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CLASSIC HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS COMBINE TO OFFER ONE EXCEPTIONALLY FESTIVE EVENING ON DECEMBER 2 IN GRAND RAPIDS

Annual Tree Lighting at the Art Museum, Opening of Rosa Parks Ice Rink, HollyJolly Window Displays, and Horse-Drawn Carriage Rides Create Warm Welcome to Downtown

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich., November 21, 2011 – A special evening in downtown Grand Rapids is scheduled for December 2, 2011, where several businesses and organizations collaborate to offer an expanded holiday experience in the city. A variety of popular holiday events—tree lighting, ice skating opener, window displays at retailers, a cabaret performance, and free carriage rides—are celebrated together to provide the community with an afternoon and evening packed with diverse entertainment options.

The majestic Christmas Tree on the Grand Rapids Art Museum Wege Plaza will light up during a short ceremony that begins at 5:15 pm. Live music from the HollyJolly choir will entertain the gathering crowd as Art Museum Board President Mitchell Watt welcomes everyone, introduces the participants, and announces the countdown to light the 40-foot tree. City Commissioner Walt Gutowski will welcome everyone downtown to enjoy holidays in the city, he will then announce the official opening of Rosa Parks Circle Ice Rink as a member of the Eastern Great Lakes Figure Skating Association entertains the crowd in a season opening performance. At 5:30pm, the HollyJolly team then takes the stage to announce the Window Display launch for the season. The ceremony concludes at 5:45pm.

The Downtown Alliance is once again celebrating the start of the season with free horse-drawn carriage rides. No ticket necessary for the rides, look for the pick-up station along Louis Street. Carriage rides are available from 6:00 to 8:00pm.

The Grand Rapids Art Museum offers a special cabaret performance at 7:00pm in the GRAM Lobby, featuring witty and fun holiday numbers by Ellie Frances and Rob Karel. The cabaret is in honor of Warrington Colescott, whose art is on view through January 15, 2012 at GRAM. Colescott is a lifelong fan of the cabaret, and features the subject often in his work.

Downtown visitors can participate in a fun-filled evening in Grand Rapids, enjoying Friday Nights at GRAM until 9:00 pm, joining in the fun on the ice rink, riding along in a horse-drawn carriage, and strolling the downtown streets and avenues to discover the window displays and more holiday delights offered along the way.

Facts at a glance:

Festivities on December 2, 2011 begin:

- 5:15 – 5:30 pm Grand Rapids Art Museum Tree Lighting Ceremony and Official Opening of Rosa Parks Circle Ice Rink*

- HollyJolly Window Display announcement and season launch. More information at HollyJolly.com
- 6:00 – 8:00 pm: Free horse-drawn carriage rides, pick-up along Louis Street
- 7:00 – 8:00 pm: Holidays & Cabarets: Performance by Rob Karel and Ellie Frances in GRAM Lobby, free with admission (\$5 ages 6 and older, kids 5 and under free).

*Rink opens to the public at 5:45 pm December 2, 2011.

Admission: \$1.00 for access to the rink

Skate rental: FREE with ID

About the Grand Rapids Art Museum

The mission of the Grand Rapids Art Museum (GRAM) is: to inspire discovery, enjoyment, and learning about art; to serve as a welcoming and inclusive cultural resource; to collect, conserve, and interpret works of art of the finest quality. Established in the heart of downtown Grand Rapids, the new Art Museum is internationally known for its distinguished design and LEED Gold certified status. Established in 1910 as the Grand Rapids Art Association, GRAM has grown to include more than 5,000 works of art, including American and European 19th and 20th century painting and sculpture and more than 3,500 works on paper. Embracing the city's legacy as a leading center of design and manufacturing, GRAM has a growing collection in the area of design and modern craft.

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