

The 24th Annual Holiday Festival of Lights **Holiday Festival of Lights (HFOL) Trivia**

Did you know...

- The Holiday Festival of Lights premiered in 1990 and attracted 85,000 visitors.
- In 2011-2012, the attendance was 225,422 people, the highest number of visitors ever reported. In 2013, the festival saw 12,175 visitors in one evening.
- In 1990, HFOL consisted of only 18 light displays.
- This year's festival will feature over 750 light displays.
- All of the light displays are constructed on-site by park staff at James Island County Park.
- The Light Show Crew works year-round to design, build, construct and breakdown the Festival.
- Chief Light Show Supervisor Rich Raab designs the light displays in-house, often getting ideas from greeting cards and coloring books.
- The festival's very first 18 light displays were made by Bernie Pettit in Wheeling, WV. Rich Raab has built each display since. His first light display was the Santa display on the roof of the Park Center.
- It takes between six to ten weeks to create one light display.
- The life span of a light display is about five years prior to reconditioning.
- An estimated 23 miles of rebar has been used to create the festival's displays.
- It takes around a full hour to turn on or off the light show each night.
- It takes approximately one week and 50 tons of sand to construct the giant holiday sand sculpture.
- In 2012, visitors donated 8,201 pounds of canned goods to the Lowcountry Food Bank to receive a discount on admission to the festival. That is enough food for 6,834 meals.
- Over 100 local businesses and organizations contribute to the success and growth of the Festival through sponsorship.
- In its original format, HFOL was a 2-mile driving tour only. HFOL has grown to include a fun run, gift shops, snack bars, an enchanted walking trail, a carousel, photos with Santa, life-size greeting cards, a giant sand sculpture, gingerbread house competition and more!
- During its 24-year history, the Festival has seen license plates from all 50 states.
- Though Festival organizers have lost count, it is estimated that there are over two-million lights shining bright at the HFOL.

- Many staff members from various divisions of the Charleston County Park & Recreation Commission commit volunteer evening hours throughout October to hand string millions of mini-lights on trees, shrubbery and along the road – the goal being not to have “one dark spot.” The involvement by hundreds of staff members contributes to the uniqueness of the Festival. There are about 10,000 strands of mini lights strung each year, or 500,000 individual “mini” lights, and these lights cover 75 different locations throughout the festival.
- The Festival relies heavily on volunteers for checking and replacing an estimated 180,000 light bulbs and working at the Festival once it opens. A primary source of volunteers is the Campground Host Club, who donates over 4,100 hours each year. This club consists of 18 couples who travel around the country in their RV’s, and reunite each year in Charleston to volunteer at the Holiday Festival of Lights.
- The Holiday Festival of Lights is listed as one of the nation’s top ten holiday light shows: www.americasbestonline.com.
- In 2013, HFOL was voted one of the top 20 events in the Southeast by the Southeastern Tourism Society.
- HFOL has received national attention from the *Travel Channel*, *the Wall Street Journal*, AOL, The Discovery Channel, Coastal Living and Southern Living.
- In 2011, The American Bus Association named the Holiday Festival of Lights, one of the Top 100 Events in North America for 2012.
- In 2012, an event in Moscow called The Festival of Festivals featured the Holiday Festival of Lights as its event representative from the United States. Pictures of the Holiday Festival of Lights were projected onto the Moscow Central House of Artists as part of the Circle of Light Festival.
- During the Holiday Festival of Lights, around 8 tons of waste is recycled from the park and James Island County Park campground.
- The festival’s 750 displays are comprised of over 1,000 pieces that are stored within 28 trailers in the off-season.
- There are 2,500 breakers used to power all of the festival’s displays, and it takes a full hour to turn on and off the show each night.
- The Giant Greeting Cards are 4x8 feet in size, and are created by local schools each year as part of an annual art competition.
- The Ravenel bridge light display is 30 feet tall and roughly the length of a football field.
- The giant lighted Oak Tree takes 80 hours to complete, and is composed of 10,000 lights.
- Each year since 2010, the festival has hosted the children’s Light Display Design Contest, in which kids submit their ideas for a new display at next year’s festival. Winning displays have featured a ferris wheel (2010), and the South Carolina state flag (2011), and a penguin sliding down an ice berg (2012). The 2012 contest winner, a local six-year-old girl named Lucy Anne, will see her penguin creation come to light at the 2013 festival.