



**Office of  
General Services**



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**SOUTHSIDE JOHNNY TO HEADLINE NEW YORK STATE'S  
FOURTH OF JULY CELEBRATION PRESENTED BY PRICE CHOPPER**

***Event to Feature Food, Family-Friendly Activities  
and the Capital District's Biggest and Best Fireworks Show***

New York State Office of General Services Commissioner RoAnn M. Destito today announced New York State and Price Chopper are teaming up again to present New York State's 40<sup>th</sup> annual Independence Day celebration at the Empire State Plaza. With an exciting program filled with amazing performances, great food, activities for children, and the largest pyrotechnics display in the region, this year's festivities will run from 3 to 10 p.m. on Saturday, July 4.

The ongoing construction on the steps over Madison Avenue at the Empire State Plaza has required changes in the site layout and street closure plan for July 4. These changes are outlined below and can be viewed on an easy-to-read map online at [www.ogs.ny.gov](http://www.ogs.ny.gov). Because the steps will not be available for seating, people are encouraged to bring their own lawn chairs.

"Since our country's bicentennial in 1976 we have been partnering with Price Chopper to put on an Independence Day celebration with entertainment, food, and family-friendly activities that attracts more than 30,000 people each year," Commissioner Destito said. "Governor Cuomo has made public-private partnerships a priority for his administration, and this is a great example of just how successful they can be. We are delighted to have the Empire State Plaza available for the community to celebrate our

country's founding and for people to demonstrate their patriotism in the company of family, friends, and neighbors."

"Since hosting the inaugural event celebrating our nation's Bicentennial in 1976, Price Chopper has helped make the Empire State Plaza *the* place to celebrate the Fourth of July in the Capital Region," said Pam Cerrone, Price Chopper's Manager of Community Relations. "On this 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary year, Price Chopper is pleased to once again present the Capital Region's largest and most elaborate July Fourth gathering."

The July 4 festivities will include a special performance by headliner Southside Johnny and the Asbury Jukes. The band emerged from the New Jersey shore scene in 1974, evolving as an R&B horn band in the Memphis' Stax Records tradition. The band is known for high-energy shows and no-holds-barred songs, including "I Don't Wanna Go Home," "Havin' a Party," "The Fever," "Talk to Me," "Trapped Again," and "This Time It's For Real."

The day's lineup includes something for everyone, starting with a naturalization ceremony, and including dozens of food and craft vendors, activities for kids, and an evening of live entertainment leading up to the big pyrotechnics show. There will be performances by local artists: horn-fueled funk and R&B band Funk Evolution, Elvis tribute artist Drew Dyal (aka DD King), and jazz and soul singer Jill Hughes.

### **New For This Year's Celebration**

In addition to bringing back some of the most popular Fourth of July activities, New York State and Price Chopper strive each year to keep this annual event fresh and exciting. New activities and performers will include:

- The RPI Juggling & Unicycling Club. This collection of local and student talent has been around for more than 15 years and is one of the oldest clubs on the RPI campus.
- Balloon Gal Jenny. This balloon artist's favorite part of her balloon-twisting adventures is the smile she brings to children's faces and surprising kids by attaching a balloon to them like a backpack, wings, wristlet, or barrette.

### **Returning Favorites**

- Watkins Glen International. Watkins Glen became a new sponsor for the event in 2014 and will be bringing Denny Hamlin's stock car to the Plaza this year.
- Roaming singers from Capitaland Chorus of Albany. Quartets from this award-winning all women's barbershop chorus will sing traditional favorites around the Empire State Plaza.

- African drumming with Badra. From Senegal, Badra's Nine Steps Away from Africa offers people a chance to play his hand-crafted drums, which, along with other hand-made items from Senegal, are available for purchase.

At each year's July 4 festivities a big focus is placed on creating a family-friendly environment at the Plaza. Smoke- and alcohol-free kids' play areas will be located on west side of the Plaza by the agency buildings and will feature bounce rides, including the Price Chopper Hopper, pony rides, face painting, and arts and crafts with the Albany Tulip Queen and her Court.

As has become tradition in recent years, Price Chopper's House of BBQ will be "grillin' tonight" on the Plaza, selling several of its signature items, including Certified Angus beef burgers and Ball Park beef franks. Other returning favorites include Poppy's Parties cotton candy, Roy's Caribbean, Maison Crepes, and Times Square Catering. Additionally, Wild Bill's Old-Fashioned Soda and Sammy's Country Wagon will be among the new food vendors at this year's event.

Plaza security will enforce its alcohol policy consistent with all other events and will not allow outside alcohol beverages, hard-sided coolers, or glass containers to be brought onto the Plaza at any time of day. The use of sparklers and fireworks remains illegal in Albany County and is not permitted on state property. All bags and backpacks will be subject to search. Alcohol will be served by vendors to adults with proper identification.

This year's Fourth of July festivities will begin at the Empire State Plaza with live music kicking off at 3:45 p.m. (see program below) and will continue throughout the afternoon and evening along with other entertainment and activities. The area's longest and most elaborate fireworks display will begin around 9:15 p.m.

Free parking is available in the visitor and "P" lots under the Empire State Plaza, the East Garage, and the Grand Street and Elk Street lots. For those arriving early, free parking will also be available in the New York State Museum parking lot, but this lot will only be accessible from Madison Avenue until 2:30 p.m. For event updates, follow @plazaevents on Twitter or call (518) 474-4759. For additional information about Summer at the Plaza events, including directions and ground rules, visit [www.ogs.ny.gov](http://www.ogs.ny.gov).

Sponsors include: Price Chopper, I Love NY, New York State Lottery, DeCrescente Distributing, Watkins Glen International, Saratoga Water, Albany.com, Times Union, Metroland, Holiday Inn Express, and Cricket Wireless.

(Grounds open at 2 p.m.; activities begin at 3 p.m.)

## **Events Schedule**

3:00 p.m. Welcome & Naturalization Ceremony  
3:45 p.m. Funk Evolution  
5:15 p.m. Elvis tribute artist Drew Dyal (aka DD King)  
5:45 p.m. Jill Hughes  
7:30 p.m. New York State's Fourth of July Celebration Official Program  
8:00 p.m. Southside Johnny  
9:15 p.m. Fireworks!

## **New Site Layout and Road Closure Plans**

- The fireworks will be shot off from a new location, which requires a new safety zone where visitors will not be allowed during the festival. This barricaded safety zone includes the areas between the Corning Tower and The Egg, the large reflecting pool and the reflecting pool closest to the museum, as well as both inner pathways on the Plaza.
- At 7 p.m., the safety zone will be expanded, and the entire south side of the Plaza, between The Egg and Madison Avenue on the east side and between Agency Building 3 and Madison Avenue on the west side, will be closed off with barricades. This area will not be reopened to the public until after a post-fireworks safety check, which will be approximately 20 minutes after the last firework.
- Both Madison Avenue and State Street will be closed to vehicle traffic between Eagle Street and Swan Street after 3 p.m. but will remain open to pedestrians throughout the entire event.
- Swan Street will remain open to traffic throughout the day, but parking will not be permitted on Swan between Madison Avenue and State Street the day of the event.
- The staircases from Madison Avenue to the Plaza will be closed all day to pedestrians. Prior to 7 p.m., access to the Plaza from Madison Avenue will be available only at the security gate just up the hill from the staircases. Visitors attempting to get from Madison Avenue to the north side of the Plaza where the stage is located will be encouraged to use the sidewalk along Swan Street.
- Pedestrian access to and from the parking garages, enclosed walkway, and Empire State Plaza Concourse will be available through The Egg, the exterior plaza staircase behind The Egg, the staircases near Agency Building 4, State Street, and the glass doors on Madison Avenue.

Additional information about road closures and parking restrictions will be made available by the City of Albany closer to the day of the event.

## ***About Price Chopper***

*Based in Schenectady, the Golub Corporation owns and operates 135 Price Chopper grocery stores in New York, Vermont, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts and New Hampshire. The American-owned, family-managed company prides itself on longstanding traditions of innovative food merchandising, leadership in community service, and cooperative employee relations. Golub's 22,000 teammates collectively own more than 47 percent of the company's privately held stock, making it one of the nation's largest privately held corporations that is predominantly employee-owned. For additional information, visit [www.pricechopper.com](http://www.pricechopper.com).*

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