



Office of General Services

For Immediate Release: 11/17/2016

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 2 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 2, 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 4.

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.

“From the child who is coming to see our traditional holiday tree lighting for the first time to the couple holding hands while ice skating on Valentine’s Day, OGS offers an exciting lineup of events at the Empire State Plaza ice rink each year to keep folks of all ages active and entertained over the winter months,” Commissioner Destito said. “This year is no different, and it wouldn’t be possible without the support we receive from I Love NY, Hannaford Supermarkets, BlueShield of Northeastern New York, SEFCU, and all of our other generous sponsors.”

“The ice rink and seasonal activities at Empire State Plaza have become winter traditions in the Capital Region,” said Howard Zemsky, Empire State Development President, CEO and Commissioner. “I’m proud of the partnership between I LOVE NEW YORK and the Office of General Services, and the family friendly entertainment we provide each year for residents and visitors to New York’s capital.”

“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, as well as during the annual New York State Holiday Tree Lighting,” said Hannaford Supermarkets Community Relations Specialist Brian Fabre. “We were excited

to see thousands of skaters take advantage of our free skate rental program 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 Empire State Plaza allows our community to maintain healthy and active lifestyles while embracing the winter season," said Dr. Kirk Panneton, Vice President, Regional Executive, and Medical Director, BlueShield of Northeastern New York. "We are thrilled to partner with the New York State Office of General Services for the 5th year in a row to offer free skating lessons and other family friendly activities all season long."

"The New York State Holiday Tree Lighting has become synonymous with the Capital Region. SEFCU looks forward every year to sponsoring this fun, family-friendly event," said Michael J. Castellana, President and CEO of SEFCU.

Schedule Highlights of Free Rink Events:

- **Friday, December 2**, 11 a.m. – 8 p.m., ice rink **opening day** and the first Hannaford free skate rental Friday.
- **Saturday, December 3**, 9 – 11 a.m., First **Learn-To-Skate Clinic** sponsored by BlueShield of Northeastern New York. Additional clinics will be offered on January 7, February 4 and March 4. Online pre-registration required at www.empirestateplaza.org.
- **Sunday, December 4**, 1 p.m. – 8 p.m., **New York State Holiday Tree Lighting presented by SEFCU and featuring free skate rentals and free parking after 3 p.m. courtesy of Hannaford Supermarkets.** This family-fun annual event has something for everyone with a full day of indoor and outdoor activities, including a chance to meet Santa, a holiday arts and crafts fair, and skating demonstrations by the Hudson Mohawk Figure Skating Club, train rides around the Empire State Plaza concourse, as well as horse and carriage rides on the Plaza. There will also be musical performances by The Capital Area Flute Club, Debuts Theater Company, and Tuba Christmas, and a holiday rock and skate with The Silver Arrow Band. The tree-lighting ceremony, hosted by the News10 Morning Team and WTRY, 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); the Great Train Extravaganza in the Empire State Plaza Convention Center, admission \$7, kids under 12 free; and a free concert by The Zucchini Brothers at 3 p.m. in The Egg Center for the Performing Arts.
- **Saturday, January 14**, 9 – 11 a.m., First **Try Hockey For Free With USA Hockey and Troy Albany Youth Hockey.** An additional hockey clinic will be held on February 18. Online preregistration is required.
- **Sunday, February 5, Big Game Sunday.** Wear your team's jersey and come to the rink to skate before the Super Bowl.
- **Sunday, February 14, Valentine's Day.** Come to the Plaza for a romantic skate with your sweetheart or even to propose marriage.

- **Tuesday, February 28, Mardi Gras.** The Spirit of New Orleans comes alive. Free beads with every skate rental. While supplies last.
- **Saturday, March 4, 12th Annual Hannaford Kidz Expo** featuring Storybook Fun with Curious George.
- **Sunday, March 12, last day of skating** for the season (weather permitting).

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, Albany Renaissance Hotel, NYSUT, CDTA, Albany Jewish Community Center, GEICO, Orange Motors, SEFCU, Hudson Valley Community College, Stewart's, El Mariachi, Albany.com, Alloveralbany.com, Times Union, PYX 106, and 99.5 The River.

Sponsors of the tree lighting include SEFCU, Hannaford Supermarkets, National Grid, New York Lottery, Hudson Mohawk Figure Skating Club, Orange Motors, Oldies 98.3, News10, Times Union, Albany.com, and Alloveralbany.com.

###