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### Arlington's annual Holiday Lights Parade set for Dec. 7

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BY SUSAN SCHROCK  
sschrock@star-telegram.com

ARLINGTON — The arrival of a 50-foot blue spruce Tuesday in front of City Hall signaled the start of holiday festivities downtown.

The 60-year-old tree, donated to the city by a community nonprofit and trucked in from Michigan, will be decorated with thousands of twinkling lights and shiny Christmas ornaments next week in advance of the Dec. 7 Decorator's Warehouse [Holiday Lights Parade](#). The annual community event, which includes dancing elves, Christmas carols, dozens of parade float, even visits with Santa, is expected to draw thousands of visitors downtown once again, Holiday Lights Parade Chairman Don Duke said.

"The enthusiasm continues to grow," Duke said, adding that the parade will set a record with nearly 100 entries this year. "This is the community's way of kicking off the holiday season. We hope families will come out and make it part of their family tradition."

This year's festivities are scheduled to begin at 4 p.m. Dec. 7 with the [Miss Persis Studio Elf Show](#) at the Levitt Pavilion stage, followed by a 5:30 p.m. performance from the Arlington Community Band on the steps of City Hall. The parade begins at 6 p.m. at Main and Center streets and travels west on Main Street, south on West Street and east on Abram Street, ending at the corner of Abram and East Street. This year's route is a little longer to include some of downtown's newer restaurants, such as Flying Fish and Twisted Root Burger, which have outdoor patio areas.

"It takes advantage of really good viewing spaces down where all the restaurants are," Duke said. "It will give people a really good opportunity for seating along the route."

Grand marshal is Robert Kembel, JCKPL president and developer of the Viridian master-planned community in far north Arlington.

Santa will help community dignitaries light the Christmas tree, donated by nonprofit Arlington Christmas Parade and underwritten by Chesapeake Energy, at the end of the parade. St. Nick will then take photos and visit with children across the street at the Levitt Pavilion stage.

Families arriving downtown before the festivities can admire dozens of festively decorated Christmas trees and Santa-themed paintings and illustrations by artist Tom Newsom for free at the [Arlington Museum of Art](#). The Mitch Wilson Memorial Festival of Trees, which runs through Dec. 29, includes more than 40 trees donated by Arlington community groups and residents.

"It's our Christmas gift to the community," said Seth Wade, office manager at the museum.

Susan Schrock, 817-390-7639 Twitter: [@susanschrock](#)

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