

Glendale Glitters

More than 1.3 million lights. A 30-foot tall Christmas tree at our Downtown Plaza. Palm trees wrapped with lights “dancing” to the melodies of traditional holiday music. All of this and more will be part of this year’s Glendale Glitters Spectacular Weekend, Enchanted Evenings and Glitter and Glow.

As these events draw close, I fondly remember our very first Glendale Glitters. Designed to draw tourists to our newly revitalized downtown and Catlin Court areas, Glendale Glitters began with 250,000 lights on November 25, 1994. We were excited that close to 10,000 people attended what we planned to be a “new holiday tradition”.

We really wanted our residents to feel that Glendale Glitters was “their” event so I wrote a letter asking each family to donate \$1. The letter appeared in the “Glendale Connection” newsletter and within six weeks 600 families had contributed \$7,100. The final tally was \$23,500 from residents and businesses.

The “Tree of Light” was created to recognize those residents and businesses that made large donations. Perhaps you have noticed this metal sculpture on the east wall of the City Council Chambers and wondered what it was. The bronze, silver, and gold “leaves” have faded over the years, but the pride they represent continues.

Glitter & Glow takes place each January and features hot-air balloons, street performers, and every genre of music. We created the event in 1996 to attract tourists in Arizona for Superbowl XXX, which was being played in Tempe. How ironic that in 2008 we will probably set the Glitter & Glow date to draw tourists who will be here for Superbowl XLII which will be played in Glendale.

We soon noticed people strolling through Murphy Park just about every night between Glendale Glitters and Glitter & Glow, especially on the weekends. Enchanted Evenings was then created, offering horse-drawn carriage rides, entertainment, and hot chocolate on Friday and Saturday nights. Stores stayed open and became “the places” to shop for Christmas gifts. People love to visit our historic downtown and Catlin Court and enjoy the easy pace of the family-friendly atmosphere.

Glitter Glitters and its extended events have truly become a hometown holiday tradition, as we hoped back in 1994. They are also an annual tradition for visitors from throughout Arizona and even neighboring states, drawing more than 300,000 annually.

I hope to see you on November 24 as Glendale Glitters once again.