



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

November 23, 2016

## **Navy Pier Celebrates the Holiday Season with Activities for All Ages**

*Inaugural Christmas Tree Lighting in Polk Bros Park on Wednesday, November 30 kicks off the season; Other festivities include Fifth Third Bank Winter WonderFest, Jingle Jamz and more*

**CHICAGO** – 'Tis the season to visit Navy Pier! As the cold weather rolls into Chicago, Navy Pier welcomes guests to an exciting lineup of indoor and outdoor activities that are sure to get everyone in the holiday spirit. From the first-ever outdoor tree lighting in Polk Bros Park to the return of *Fifth Third Bank Winter WonderFest*, Navy Pier is the place to celebrate the holidays from start to finish.

New this year, an inaugural outdoor **Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony** kicks off the season in the new Polk Bros Park on **Wednesday, November 30 from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m.** Free and open to the public, the event will include a special program, emceed by NBC Chicago Reporter LeAnn Trotter, and feature live performances, a countdown to the tree lighting with Santa Claus and friends, and of course, hot chocolate, while supplies last.

The program begins with a holiday medley from the young cast of Goodman Theatre's *A Christmas Carol*, followed by music from Rodrick Dixon and Alfreda Burke – stars of the Auditorium Theatre's annual January performances of *Too Hot to Handel: The Jazz-Gospel Messiah*, and a grand finale performance from the Chicago Chamber Choir.

The celebrations will continue in the following weeks with **Jingle Jamz**, featuring three nights of caroling in Polk Bros Park near the Christmas Tree on **December 3, 10 and 17 from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m.** Guests are invited to sing along as the Wicker Park Choral Singers (12/3), Soul Children of Chicago (12/10) and Chicago Gay Men's Chorus (12/17) lead the group in reciting classic holiday carols. Hot chocolate will also be served each night of *Jingle Jamz* while supplies last.

"We are thrilled to celebrate the holidays with our inaugural Christmas Tree Lighting, *Jingle Jamz* caroling series and the first winter with our new *Centennial Wheel*," said Marilynn Kelly Gardner, president and CEO of Navy Pier, Inc. "As we continue our *Fifth Third Bank Centennial Celebration*, we invite guests of all ages from near and far to join us at Navy Pier for what is sure to be a memorable holiday season."

Along with the new, Navy Pier will continue to honor old traditions as the iconic destination welcomes the arrival of the **Christmas Tree Ship** with a special ceremony open to the public on **Saturday, December 3 at 10 a.m.** This annual tradition delivers trees from Michigan to Chicago in an effort to spread holiday cheer to underserved families throughout the city.

The ever-popular **Fifth Third Bank Winter WonderFest** returns for its 16<sup>th</sup> year, treating guests to a festive indoor oasis from **December 2, 2016 through January 8, 2017**. With dozens of activities and attractions and 170,000 square feet of entertainment for all ages, *Fifth Third Bank Winter WonderFest* is

perfect for the whole family to enjoy this special time of year. Tickets can be purchased online or on site at the *Fifth Third Bank Winter WonderFest* Box Office. The Mini Pass, which provides limited access to rides and attractions, costs **\$10** and the Activity Pass, which includes full access to rides and attractions, costs **\$25** – per day. Children under 36” are permitted for free. Special pricing and hours are available online.

Guests to *Fifth Third Bank Winter WonderFest* are also encouraged to take advantage of Navy Pier’s *Centennial Wheel* combo pack and seasonal garage parking rates. The special combo pack includes tickets to the *Centennial Wheel* – now a year-round attraction with enclosed, climate-controlled gondolas – at a discounted price of **\$10** with the purchase of any ticket to *Fifth Third Bank Winter WonderFest*. The combo pack can be redeemed as an add-on online or at the Box Office. On-site garage parking is also available for a special flat rate of **\$25** from now through March 31, 2017 – no coupon or voucher necessary.

For more details and complete calendar of events at Navy Pier, please visit [www.navypier.com](http://www.navypier.com).

## **CONTACTS**

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## **ABOUT NAVY PIER**

Located on Lake Michigan, Navy Pier is the top-attended leisure destination in the Midwest, stretching more than six city blocks and welcoming more than 8 million guests annually. Originally opened in 1916 as a shipping and recreation facility, this Chicago landmark showcases more than 50 acres of parks, restaurants, attractions, retail shops, sightseeing and dining cruise boats, exposition facilities and more. In 2016, Navy Pier celebrates its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a series of special events and programming, the grand opening of its new *Centennial Wheel* and ongoing pier-wide redevelopment efforts as part of the Centennial Vision. Navy Pier, Inc., a 501(c)(3) not for profit organization, maintains and oversees Navy Pier and its redevelopment into a bolder, greener and more contemporary urban space. For more information, visit our website at [www.navypier.com](http://www.navypier.com).

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