



MARIANAS VISITORS AUTHORITY
News Release

Tourism is Everybody's Business!

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EXPANDED “CHRISTMAS IN THE MARIANAS” STARTS DEC. 7

Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands (NMI) – Organizers of the annual “Christmas in the Marianas” celebration kick off an expanded month of holiday cheer this Saturday’s (Dec. 7) with the 8th Annual Christmas Tree Decorating Contest.

Organizers have announced a final schedule of events which includes evening entertainment at Paseo de Marianas pedestrian mall every Saturday and numerous other days throughout December.

“This year’s 12th Annual Christmas in the Marianas could possibly turn out to be the biggest and best, thanks to the wide support of many sponsors and supporters in the private sector,” said Marianas Visitors Authority (MVA) Community Projects Manager Martin Duenas. “We invite everyone to come down and enjoy the holiday festivities on our expanded celebration dates this year.”

Entertainment, games, and food sales will run from 5:30 to 9 p.m. each night.

The annual school-wide Christmas Tree Decoration Contest kicks off on Saturday with

Saipan Awaodori at 5:30 p.m., the Christmas Tree Light-up Countdown at 6:05 p.m., and other entertainment from 7-9 p.m. Beginning Saturday, revelers will also be able to tie ribbons representing their holiday wishes on the main Christmas tree.

Fourteen schools are competing in this year's contest, which requires them to use recyclable material for ornaments and other decorations. Participating schools are San Antonio Elementary, Green Meadow, Kagman Elementary, Tanapag Elementary, Golden Harvest International, William S. Reyes Elementary, Oleai Elementary, Dandan Elementary, Gregorio T. Camacho Elementary, Agape Christian, San Vicente Elementary, Mt. Carmel, and Koblerville Elementary Schools and Grace Christian Academy. They are joined by special participants Commonwealth Cancer Association and Girl Scouts of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The "Christmas in the Marianas" celebration will continue every Saturday in December, offering weekly holiday entertainment. On Dec. 14, students will sing their hearts out at the annual Christmas Caroling Competition on-stage at Paseo de Marianas. On Dec. 21, the Parade of Floats will be held around sunset from the Carolinian Affairs Office in Garapan along Beach Road to Paseo de Marianas. Also on Dec. 21, Marianas Walking Association will host the 5K Christmas Health Walk. Festivities for the month continue with the annual Mochitsuki Festival on Dec. 28, organized in collaboration with the Japanese Society. The festival marks the season preparation of *mochi* – a dough-like substance of glutinous rice – for the Japanese New Year.

In addition to the Saturday events, entertainment will be provided nightly on Dec. 22, 27, 29, and 30.

"Christmas in the Marianas" is also sponsored by PDM Promoters, Inc., Team PDI, Tan Sui Lin Foundation, DOCOMO PACIFIC, DFS Galleria, and Kinpachi Restaurant. Event sponsors are: Office of the Governor, DCCA-Commonwealth Council for Arts & Culture, Division of Environmental Quality, Dept. of Public Safety, Dept. of Public Works, Dept. of Lands and Natural Resources, Div. of Parks and Recreation, Koblerville Youth Learning Center, CNMI Public School System, MINA, Japan Saipan Travel Association, KKMP, Power 99, KZMI, KCNM, Magic 100, Chamolinian Cultural Village Inc., IT&E, RNV Construction, Country House Restaurant, Moby Dick Restaurant, S.P.E. Saipan, Inc., Hafadai Production, Misa Enterprises, and Kinpachi Convenience.

Food and drink vendors are Java Joe's, Okadaya, Hula Girl, Lyn's BBQ, Country House

Restaurant, Furusato Restaurant, Kinpachi Restaurant, and various schools conducting fundraisers.

The Northern Mariana Islands of Saipan, Tinian, and Rota are a chain of idyllic islands in the West Pacific, offering a friendly, fun and exciting vacation in paradise. They are an excellent destination for families, adventure and sports-minded travelers, as well as business people looking for a tropical haven. Adventurous travelers from Asia, Australia, Europe and elsewhere looking for new travel discoveries will find them in the Mariana Islands, just three hours travel from most cities in Japan, and four from Asia and Australia. The Northern Marianas are served from Tokyo and Osaka in Japan by Delta and Asiana Airlines. From Korea, Asiana provides direct flights from Seoul and Busan. China is served from Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou. Russia is served via Vladivostok and Khabarovsk. United Airlines has daily flight connections from nine cities in Japan to Saipan via Guam. United States mainland connections can be made by United Airlines to Saipan via Guam, and Delta Airlines from the west coast to Saipan via Narita. For more information visit www.mymarianas.com.

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