

DOWNTOWN FOR THE HOLIDAYS



Tennessee Aquarium

BY KIM H. WHITE

President/CEO of River City Company



Seasonal window scenes at EPB

PHOTO BY MED DEMENT



Breakfast with Santa



Holiday window scenes at BlueCross BlueShield

PHOTO BY MED DEMENT

City sidewalks, busy sidewalks dressed in holiday style. In the air there's definitely a feeling of the season. Yes, indeed, downtown Chattanooga is bustling with activity as this magical time of year draws near.

Growing up in Chattanooga, our family had an annual tradition of coming downtown to look at all of the store windows decorated for the holidays. You could count on department stores such as Miller Brothers and Loveman's to set the stage for Santa's impending arrival with garland, lights and window scenes filled with mechanical elves building toys. Thankfully, EPB and BlueCross

BlueShield continue that tradition each year within their street level windows for families everywhere to enjoy when visiting the City Center district of downtown.

A holiday tradition that's also become a staple of downtown Chattanooga is "Winter Days & Lights" that includes a Lighted Boat Parade, held this year on November 25th. You can enjoy the view from the NorthShore or the Riverfront and watch beautifully lit boats float on the Tennessee River near Ross's Landing. And the next morning, a very popular red-suited man is the featured guest at Breakfast with Santa at The Chattanooga. It's definitely a weekend the family shouldn't miss.

This year, be sure to check out the Chattanooga Boys Choir Annual Singing Christmas Tree at the Tivoli Theatre or the IMAX 3D Theater's holiday screening of "The Polar Express," an exciting animated classic that delivers the feeling of ice and snow – even if we're not lucky enough to get a wintery mix on our own streets.

If you just can't get enough of the spirit of community cheer around this joyful time of year, be sure to take part in Mainx24 on December 3rd in the Southside district of downtown. In its fourth year, this unique event transforms Main Street into a plethora of activity for an entire 24-hour period, starting with a holiday parade featuring Santa Claus that morning at 8 a.m.

Speaking of parades, the "Holiday Starlight Parade" will once again deliver an old-fashioned hometown stream of cheer straight down Market Street the evening of December 10th. Bring the kids and get there early for a good spot on the sidewalk.

But the holidays just wouldn't be the holidays without good old-fashioned shopping. And lucky for us, downtown

has plenty of options to satisfy everyone on your gift giving list. In City Center you'll find great clothing, shoes and jewelry. Warehouse Row is full of boutique specialty shops for the fashionista in your life. A little further south on Market Street, 13th & Williams Streets and all along Main Street there is a great eclectic mix of shops, restaurants and galleries. And, the NorthShore boasts a host of various shops and galleries all along Frazier Avenue and 2 Northshore on Manufacturers Road. Best of all, shopping at locally owned and operated retail stores keeps your money within the local economy where it benefits your neighbors around you.

As you begin celebrating the spirit of this joyous season and get ready to shop for those special in your life, be sure to remember that the holiday spirit shines bright in downtown Chattanooga! **CS**

Kim H. White is President/CEO of River City Company. As downtown Chattanooga's economic development company, River City Company is working to keep downtown working.