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The North Carolina Arboretum Lights up Asheville this Holiday Season with Sixth Annual *Winter Lights* Holiday Light Show, November 22, 2019 – January 4, 2020

ASHEVILLE, N.C. (October 14, 2019) – The North Carolina Arboretum will once again light up Asheville this holiday season with its sixth annual *Winter Lights* holiday light show. On display nightly, Friday, November 22, 2019, through Saturday, January 4, 2020, from 6 to 10 p.m., *Winter Lights* is an outdoor walking experience through the Arboretum’s nationally known gardens dressed in more than half-a-million holiday lights. Designed with an artistic aesthetic, this family-friendly event includes beautifully lit displays and glowing landscapes, interactive games and activities, live entertainment, as well as festive food and beverages available for purchase. Considered Asheville’s brightest holiday tradition, *Winter Lights* is the Arboretum’s largest fundraising event of the year, and proceeds help support the Arboretum’s educational programs, exhibits and facilities year-round.

This year, the Arboretum will be launching its new “Magical Maple” display, which showcases Western North Carolina’s native red maple tree through lights, music and art. Featuring four signature trees located alongside the Arboretum’s grassy knoll, the display will illuminate to musical hits from the ’60s, ’70s and ’80s. Many fan favorites will also return this year, including the Arboretum’s signature 50-foot animated tree and lighted Quilt Garden, Rocky Cove Railroad garden scale model train, as well as its animatronic children’s program, “Storytime at Woodland Cove,” and a variety of holiday-themed interactive games. Festive food and beverages, including hot cocoa, s’mores, wine and beer, will be available for purchase throughout the gardens and inside the Arboretum’s Education Center.

“*Winter Lights* has truly become a signature holiday event for Asheville and the entire Western North Carolina region,” said George Briggs, executive director of The North Carolina Arboretum. “Walking through the Arboretum’s gardens at night and seeing our landscapes covered in more than half-a-million lights brings a whole new light to the natural world during the holiday season. It is really a unique experience that visitors have enjoyed coming back to year after year.”

For visitors seeking transportation from Asheville, The Trolley Company will offer its *Winter Lights Holiday Tour*, Thursdays through Saturdays from 6 to 9 p.m. This chartered package includes a complimentary cup of hot cocoa, admission to *Winter Lights* and a scenic ride filled with music and merriment to and from the Arboretum. Pick-up locations for the tour will be at the Renaissance hotel in downtown Asheville and the DoubleTree hotel in Biltmore Village. Tickets for The Trolley Company’s *Winter Lights Holiday Tour* are \$29.50 per person and must be purchased in advance through The Trolley Company’s website, www.thetrolleycompany.com.

The Arboretum has also partnered again with the City of Asheville for its *Local Lights* holiday light displays. Thanks to a partnership between the Arboretum, the City of Asheville, the Asheville Downtown Association, the Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority and the Historic Biltmore Village Association, residents and visitors can enjoy special pop-up holiday light displays in Pack Square Park, Pritchard Park and Biltmore Village. A special lighting ceremony to kick off *Local Lights* will take place at Pack Square Park on Friday, November 22, from 5 to 7 p.m. and will include free photos with Santa and Mrs. Claus. On Friday, December 6, Biltmore Village will celebrate its *Local Lights* display as part of the tree lighting ceremony for its 32nd annual Dickens Festival.

“The *Local Lights* partnership really showcases the power of Asheville’s collaborative community and enthusiasm to provide residents and visitors with a special, artistic experience during the holiday season,” Briggs continued. “We are proud to produce this show and help ‘Light up Asheville’ this holiday season.”

The North Carolina Arboretum is located off the Blue Ridge Parkway at Milepost 393. From I-26, take Exit 33 and follow Blue Ridge Parkway signs for two miles to the entrance ramp. Please visit www.ncarboretum.org for parking fees and hours of operation.

Tickets for *Winter Lights* range from \$8 – 25 and are date- and time-specific. Children four and under are free. This year, the Arboretum is offering guests the opportunity to purchase Flex Tickets, which give visitors the option to easily exchange the date of their purchased ticket for another night without any additional penalty. The Arboretum will also be offering several different discounted ticket opportunities, including its “Friends and Family” Tuesday night promotion (excluding Christmas Eve and New Year’s Eve) and “Arboretum Week,” December 2 – 5. Arboretum members receive \$2 off each ticket purchased. Many nights, including weekends and holidays, are likely to sell out, and visitors are strongly encouraged to purchase their tickets in advance. Tickets for *Winter Lights* can be purchased online at ncwinterlights.com.

For more information about the Arboretum and *Winter Lights*, please visit ncarboretum.org.

About The North Carolina Arboretum

Each year more than 500,000 visitors experience the Arboretum’s gardens, trails, exhibits and plant shows, educational programs and lectures. The Arboretum’s ability to meet its mission and enrich the visitor experience is made possible by a community of supporting resources – from members, volunteers and staff to state and local funds, special events, tribute gifts, grants and community partners.

The central mission of The North Carolina Arboretum, an affiliate institution of the 17-campus University of North Carolina System, is to cultivate connections among people, plants and places. A standard \$14 per vehicle parking fee is required for non-members. Special events and after-hours activities may require additional fees. For more information, please call (828) 665-2492 or visit www.ncarboretum.org.

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