

Alton gets into the holiday spirit with the Annual Community Tree Lighting

by Steven Spencer, Staff Writer
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ALTON - It's starting to look more like Christmas in Downtown Alton with the 23rd Annual Community Tree Lighting at Lincoln-Douglas Square Friday evening.

Families gathered Downtown for carols, cocoa and even a special appearance from Frosty the Snowman and Rudolph.

Executive Director of Alton Main Street, Sara McGibany said they kick off the holiday season with the tree lighting every year on the Friday before Thanksgiving.

"We gather together and light up the beautiful tree that's provided by the Rotary Club," McGibany said.

Sasha Bassett, President of Alton Main Street, said it was a wonderful feeling to see the community come together for the ceremony.

"It's so important to gather with your community at any time of year, but especially during the holiday season," Bassett said. "As we go into colder days and longer nights, it becomes even more important to find the light within each other."

Alton-Godfrey Rotary Club President, Ron Mayhew pointed out that the tree is 22 years old this year.

"It stands 42 feet high, weighs 1.2 tons and has 1,760 lights on it," Mayhew said.

"Twenty-two years ago when the guys from Rotary first started working on that, those guys were in their 40s and 50s, they're same guys doing it now and their in 60s and 70s. Our club is average 69 years old and we're not going to get any younger. We need new young members from this community, to come and join us, and help keep these projects going."

After a brief blessing of the tree by Jason Harrison, Alderwoman Carolyn MacAfee and all the children present in the crowd counted down to flip the light up the tree to fill up the community with the holiday spirit.

