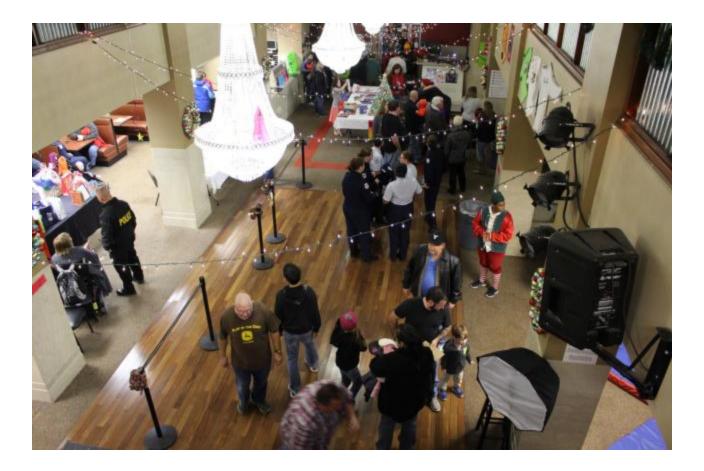


Annual holiday tradition: Riverbender. com Community Center Open House expects large crowd Friday night

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ALTON - Keep your spirits bright even after the Downtown Tree Lighting Ceremony ends with a visit to the <u>Riverbender.com Community Center Annual Holiday Open</u><u>House.</u>

Hop on a trolley and travel to the Center for live music, games and crafts, door prizes, photos with Santa and Mrs. Claus, a bake sale and basket raffle. The Center is festively decorated for the season and a trolley will transport individuals to and from the Center following the Christmas Tree lighting ceremony in Downtown Alton.

"My favorite part of volunteering at RBCC is planning family events," said event coordinator and RBCC volunteer Vicki Grover. "The Holiday Open House is our largest event of the year. Seeing the community come together, enjoying everything we have to offer is extremely satisfying. As the chairperson of this event, watching it grow over the last few years has been amazing. I'm looking forward to the joy and excitement of the kids and the adults as we kick off the holiday season."

The Annual Holiday Open House has been a staple of the Downtown Alton Christmas celebration for several years. The event is free for all ages and runs from 7-10 p.m. Local musician Joey Ciaramitarro will be on hand with live music to serenade individuals who stroll through the event. And Santa and Mrs. Claus will be on stage to hear the Christmas wishes of each child.

"The Christmas season is such a wonderful time to celebrate with family and friends," RBCC Executive Director Jeff Allsman said. "The nostalgic feelings that accompany Christmas music and the beauty of decorations leave lasting impressions on individuals of all ages. Memories are made for children, grown-ups and for some grown-ups who reflect back to childhood at the holiday season."

Last year, nearly 300 people attended the event.



