

Video Included: Downtown Alton Shines With Spirit Of Christmas Season As Netflix Lighting Display Goes Up

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
December 14 2020 3:15 PM



SEE VIDEO:

ALTON - In what surely has been a very rough year for the entire Riverbend area due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a lighting display in downtown Alton has given the area a badly-needed boost, as the city was one of six selected by the popular television streaming service Netflix to have a Christmas lighting display.

The display is now up in the downtown area, and will remain up during the holiday season to help boost the spirits of the area, and undoubtedly will be a major attraction to the area. The process started several months ago with an E-mail to Alton Mayor Brant Walker.

"Well, we got an e-mail into my office several months ago, inquiring if we would be interested," Walker said during an interview held outside the display, "and my question, of course, is how much does it cost? We found out it didn't cost us anything, so we forwarded it to Deanna Barnes. We reached back out to Netflix, they were very responsive, and somehow, throughout the process of a couple of months, we were chosen as one of the five cities to be given this Christmas makeover, which is wonderful."

Alton was chosen for the Netflix lights display along with Augusta, Ga., Vallejo, Calif., Stroudsburg, Pa., Natchez, Miss., and Norman, Okla., and in a year where Holiday gatherings will be very limited because of the pandemic, it's given Walker and the Alton community a big boost in its feelings.

"You know, you said how does it make you feel," Walker said. "I guess if you would say Christmas is a feeling when you're supposed to spend time with your friends, families and loved ones, and share your beliefs and share time together in a year when you can't do this, I think that represents that feeling a feeling of being able to be together to enjoy some joy in a year where you can't be together, where you have to distance and can't spend time with friends and loved ones, it's incredibly important. This may be more important this year than in any year I can ever remember. So I think it summarizes joy, which this has been pretty much a joyless year, so it's absolutely wonderful, not only for Alton, but I'm pretty sure I speak for the whole region and thank Netflix for allowing our community to have this makeover."

Walker invited everyone around the entire region to come by, take a look at the lighting display, and patronize the businesses in the downtown Alton area, which have been very hard hit this year due to the pandemic.

"If you get an opportunity, don't miss this," Walker said. "Come on down, it looks beautiful. Feel free to come on down, enjoy yourself, enjoy the lights, get something to eat, and take it home, support small businesses. Those that you know our area down here; this is the second year they've been ravaged, by floods last year, and then the pandemic this year, and this is a lot of concentration of small businesses in our community. So come down and shop, get something to eat, enjoy yourself, and Merry Christmas. Be safe."

[Charles Thomas also contributed to this story.](#)