



Milwaukee Downtown, Business Improvement District #21
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Downtown Milwaukee will radiate holiday cheer during annual kickoff extravaganza on Nov. 20 at Pere Marquette Park

Kickoff ceremony to feature fireworks, giveaways and performances from local entertainers

MILWAUKEE (November 4, 2025) – Downtown Milwaukee will radiate holiday cheer as Milwaukee Downtown, BID #21 celebrates the 27th annual Milwaukee Holiday Lights Festival presented by Johnson Financial Group. The six-week celebration kicks off at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, Nov. 20 at Pere Marquette Park, 900 N. Plankinton Ave. Live music, dance acts, holiday treats and fireworks make up the Milwaukee Holiday Lights Festival Kickoff Extravaganza presented by Johnson Financial Group, a festive jumpstart to the city’s holiday season running through Jan. 1, 2026.

The bright night of festivity will begin at 5:30 p.m. with pre-show entertainment by Kid Boogie Down. Following this dance warm-up, guests will enjoy performances by DJ Mr. NY, characters from Milwaukee Repertory Theater's "A Christmas Carol," Anita's Dance Center, The Squezettes, select cast members from Cirque du Soleil's "'Twas the Night Before...," Marquette University's Gold 'n Blues, Christopher Gilbert, Willow Newell – Miss Wisconsin, and Jenny Thiel. Santa and Mrs. Claus will also make an appearance. The evening will wrap up with a fireworks show, shortly before 7 p.m. Guests in attendance will receive free cocoa and cookies and can take part in free Jingle Bus rides, operated by KB Excursions, after the fireworks.

After the Nov. 20th kickoff, residents and visitors can view the light displays, coordinated by Milwaukee Downtown, BID #21, through Jan. 1. Four Downtown parks will be transformed into winter wonderland scenes: “Community Spirit Park” at Cathedral Square Park; “Santa’s Celebration Square powered by We Energies” at Zeidler Union Square; “¡Felices Fiestas!” at Pere Marquette Park and “Slice of Ice Lights” at Red Arrow Park. Street decorations will also adorn three Downtown thoroughfares, including Wisconsin Avenue, which will feature an 18-block stretch of silver and gold chandeliers suspended above each intersection.

Visitors can see all the sights aboard the Jingle Bus, a 40-minute narrated tour that offers a no-fuss way to view all of Downtown Milwaukee’s offerings during the holiday season. Tours will depart from the Festival’s new Warming House at Red Arrow Park, 920 N. Water St. Jingle Bus operating hours are 5 p.m. to 9 p.m., Fridays through Sundays, Dec. 5 – 28. Tickets are \$8 per person (excluding tax and fees). Advanced ticket sales are encouraged. Spanish tours are offered on select nights. Discounted parking is available for riders at the BMO Tower garage, 771 N. Broadway, for \$3.24 with validation from the Jingle Bus info table.

For more information on the Milwaukee Holiday Lights Festival Kickoff Extravaganza and to purchase Jingle Bus tickets, visit www.milwaukeeholidaylights.com.

The 2025 Milwaukee Holiday Lights Festival is sponsored by Johnson Financial Group, We Energies Foundation, Ideal Property Management, MGIC, KB Excursions, Verizon, Biggby Coffee, Interstate Parking, Educators Credit Union, National Association of Letter Carriers – Pioneer Branch 2, Serving Older Adults, WISN 12, B97.3 FM, Visit Milwaukee, Food Fight Restaurant Group, City of Milwaukee, Milwaukee County Parks, and Milwaukee Downtown, BID #21.

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About Milwaukee Downtown, BID #21

Milwaukee Downtown, Business Improvement District #21, is an organization established in 1998 to support the interests of the downtown Milwaukee business community. Created through private sector leadership, Milwaukee Downtown is a management district organization that oversees 150 square blocks representing approximately 500 property owners in the center of downtown Milwaukee. The organization funds specific initiatives aimed at creating a clean, safe, and welcoming downtown. More info available at www.milwaukeedowntown.com.