



Office of General Services

For Immediate Release: 11/19/2015

Contact:

Heather Groll | heather.groll@ogs.ny.gov | (518) 474-5987

OGS ANNOUNCES WINTER AT THE PLAZA EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Empire “Skate” Plaza Ice Rink to Open December 4 and Feature Free Skate Rentals, Courtesy of Hannaford Supermarkets; Online Registration for First Learn-To-Skate Clinic Now Open

New York State Office of General Services (OGS) Commissioner RoAnn Destito today announced the Empire State Plaza ice rink will open at 11 a.m. on Friday, December 4, weather permitting. The rink will once again play a major role in a series of free events planned for the Plaza this season, including the annual holiday tree lighting presented by SEFCU on Sunday, December 6.

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 located on the Plaza level adjacent to the rink. Each Friday, including opening day, will feature free skate rentals, courtesy of Hannaford Supermarkets. Also, BlueShield of Northeastern New York will sponsor a series of learn-to-skate clinics.

“There is always a great sense of excitement and anticipation each fall when people see members of the OGS team start assembling the Empire State Plaza skating rink and realize the opening day of free skating and then the holiday tree lighting are just around the corner,” Commissioner Destito said. “The rink offers our neighbors in the Capital Region and visitors from all over the world a place to be active and attend family friendly events throughout the winter months. That wouldn’t be possible without the support we receive from I Love NY, Hannaford Supermarkets, BlueShield of Northeastern New York, and all of our other generous sponsors.”

“I LOVE NEW YORK is excited to once again partner with the Office of General Services to offer access to fun events and free skating all season long at the Empire State Plaza ice rink,” said Empire State Development Executive Director of Tourism Gavin Landry.

“Ice skating at the Empire State Plaza is one of the Capital Region’s most beloved winter traditions. Hannaford Supermarkets is thrilled to partner with the New York State Office of General Services to offer free skate rentals each Friday throughout the season at this amazing ice rink,” said Hannaford Supermarkets Community Relations Specialist Brian Fabre. “We encourage families to visit the Empire State Plaza this winter to experience a wonderful

seasonal pastime that crosses generations and allows people of all ages to get some fresh air and stay active throughout the cold weather months.”

"BlueShield is excited to welcome Capital Region families onto the ice this winter as the presenting sponsor of the Empire State Plaza ice rink Learn to Skate clinics," said Dr. Kirk Panneton, Regional Executive and Medical Director of BlueShield. "Since 2011 we have helped over 1000 children and adults learn to ice skate. The stability, control and strength involved in ice skating are a fun part of this healthy activity that is great exercise for people of all ages and abilities."

Schedule Highlights of Free Rink Events:

- **Friday, December 4**, 11 a.m. – 8 p.m., ice rink **opening day** and the first Hannaford free skate rental Friday.
- **Saturday, December 5**, 9 – 11 a.m., First **Learn-To-Skate Clinic** sponsored by BlueShield of Northeastern New York. Additional clinics will be offered on January 2, February 6 and March 5. Online pre-registration required at www.empirestateplaza.org.
- **Sunday, December 6**, 1 p.m. – 8 p.m., **New York State Holiday Tree Lighting presented by SEFCU**. This family-fun annual event has something for everyone with a full day of indoor and outdoor activities, including a chance to meet Santa, ice sculpture demonstrations, a holiday arts and crafts fair, and skating demonstrations by the Hudson Mohawk Figure Skating Club, live music, train rides around the Empire State Plaza concourse, and a holiday rock and skate with Grand Central Station. The tree-lighting ceremony begins at 5:15 and concludes with a fireworks show. The event also coincides with the Taste NY Holiday Expo at the New York State Museum, which has a \$5 admission (those 12 and younger get in free) and the Great Train Extravaganza in the Empire State Plaza Convention Center, admission \$7, kids under 12 free.
- **Saturday, December 19**, 9 – 11 a.m., First **Try Hockey For Free With USA Hockey and Troy Albany Youth Hockey**. Additional hockey clinics will be held on January 16, February 20, and March 12. Online preregistration is required.
- **Sunday, December 20**, 11 a.m. – 8 p.m., **Siena Day**. Show off your school pride by wearing green or gold at the Empire Skate plaza and a \$2 discount on skate rentals.
- **Sunday, February 7, Big Game Sunday**. Wear your team's jersey and come to the rink to skate before the Super Bowl.
- **Tuesday, February 9, Mardi Gras**. The Spirit of New Orleans comes alive. Free beads with every skate rental. While supplies last.
- **Sunday, February 14, Valentine's Day**. Come to the Plaza for a romantic skate with your sweetheart or even to propose marriage.
- **Saturday, March 5, 11th Annual Hannaford Kidz Expo** featuring the Berenstain Bears.
- **Sunday, March 13, last day of skating** for the season.

General Rink Information

- **Hours:** Every day from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m., weather dependent. The rink will be closed daily from 3 to 4 p.m. for maintenance.
- **Cost to Skate:** Free
- **Skate Rental:** \$3 for children 12 and under and \$4 for adults. A photo ID is required to rent skates. Every Friday is free skate rental Friday courtesy of Hannaford Supermarkets.
- **Amenities:** A full-service snack bar open Friday nights and weekends and a skate lounge with lockers for personal items are located on the Plaza level.

Paid visitor parking is available in the V-lot under the Empire State Plaza. Free parking in the East Garage on Philip Street off Madison Avenue is available after 5 p.m.

For updates on any of the above listed events visit the Empire State Plaza Events page on Facebook, follow @plazaevents on Twitter, or call (518) 474-4759. For additional information about Winter at the Plaza events, including directions, parking, and ground rules, visit www.ogs.ny.gov.

Winter at the Plaza sponsors include I Love NY, Hannaford Supermarkets, BlueShield of Northeastern New York, CDTA, Albany Jewish Community Center, Garelick Farms, GEICO, SEFCU, Hudson Valley Community College, Stewart's, Sunmark Federal Credit Union, El Mariachi, Siena Athletics, Albany.com, Alloveralbany.com, Times Union, PYX 106, and 99.5 The River.

Sponsors of the tree lighting include SEFCU, Hannaford Supermarkets, MetLife, National Grid, New York Lottery, Sunmark Federal Credit Union, Hudson Mohawk Figure Skating Club, Schenectady County Community College, Oldies 98.3, Times Union, Albany.com, and Alloveralbany.com.

###