



UCNSB News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Contact: Ellen Fisher, 386-424-3003
November 1, 2011

A Star is Reborn! UCNSB brings back familiar Christmas Star with new, energy efficient LED lights in time for the holiday season

(New Smyrna Beach, Fla.) – The Utilities Commission, City of New Smyrna Beach, will put up a treasured community holiday icon this year - the lighted star that had adorned the Old Fort Park water tower for 36 years until the tower was dismantled in 1993.

Long-time residents and visitors likely remember the water tower strung with Christmas lights and topped with the brightly lit star, a community tradition that began with a few light strands in 1951. The tradition grew as did the lights, until as many as 18 streamers of 1,165 incandescent bulbs of red, amber, flame and orange lights cascaded down from the top of the 168-foot water tower. One-hundred forty-four (144) white bulbs lit the 10-foot high, 10-foot wide, 150-lb star that graced the very top.

This year, the UC will put up a lighter, more energy efficient star on the top of the UC's downtown office building at 200 Canal Street. The original star was replaced with a slightly larger (14 feet in diameter) aluminum version, and the 157 lights are now LED, which use 90% less energy than incandescent bulbs.

“The goal this year was three-fold,” UCNSB spokesperson Ellen Fisher said, “We wanted to decorate the building for Christmas as part of the Canal Street festivities and bring back a beloved holiday symbol for the community, while also emphasizing the importance of energy efficiency with LED lights.”

In fact, the cost difference between running the incandescent bulbs that previously lit the star and the new LED bulbs is astonishing, Fisher said.

“With 144 incandescent bulbs, the energy cost for running the star from Thanksgiving to New Year's Day would be \$68.43. The 157 LED lights currently on the star will cost only \$6.51 to run the same amount of time.” Fisher said. “That's a 90% savings in energy cost. We encourage everyone to consider using LED lights in their holiday displays.”

The star will be lit from Friday, November 25 through New Year's Day. The effort is in conjunction with the Christmas on Canal Street festivities sponsored by area merchants.

About UCNSB: The Utilities Commission, City of New Smyrna Beach, Florida, is one of Florida's 34 municipal electric utilities. The Utility also provides water, wastewater, reuse and internet service to approximately 25,000 customers in the greater New Smyrna Beach area. The Utilities Commission is a non-taxing, political subdivision of the State of Florida and is funded solely through utility revenues.



Potential story ideas/Notes to media:

- The staff member heading the UC's Christmas lights project from the Electric Department is Installation/Line Crew Leader Stuart Hughes. Stuart's dad actually proposed to his mother under the lit water tower in 1955.
- Several retired UC electric personnel have first-hand stories about climbing the tower and putting up the star, including current City Commissioner Jack Grasty.
- There are many old newspaper articles and pictures at the UC about the lit water tower and star, including reference to a picture taken by Life Magazine. Attached is a scanned copy of one article from the Daytona Beach News-Journal from 1978. The UC and New Smyrna Museum of History have postcards of the tower which are distributed every year.