

Local businesses help ‘Light up the Night’ at Barrhaven’s 11th annual Lions Club Santa Claus parade

By Andrea Steenbakkers
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Over 16,000 local residents were treated to the biggest and brightest Barrhaven Santa parade yet! The parade participation and attendance has grown exponentially in the past two years since the Barrhaven Lions formed a partnership for this event with the Barrhaven Business Improvement Area and the groups decided to try an evening parade.

According to George Kennedy of the Barrhaven Lions, the “Police officers that worked the parade both years estimate that the crowd doubled from previous year. We have to get real serious about the conduct of this parade. It's getting far too big for three Lions, all over 60... well, closer to 70 years of age, to handle, especially at the start point and dispersal area. From what I've heard, all of the hard work was worth it!” Mr. Kennedy can rest assured that the business leaders in the community will come together through the BBIA to fill in any gaps left in the Lions parade services, by the rapid growth of the event.

Local businesses were excited to be a part of this parade once again and were glad to have a chance to give back to the community that supports them over the year. “We have many special things in Barrhaven and this is certainly one of them. A great number of our local businesses gave back through much needed financial support and sponsorship as well as float participation in the parade. This is rewarding for the businesses and the residents alike. This absolutely proves that when all of the elements in a community bind together to create something, *magical* things happen. On a clear Saturday, November 17th night, indeed there was some Christmas Magic in the air!” exudes Ken Ross, the Barrhaven BIA Chair and owner of Ross Independent Grocer.

New this year were a series of food and beverage stations along the parade route, where area retailers generously gave free samples to the chilly but excited residents who came out to enjoy our parade. Through the sponsorship of local business we were able to add more bands to the parade line up which always makes for a more lively evening! Our major sponsors made it all possible. They are the backbone of the parade. “We are proud to be the Platinum sponsor for this event that brings so much joy to so many Barrhaven families. This is the perfect way to kick off the holiday season and get the community into the holiday spirit”, says Rosemary O’Shea, Monarch Corporation’s Ottawa area general manager.

Parade announcers Linda Warne from Y101 and Steve Warne from the Team 1200 were a welcome addition to our stage this year. It was wonderful to have a Barrhaven couple to cheer on the float participants, many of whom they knew. It just added that intimate final touch which truly made this a unique, Barrhaven-made Santa parade! To see the highlights from the parade, please visit Santa's webpage at www.barrhavenlive.ca/LionsSantaClausParade .

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