

Shine On Chillicothe raises \$100K for Yoctangee holiday lights

Megan Becker

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CHILLICOTHE— Yoctangee Park's Christmas lights will be bigger and better than ever thanks to Shine On Chillicothe, the city's blossoming organization of holiday light enthusiasts.

The non-profit was founded last year to bring more Christmas decorations and lights to Chillicothe during the annual Christmas tree lighting celebration.

The organization's inaugural year collected about \$90,000 to light up the park. This year, the organization has collected over \$100,000 for decorations through community fundraisers, including selling Christmas trees and hosting a cocktail dinner. Downtown businesses sponsored individual trees, which Shine On decorated with over 500 strands of lights.

Big donors include Adena Health System, South Central Power and Mares Cares.

Some displays are rented from an organization in Columbus, while other decorations are bought to be reused for years to come.

Lisa Wayland, a member of Shine On, said the group started putting up the lights in October and are still working eight hour days to finish in time for the grand tree lighting this month.

Wayland said the organization's goal this year is to light as much of the park as possible. She said last year's display was, "beautiful and everybody appreciated them, but there was still a lot of darkness in the park."

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Braxton Clarkson checks out the Christmas Tree bulbs on the park tree with his uncle James Littlejohn after the tree lighting ceremony in Yoctangee Park in 2021. FILE PHOTO

Lights

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Although it may take a few more years of acquiring Christmas decorations to light up the entire park, Wayland said the organization is making major strides.

Grand Tree Lighting

The Christmas tree lighting will be held at Yoctangee Park at 6 p.m. on Friday during downtown open house weekend. The event will host carolers, carriage rides, ice skating, hot chocolate, Christmas music, Santa's playhouse and food trucks. Santa will be arriving in a horse-drawn sleigh.

The tree lighting will take place at 6:30 p.m.

Megan Becker is a reporter for the Chillicothe Gazette. Call her at 740349-1106, email her at mbecker@gannett.com or follow her on Twitter @BeckerReporting.

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