

MDA's Elves Spread Holiday Cheer Downtown

MDA's army of volunteers has been hard at work making our hometown as festive as possible for the holiday season.

From holiday caroling to installing new seasonal displays in all the planters, the MDA has been busy brightening up downtown for shoppers, diners and everyone else enjoying our quaint borough.

The centerpiece of the efforts have been the expansion of the beautiful holiday light display throughout the downtown district. The lights and globes were purchased by the MDA, which worked with the Department of Public Works, businesses and volunteers to put them up.

Sorry you missed all the fun? There will be plenty of more opportunities to help the MDA on its mission to make Metuchen the best borough around.

ABOUT THE MDA

The Metuchen Downtown Alliance represents nearly 300 business owners, 89 property owners and inspired more than 3,500 volunteer hours last year.

DOWNTOWN METUCHEN

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MDA Annual Meeting on January 25

Save the date for Thursday, Jan. 25, for the MDA's annual member meeting starting at 7:30 p.m. at LaRosa Pizzeria and Restaurant on Lake Ave.

New Year's Eve in Metuchen Will Be...

LIT!!



If you thought the wings at Hailey's were the hottest thing downtown, do we have news for you! The flame-throwing, fire-eating, crowd-pleasing act known as Fire Magick will be among the highlights of a party being planned on the brand-new Town Plaza to ring in 2018. The Metuchen Downtown Alliance is partnering with the Borough of Metuchen to host a New Year's Eve bash, the likes of which this town has never seen.

The details are still being planned by MDA volunteers, but attendees can look forward to Fire Magick, a fire dancing company, an LED light show, vintage photo booth, restaurant specials, a chainsaw ice sculpture, DJ dance party, champagne cotton candy and a fortune teller.

It starts at 8 p.m. but for those who like to be under the covers by the time the New Year is here, the ball drop ceremony for kids will be held at midnight Greenwich Mean Time, which is a mercifully early 7 p.m. Metuchen standard time.

"The Plaza opening is the culmination of 50 years of smart planning and is a major milestone," said Eric Berger, chairman of the MDA Board of Trustees, "The MDA is proud to host the first event on the Plaza, and looks forward

to the Plaza drawing customers to our downtown businesses for years to come."

The Town Plaza is located at the corner of New and Pearl Streets.

#Downtown Metuchen

Tips for Boosting Your Business's Presence On Social Media

The MDA's post-Small Business Saturday survey found that the top two motivators for shoppers to participate in the event were social media and word of mouth. We all know that social media is important and increasingly so every day, yet many downtown businesses use it infrequently or not at all. The MDA's newly formed Tech Team is trying to remedy that, starting with an initiative focused on increasing the visibility of Metuchen's businesses on Google Maps.

So, if you see some adults and teens snapping photos at your businesses over the next few weeks, don't be alarmed. They're posting updated photos and short interior videos on each business's Google site.

And one team member is also creating entries for businesses that aren't mapped yet. How helpful is that to a business? Within a week, Google reported that 100 users had viewed the photos of one



business with newly posted content.

But an effective social media presence demands more than that. Each business has to increase its savvy in this area and commit to posting on Facebook and Instagram, and building a following. If you need and want help in getting started, or in reactivating your dormant accounts, here are a couple of things you can do:

Attend the short workshop "Drive New Business with Social Media" at the Metuchen Library on January 24 (7– 8:30 pm), co-sponsored with SCORE and led by expert Maria Semple (theprospectfinder.com) Register

by phone: 732- 632-8526 or: business_seminar1_eventbrite.com.

Ask the MDA for help. The Tech Team is committed to helping businesses get up and running and will try to offer consultations for those who ask.

And if you know what to do, but just need to re-energize yourself to do it, remember that the MDA amplifies the power of your posts by reposting them on its website and featuring offers and events it knows about in its own social media.

So, make a focus on social media a New Year's business resolution and see the benefits in 2018.

25 Net Business Additions in 2017

The Downtown Metuchen business community grew strongly in 2017, with launches of new businesses far outnumbering closings, according to a tally from the MDA. Thirty businesses were added to the downtown district and five expanded, while only 10 closed, resulting in a net addition of 25 businesses. Welcome to Metuchen: Genus Boni, IQ Research, Supercuts, ArteVino Studio, Multiply Group, AliFina's Designs, Leonardo Jeweler, Woodmont Metro, Dr. James D.

Oliver Family Dentistry, John W. Ferrante DMD, Metuchen Smoke Shop, Massage Envy, European Wax Center, Picture Perfect Studios, Pearl Street Café, Bishop's Bistro, The Hair Loft, Strongmile Movers, Maria Manjelo Photography, FiveStar Mobiles, Whole Foods, Eckanskar Satsang Society of NJ, HomePoint Financial, Lionheart Holdings, Preschool of Rock, Pearl Street Automotive, Beauty Anthology, Wade Appraisal, Marafiki Fair Trade Pop-up Shop, Amboy Bank and Title Boxing Club.

