



Office of General Services

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OGS ANNOUNCES OPENING WEEKEND EVENTS FOR WINTER AT THE PLAZA

Empire State Plaza Ice Rink to Feature New Hours and Hannaford Free Skate Rental Saturdays

Holiday Tree Lighting & Fireworks Celebration on December 2

New York State Office of General Services (OGS) Commissioner RoAnn Destito today announced the Empire State Plaza ice rink will open at 4:30 p.m. on Friday, November 30, weather permitting, with free skate rentals opening weekend, courtesy of Hannaford Supermarkets.

The rink will once again play a major role in a series of free events planned for the Plaza this season, kicking off with rink-side live music from Grand Central Station on Friday, November 30; a Learn to Skate Clinic with BlueShield of Northeastern New York on Saturday, December 1; and the New York State Holiday Tree Lighting presented by SEFCU on Sunday, December 2.

In addition to opening weekend, the Empire State Plaza ice rink will feature free skate rentals each Saturday of the 2018-19 season, courtesy of Hannaford Supermarkets. The first official Hannaford Free Skate Rental Saturday will be held on Saturday, December 8.

“Seeing members of the OGS team begin assembling the Empire State Plaza skating rink is a telltale sign that a season full of exciting events and activities, including free skating and our annual holiday tree lighting, is fast approaching,” **OGS Commissioner Destito** said. “The rink provides visitors to the Plaza with a wonderful opportunity to have some fun and stay active 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, SEFCU, and all our other generous sponsors.”

Empire State Development President, CEO & Commissioner Howard Zemsky said, “The Empire State Plaza ice rink complements the many winter traditions offered across the Capital Region, and the seasonal events welcome residents and visitors to explore and experience all the area has to offer.”

“All of us at Hannaford are excited to celebrate the opening of the Empire State Plaza ice rink in partnership with the New York State Office of General Services. We are also excited to share

that our popular free skate rental program, which was traditionally held on Fridays, will now be offered each Saturday of the season,” said **Hannaford Supermarkets Community Relations Specialist Brian Fabre**. “More than 20,000 people have enjoyed Hannaford’s free skate rental program since 2012 and we hope this switch to Saturdays will provide even more families and individuals with access to a healthy outdoor winter activity that crosses generations.”

"Each winter, families and friends gather at Empire State Plaza to skate together," said **Dave Busch, Senior Vice President, Regional Executive of BlueShield of Northeastern New York**. "As a community-based health plan, BlueShield is proud to be part of those healthy traditions and excited to kick off another season of skating."

“SEFCU is proud to support the New York State Tree Lighting, a tradition that brings families and the community together to celebrate the beauty and joy of the holiday season,” said **Michael J. Castellana, President and CEO of SEFCU**.

Opening Weekend Schedule of Events:

- ***Empire State Plaza Ice Rink Opening Night***, Friday, November 30, 4:30 – 8 p.m. Festivities to include a brief presentation by OGS and sponsors at 4:30 p.m. followed by open skating. Skaters can enjoy live music from six-piece ensemble band Grand Central Station from 5 to 7 p.m.
- ***Free Skate Rentals at the Empire State Plaza Ice Rink courtesy of Hannaford Supermarkets***, opening weekend, Friday, November 30 through Sunday, December 2. Hannaford Free Skate Rental Saturdays will commence for the season on December 8.
- ***Learn to Skate Clinic of the season presented by BlueShield of Northeastern New York*** and hosted by the Hudson Mohawk Figure Skating Club. Saturday, December 1, 10 a.m. – noon. Additional clinics will be offered on January 5, February 2, and March 2. Online pre-registration is required at empirestateplaza.ny.gov.
- ***New York State Holiday Tree Lighting presented by SEFCU and featuring free parking after 3 p.m. courtesy of Hannaford Supermarkets***, Sunday, December 2, 1 – 8 p.m. Celebrate the season with indoor and outdoor activities the family is sure to love, including visits with Santa, an arts and crafts fair, skating demonstrations by the Hudson Mohawk Figure Skating Club, and horse and carriage rides on the Plaza. Performances throughout the day include Tuba Christmas, the Rusty Pipes, Debuts Theater Company, the Capital Area Flute Club, and a rock and skate after the fireworks with the Kyle Bourgault Band. Free parking at the Plaza begins at 3 p.m., and the official tree lighting and fireworks ceremony will start at 5:15 p.m. and be hosted by the News10 Morning Team and WTRY’s Chris Warren.
- ***The Great Train Extravaganza***, Sunday December 2, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. Empire State Plaza Convention Center, admission \$7, children 12 and under free
- ***Taste NY Holiday Market***, Sunday, December 2, 11 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., New York State Museum, free

Ice Rink Information:

- **Hours:** Noon to 8 p.m. seven days a week, weather permitting. Closed daily 3:30 - 4:30 p.m. for maintenance.

- **Cost to skate:** Free
- **Skate Rentals:** \$4 for adults, \$3 for children 12 and under. A photo ID is required to rent skates. Every Saturday is Hannaford Free Skate Rental Saturday.
- **Amenities:** Lockers, skate rentals, and refreshments are available in the glass pavilion adjacent to the rink.

For additional information on Winter at the Plaza events including Fitness at the Plaza and the Hannaford Kidz Expo, visit @EmpireStatePlaza on Facebook, follow @PlazaEvents on Twitter, or call (518) 474-4759.

For event information including parking, directions, and ground rules visit empirestateplaza.ny.gov.

Sponsors of Winter at the Plaza events include I LOVE NY, Hannaford Supermarkets, BlueShield of Northeastern New York, SEFCU, Albany Renaissance Hotel, CDTA, Times Union, News10, 98.3 TRY, and Albany.com.

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