

# Silver Bells Electric Light Parade

## Lighting Tips

### Time to decorate–

- Plan with ‘night vision’ eyes– try out lighting effects in the dark.
- Choose a vehicle or float unit with decorating and parade time in mind– consider being in other area holiday parades to maximize your investment of time and money.
- Budget considerations– make best buy– make best use of materials and then store materials to use year after year where mice and other elements will not damage them.
- The more lights– the better to wow the crowd and to get invited back next year.
- Test each light string before placing it, make sure your light strings are set to minimize the use of cords to reach the generator and make sure your power source is adequate for your voltage– more on this later.
- Find an indoor area to decorate and store the parade unit if possible.
- Clean the vehicle surface well before decorating if you are taping light strings.
- Do a road test. If you have one, bring a spare generator and someone who can troubleshoot lighting problems. If you develop problems at the staging area– go to the parade tent at Hillsdale and S. Washington and they may be able to help out.
- If you are using amplified music, know that multiple generators make a lot of noise. You must have adequate power, but not knock down bystanders with the sound of the generators or cranked up music.

### People to make the magic

- Don’t underestimate the work involved in float decorating and wait till parade day to start.
- If employees will be decorating, decide whether work will be on the clock or volunteered.
- Schedule your decorating crew.

- Assign someone to order supplies, develop a clear plan and oversee light application. Everyone has their own style of decorating and you want your entry to have a consistent light/decoration style of application.
- Have supplies laid out with ladders, stools, scissors, tape, wire, etc. before your 'decorators' arrive.
- Band members or individuals on floats should be dressed comfortably. Any lights on their clothing should be attached in a safe and secure manner. Remind them to dress for the weather the day before the parade.
- Santa is in the Silver Bells parade. Please do not include a Santa on your parade unit. There is only one Santa. You knew that of course!

### **Safety comes first**

- Pace of parade is fast– people in the parade must be able to keep up and stay out of the way of mechanized vehicles.
- Reminder not to hand out or throw any candy or objects of any kind. Children run out into the street and could be seriously injured or worse.
- Be sure all decorations are securely fastened to make the trip to the parade and back.

### **More Power to you**

- When stringing lights together, try to limit the strings plugged together to no more than 15 strands. If you string more than 15 you have the possibility of blowing fuses.
- The first item you need to address is the location of your power source. If you are using a generator it should be in an area that will allow air flow. This allows the engine to get the air it requires to run and also cool the unit.
- Know where the exhaust is venting and keep it away from any area that will or could be affected by the heat of the discharge.

- The placement of the power source is important to know before you string lights. You need to work with this placement in mind so you can get the receptacles in a location close to the power source if possible. This will affect the number and length of extension cords required to make your connections.
- Extension cords can be secured with tape the same way you secure light strands. Remember to keep them away from moving wheels and any other moving part you are working around. It is helpful to have your main connections accessible if you have to perform any troubleshooting of your work.
- The power source has to be considered before you begin. For example, CATA utilizes two 5,000 watt generators to operate over 12,000 lights on the CATAPillar parade bus. Generally there are multiple outlets on a generator and in CATA's case there were two 110 volt outlets and one 220 volt outlet. Because of the large number of lights on the CATA bus, they made splitter boxes to utilize the 200 volt outlets. The splitter box takes the 220 volt power and provides additional 110 volt outlets for the light strands. The splitter box can be made by any electrician.

**HAVE FUN!!!**