



City of Arts & Innovation

News Release

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Festival of Lights at Mission Inn Hotel & Spa Wins Top Spot in National Contest

Riverside's premier event named Best Public Lights Display by USA Today/10Best.com

RIVERSIDE, Calif. – After weeks of voting by communities from all over the country, the Festival of Lights at the Mission Inn Hotel & Spa has been named America's Best Public Lights Display by the USA TODAY/10Best.com Readers' Choice contest.

The Festival of Lights, Riverside's premier annual event, finished first among 20 nominees from around the United States. Residents from each nominated community logged on to the Internet and voted daily to support the lights shows in their respective cities, with Riverside coming out on top.

"Riversiders are proud of the Festival of Lights, and they showed how much they care about this special event by voting day after day," Riverside Mayor Rusty Bailey said. "Anyone who has spent time downtown strolling around the historic Mission Inn & Spa during the Festival of Lights knows what a special experience this is for our community."

The Festival of Lights, which kicks off each year on the day after Thanksgiving with a countdown ceremony and spectacular fireworks display, provides residents from all over Southern California with an amazing holiday experience.

Anchored by the millions of lights and hundreds of animatronic figures that adorn the historic Mission Inn Hotel & Spa, the free event transforms Main Street and the Mission Inn into a winter wonderland.

Duane and Kelly Roberts, Keepers of the Inn, said they were thrilled to see the event receive such strong support from the Riverside community.

"The Mission Inn's Festival of Lights brings together families from all over Southern California for a wonderful holiday experience," said Chief Operating Officer Kelly Roberts. "Duane and I are pleased that this accolade is helping people from around the United States get a glimpse of an amazing event that Riversiders have been enjoying for years."

The Festival of Lights finished ahead of the Nights of Lights event in St. Augustine, Florida and the Holiday Festival of Lights in Charleston, South Carolina, among others. Winners will be promoted in a Friday edition of USA TODAY and on usatoday.com/travel in the coming days.

The contest was hosted on 10Best.com, a standalone travel media site, but promoted across USA TODAY Travel Media Group's digital and mobile products, as well as via social media and across the websites of 81 local newspapers and 43 television stations.

“A destination, organization or business which finds itself the recipient of a 10Best Readers' Choice Award has really accomplished something,” said John Peters, president of USA TODAY Travel Media Group.

To get a glimpse of the magic, visit www.RiversideFestivalofLights.com

The full list of winners is available at: <http://www.10best.com/awards/travel/best-public-lights-display/>