a taste of what the center has for children and teens every day.**



[21st Annual Tree Lighting photo gallery](#)