



## **PRESS RELEASE**

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**Contact:** Jim Salengo, Executive Director  
Downtown Schenectady Improvement Corporation, 518-377-9430

### **5<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL MAGIC & MELODIES EVENT SPOTLIGHTS DOWNTOWN SCHENECTADY** **Holiday Celebration Promotes Businesses and Family-Friendly Activities**

(Schenectady, NY, 12/15/08) – Downtown Schenectady will become a winter wonderland of seasonal entertainment, activities and shopping on **Thursday, December 18 from 4:00 – 9:00 p.m.** when the Downtown Schenectady Improvement Corporation (DSIC) presents its 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Magic & Melodies Holiday Celebration. The public is invited to enjoy a FREE evening of family fun in the heart of the ElectricCity Arts & Entertainment District.

Schenectady City Hall will be a hub of activity throughout the evening, with free kids' crafts, performances and more inside. Outside, free horse-drawn carriage rides will be available on the streets around City Hall. At approximately 5:45 p.m., Mayor Brian U. Stratton will lead a bagpipe procession from City Hall to Veterans' Park at the top of State Street for a 6:00 p.m. tree lighting ceremony, complete with caroling from the AEG Calvary Tabernacle Choir.

Free holiday refreshments will be available along the Jay Street Marketplace, including hot chocolate, cookies and eggnog. Most businesses will be open late, many of which will offer in-store performances, demonstrations and shopping specials. Additional businesses from State Street and North Ferry Street to Union Street and Barrett Street will welcome guests throughout the evening with specials and free goodies.

At 440 State Street, the Northeast Ballet Company will perform selections from the Nutcracker. The Octavo Singers will provide added entertainment inside City Hall and in select downtown businesses. Singing group Didynimous will also perform inside City Hall.

Artisan demonstrations, including woodcarving, will take place along State Street. Greek dancing from the Fotia Hellenic Society, jazz dancing from the Sayles School of Fine Arts and fire spinning by Shilly Shally Fire Arts are some of the performances that will take place outside at "The Circle" at the corner of State and Jay Streets.

This year's Magic & Melodies Holiday Celebration coincides with the opening night of WRGB's extremely popular Melodies of Christmas concert at Proctors. To encourage patrons of Melodies of Christmas to spend time in and around downtown before or after the show, more than 20 downtown businesses are offering 20% discounts on dining or selected merchandise for anyone who presents a concert ticket during the run of the show from Thursday, December 18 to Sunday, December 21.

Says Jim Salengo, executive director of the DSIC, "Downtown Schenectady is definitely the holiday place to be on the evening of Thursday, December 18. We invite families from throughout

the Capital Region to visit the *new* downtown Schenectady and experience free fun, cultural entertainment and our fantastic selection of independently-owned businesses.”

A full schedule of Magic & Melodies activities and participating businesses is available online at [www.downtownschenectady.com](http://www.downtownschenectady.com). Also listed are businesses providing discounts for holders of WRGB's Melodies of Christmas concert tickets. On the night of the event, Magic & Melodies schedules will be available at the information table located at the corner of Jay and State Streets. For additional information, contact the Downtown Schenectady Improvement Corporation at 518-377-9430.

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*The Downtown Schenectady Improvement Corporation is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the revitalization of Downtown Schenectady. Our mission is to promote Downtown Schenectady as a premier location for commerce, recreation and residence by enhancing, facilitating and supporting economic and cultural growth.*