



STATE OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF GENERAL SERVICES
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Winter At The Plaza Schedule Announced
*Empire State Plaza Rink Opens November 29 with the first
Hannaford Free Skate Rental Friday*

RoAnn M. Destito, New York State Office of General Services (OGS) Commissioner, today announced the lineup for this year's *Winter at the Plaza* events. The ice rink will open the day after Thanksgiving. The popular Hannaford Free Skate Rental Fridays will make a return this year as will the free Learn-to-Skate clinics sponsored by BlueShield of Northeastern New York. I Love NY will once again be featured at center ice. Lots of new events have been added including a Valentine's Day Rock-N-Skate sure to attract romantics of all ages. For full details visit www.empirestateplaza.org.

The rink will be open 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. seven days a week, and skating is always free. Lockers and skate rental are now located on the Plaza level adjacent to the rink. Each Friday, including opening day, will feature free skate rentals, courtesy of Hannaford Supermarkets, one of the rink's presenting sponsors for the season. Friday evenings will also feature family-friendly entertainment, including live music. Also, BlueShield of Northeastern New York will once again sponsor a series of Learn-to-Skate clinics throughout the season.

"When Governor Cuomo talks about making better use of the state's public facilities, the Empire State Plaza's skating rink and all the exciting, family-fun events held there immediately pop into mind," Commissioner Destito said. "We invite everyone to take advantage of this amazing state asset and enjoy the Plaza this winter for some fresh air and fun. Thanks again to Hannaford Supermarkets' generous support, November 29 will be the first Free Skate Rental Friday of the season."

"We are thrilled to partner with the New York State Office of General Services to bring such a beloved winter activity to the Empire State Plaza and offer free skate rentals each Friday throughout the season," said Hannaford Supermarkets Community Relations Specialist Molly Tarleton. "We were excited to see thousands of skaters take advantage of our free skate rental program in its inaugural year and are thrilled to again provide families and individuals with

access to an activity that crosses generations and is enjoyed by people of all ages. We look forward to welcoming families onto the rink for a fun and affordable outing against the backdrop of the state Capitol.”

“The opening of the Empire State Plaza skating rink is the perfect way to kick off the holiday season,” said Empire State Development Division of Tourism Executive Director Gavin Landry. “ESD’s Division of Tourism, through the I LOVE NEW YORK program, is pleased to join the NYS Office of General Services and our partners at Hannaford and Blue Shield of Northeastern New York to sponsor this free family-friendly activity and encourage New Yorkers from around the state to come visit.”

“We understand that it can be difficult to stay active when the weather turns cold,” said Brian O’Grady, Vice President of BlueShield. “We are proud to sponsor the Learn-to-Skate clinics at the Empire State Plaza and hope that these events will encourage people to stay active throughout the winter months.”

Rink Events:

- Hannaford Supermarkets Free Skate Rental Fridays – No charge for skates from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m., every Friday starting opening day November 29.
- Saturday, November 30, 9 - 11 a.m. — Learn-to-Skate Clinic presented by BlueShield of Northeastern New York. Visit ogs.ny.gov to register.
- Sunday, December 8, 3 – 8 p.m. — New York State Holiday Tree Lighting and Fireworks Festival presented by SEFCU. Tree lighting, staged program and fireworks 5:15 – 6 p.m. The rink will be closed during the fireworks and will re-open afterward with live music playing for skaters. All festival events will take place outside this year.
- Friday, December 13, 6 – 8 p.m. — Holiday Rock and Skate.
- Friday, December 20, 6 – 8 p.m. — Holiday Rock and Skate.
- Saturday, December 28, 9 – 11a.m. — Learn-to-Skate Clinic presented by BlueShield of Northeastern New York. Visit ogs.ny.gov to register.
- Saturday, January 25, 9 – 11a.m. — Learn-to-Skate Clinic presented by BlueShield of Northeastern New York. Visit ogs.ny.gov to register.
- Friday, February 14, 6 – 8 p.m. — Valentine’s Day Rock and Skate.
- Saturday, February 22, 9 – 11a.m. — Learn-to-Skate Clinic presented by BlueShield of Northeastern New York. Visit ogs.ny.gov to register.
- Saturday, March 8 – 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. Hannaford Kidz Expo, on the concourse.

General Rink Information

- **Hours:** Every day from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m., weather dependent. Closed Christmas Day.
- **Cost to Skate:** Free
- **Skate Rental:** \$3 for children under 12 and \$4 for adults. Skate rentals will be available whenever the rink is open.
- **Amenities:** Full-service snack bar open Friday nights, weekends, and school holidays; skate lounge with lockers for personal items now located at the Plaza level; and music.

The rink was closed for several years and was reopened under Governor Cuomo in December 2011. It is now regularly recognized as one of the best places to skate in the Capital Region. The ice rink originally opened on December 17, 1976, when the Office of General Services held the first holiday festival at the Empire State Plaza. The three-day event drew more than 60,000 people to see the lighting of the tree, fireworks, and rink dedication.

Winter at the Plaza sponsors include I Love NY, Hannaford Supermarkets, BlueShield of Northeastern New York, SEFCU, MetLife, New York's 529 College Savings Program, CDPHP, Garelick Farms, Dunkin' Donuts, Times Union, Albany.com, Metroland, 99.5 The River, PYX 106, 810 & 103-1 News Radio WGY, KISS 102-3, Oldies 98-3, and Fox Sports 980.

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