

NEWS

Oviedo set to chill out this weekend as Snow Mountain, parade come to town

By Jessica J. Saggio | December 06, 2012

The weather in Florida may not be anywhere near freezing temperatures, but in the spirit of the season, the city of Oviedo will "Let it snow, let it snow, let it snow."

Gearing up for the city's annual holiday parade and Snow Mountain event on Saturday, residents will finally have an excuse to pull out the old winter coat for a night of frolicking in more than 60 tons of snow.

The festivities will begin at about 3 p.m. at the Oviedo Mall, Bridget Lake, senior director of sponsorship and events, said. The Metropolitan Area Youth Symphony will set the tone of the event as it begins to play at 3:15 p.m., she said, which will hopefully get everyone in the holiday spirit. The parade is set to begin at 4 p.m., but attendants are encouraged to arrive early to snag a good seat.

More than 40 groups are participating in the parade, which will be routed around the mall. The stage and performance area will be located about halfway through the route, near the northeast corner of the mall parking lot, where groups will stop to give the crowd a show. Lake said a variety of participants will show off their skills, floats and talents during the parade including dance groups, martial arts groups, boy scouts, girl scouts, organizations and the Hagerty High School band.

The parade is schedule to last until about 5 p.m., when it will conclude at Snow Mountain.

Snow Mountain is an event sponsored by the city that trucks in snow from the "North Pole," David Burgoon, recreation superintendent for the city of Oviedo, said. Sixty tons of snow will be dropped off in the mall parking lot that will make for great fun on a series of sliding hills and play areas.

"It's a family-fun event to give families or kids the chance to experience snow in Central Florida, something unique and different, since we don't get snow here," Burgoon said. "So we will have sled riding, to where they can go down a hill. We also have a couple play areas for them to go in and play in the snow, make their snow angels and stuff."

Admission for snow mountain is \$5 if purchased beforehand at either Riverside Park or at the Gym & Aquatic Facility, or \$10 if purchased at the event. Tickets can be purchased in advance up until Friday. VIP passes are available for \$20 for early entrance and a goodie bag, but the number of VIP tickets sold is limited, he said. Snow Mountain will run from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m.

The event costs the city about \$20,000 each year, but those funds are recovered with admission revenue, Burgoon said, which makes Snow Mountain an event that is possible year to year.

Alongside the parade and Snow Mountain, an unannounced list of performers will take the stage outside the mall. Bounce houses, carnival games and food trucks will also be present.

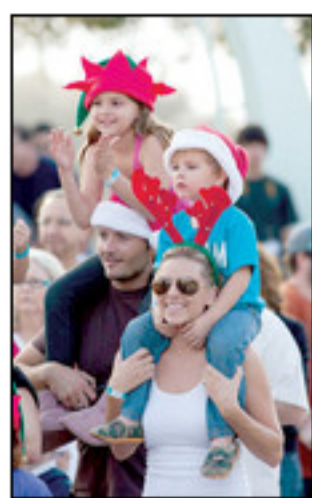
This year's events mark the second opportunity the Oviedo Mall has had to host the holiday festivities, which is something mall property managers take great pride in, Sara Steffes, marketing manager for the Oviedo Mall, said.

"It's events like this that have helped Oviedo Mall become what we consider it to be: the heart of the community," she said. "These family-friendly events bring our community together, and the mall truly enjoys being the venue for such a platform."

The mall is host to the event and has done much in preparation, she said, including a clean sweep of the premises and working with event planners at the Chamber and within the city. However, at the end of the day, it also provides a fun venue for attendants to relax, enjoy themselves and perhaps check out a few of the stores inside.

"Event days are some of our heaviest traffic days. Families seek shelter inside the mall for a snack or restroom break and often walk the mall and stop in a few stores," Steffes said. "Even if they don't make a purchase on event day, it's several thousand bodies on property being exposed to what our merchants have to offer, and more often than not, families return for a purchase at a later time."

For information on Snow Mountain, or for ticket information, call 407-971-5568.



Attendants at last year's parade look on to the festivities that are routed around the mall.