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## Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony Will Shine Brighter Than Ever

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# Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony Will Shine Brighter Than Ever

## Quick Facts

- The tree lighting ceremony will be at 6 p.m. Dec. 5.
- The ceremony has been a tradition since 1971.



*The Christmas tree in years past  
(does not show new lights)*

ROCK HILL, SOUTH CAROLINA — The beautiful magnolia tree in front of Winthrop University's Tillman Hall is a beacon of holiday cheer each December as it comes alive with colorful lights.

This year, the tree will shine even brighter since it will be adorned with new lights for the first time in more than 50 years. The community is invited to participate in the tree lighting at the annual **Lighting of the Christmas Tree** this Friday, Dec. 5, at 6 p.m.

"The Christmas Tree lighting is a wonderful tradition because it brings together not only the Winthrop community, but the Rock Hill community as well," said **Blair McCraney**, campus relations coordinator for the Office of Development and Alumni Relations. "These new LED lights are really going to put on a nice show and help us kick off the Rock Hill Christmas parade in style."

The ceremony will begin with special performances by the Vision of Prayze gospel choir and the Winthrop RockHettes before this year's Homecoming King and Queen, seniors **Cameron Benton** and **Jazmin Linnette**, do the honor of lighting the tree.

Free hot chocolate will be served.

The magnolia tree, which was designated the 2010 Heritage Tree by Trees SC, is more than 100 years old and has been decorated every December since 1935. In the 1950s, students, faculty and staff would gather near the tree and sing carols before the holiday break began. The tree lighting ceremony itself started in 1971.

The tree lighting ceremony is one of the highlights of Rock Hill's **annual ChristmasVille** events. The Rock Hill Christmas parade will begin at 6:30 p.m. along Oakland Avenue between Cherry Road and Stewart Avenue. Road closings around the university beginning at 2 p.m. Dec. 5 are:

- Eden Terrace at Oakland, Charlotte and College Avenues
- Cherry Road at Oakland Avenue
- Winthrop entrance and Tillman Loop
- Stewart Avenue and Myrtle Drive at Oakland Avenue
- Myrtle Drive at College Avenue
- Sumter Avenue between Oakland and College Avenues

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