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**‘TIS THE SEASON: MAKE YOUR HOLIDAYS
MERRY AND BRIGHT IN MONTEREY COUNTY**

MONTEREY, Calif., November 11, 2016 – With winter quickly approaching, are you dreaming of a bright Christmas with sunshine, mild weather and postcard-worthy scenery? Leave the snow shovels at home and escape with your family this holiday season to Monterey County. From traditional tree lightings to yuletide carols to a twinkling boat parade, the destination boasts celebrations and festivities for residents and visitors alike, creating unforgettable holiday moments.

“The holidays are such a special time in Monterey County as communities put up incredible light displays and plan creative events to celebrate the season,” says Tammy Blount, President and CEO of the Monterey County Convention and Visitors Bureau. “Bring your children, loved ones and even your four-legged friends and join us in making holiday memories that will last a lifetime.”

TREE LIGHTING CEREMONIES

For many communities, the ceremonial lighting of a Christmas tree is a long-time tradition and marks the official start of the holiday season. Monterey kicks the season off on Friday, November 25th, with Christmas carolers, Santa’s reindeer and the **22nd Annual Cannery Row Holiday Tree Lighting**. The entire family is invited to join Santa on Steinbeck Plaza. The quaint City of Pacific Grove flips the switch on Monday, November 28th, with an old-fashioned **Christmas Tree Lighting and Santa’s Christmas Party**. As jolly old St. Nick is busy making appearances, don’t miss him as he is delivered by the Monterey Fire Department at the **City Holiday Tree Lighting and Carmel Plaza Holiday Party** on Friday, December 2nd in charming Carmel-by-the-Sea. Before the main event, toast the beginning of the holiday season at the Sunset Center with a celebration in the theater library including free portraits in front of their Christmas tree. Also, happening that Friday evening is **Historic Downtown Monterey’s Traditional Christmas Tree Lighting** on Colton Hall Lawn featuring carols, candles, cookies and cheer.

HISTORICAL HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS

Monterey County is rich in history and stretching back to 1850. Folks can take a step back in time and visit bed and breakfast inns dressed in Victorian-era splendor at **Christmas at the Inns** in Pacific Grove. The innkeepers open the doors

for two evenings – November 29th and 30th – offering live music and tasty treats. Stroll through Historic Downtown Monterey for **Christmas in the Adobes** on December 9th and 10th. The annual event includes exploring 19th century adobes for fandango dance lessons, bagpipes, games and more with proceeds benefiting the Monterey State Historic Park children’s educational programs. The Carmel Heritage Society works to preserve and promote the history of Carmel-by-the-Sea; and every holiday season, the non-profit group hosts the **Inns of Distinction Tour**. On Sunday, December 4th, participants will have the opportunity to tour the inns including Doris Day’s Cypress Inn which has been a landmark since 1929. And if you’re looking for a Christmas Eve celebration, The **Peninsula Harmony Company choir** will be caroling around the lobby at Hyatt Carmel Highlands in their Victorian attire. The community and visitors are invited to join as the carolers spread Christmas cheer on the night before Santa arrives.

PARADES AND LIGHTS

Strike up the band for the **Holiday Parade of Lights** in Salinas. Marching bands, floats, classic cars and more travel through Oldtown Salinas to the National Steinbeck Center for this lighted event on Sunday, November 27th. Santa and Mrs. Claus travel all the way from the North Pole to celebrate the **15th Annual Holiday Parade of Lights** on Lighthouse Avenue in Pacific Grove. The parade will be held on the first of December and includes local marching bands, floats and equestrian groups. We mustn’t forget the traditional **Brighten the Harbor Lighted Boat Parade**, sponsored by the Monterey Peninsula Yacht Club. Taking place Sunday, December 4th, decorated illuminated boats cruise Monterey Bay, competing for “Best Decorated Boat.”

GINGERBREAD HOUSES FOR A CAUSE

Icing, candy canes and swirly twirly gum drops! My Museum’s Gingerbread Extravaganza Weekend is sure to be a sweet treat and raises funds for the museum. The extravaganza kicks off on Thursday, December 1st with adults getting in on the fun by decorating their own gingerbread houses followed by the kid-friendly gingerbread house event on Sunday. Hofsas House in Carmel-by-the-Sea also hosts a **Gingerbread Making Fundraiser** for families to enjoy on Saturday, December 3rd. The 5th annual benefit supports the Carmel Public Library Foundation.

YOU WON’T WANT TO MISS...

With a festive spirit in the air, Santa arrives a little early in Carmel Valley. Instead of a sleigh and reindeer, Kris Kringle and the Mrs. make a grand entrance by helicopter and are greeted by excitement and joy. The **58th Annual Carmel Valley Santa’s Fly-In** is happening on Saturday, December 10th, at Carmel Valley Airfield. You can also catch Santa as he joins the Snowman and Snow Queen at the **23rd Annual Stillwell’s Fun in the Park** event in Pacific Grove, featuring complimentary rides, bounce houses and a petting zoo.

From holiday traditions to unique events, unwrap the secrets of the season and family fun in Monterey County! Hotel properties and restaurants throughout the destination are also offering special holiday deals and meals. For a list of events and specials, please visit SeeMonterey.com. From our family to yours, we wish you a happy and healthy holiday season!

ABOUT MONTEREY COUNTY CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

The Monterey County Convention & Visitors Bureau (MCCVB) is a 501c6 organization that drives tourism for Monterey County and in recent years has led the destination to record levels of growth. Tourism is the largest industry on the Monterey Peninsula and the second largest in the County. The MCCVB is a partnership of the hospitality community and local governments that aims to drive business growth through compelling marketing and sales initiatives that maximize the benefits of tourism to our guests, members and the community. Travel

spending in Monterey County was more than \$2.7 billion in 2015, representing a 4.5 percent increase from 2014, and per person/per day spending rose to \$333. Visitors in 2015 also generated \$109 million in local tax receipts, a 7.4 percent increase and supported 24,390 jobs.

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