

TEXAS HIGHWAYS--HOLIDAY LIGHTS--WWH--MALLORY

[note: A couple of websites are supposed to be up soon, so pull them up during fact-check to make sure they're working, or call the park involved. Also note that I beefed up the Laneville entry because I wanted to put it in the copy but couldn't fit it in.]

Holiday Lights Galore

Load up the family and "see the lights" at the following drive-through holiday lights parks. Drive time varies from 20 minutes to an hour or so, depending on traffic. The closer to Christmas Day, the heavier the traffic. To avoid long waits, go early in the season or early on any given night. Some parks offer hayrides, gift shops, a live Santa, refreshments, and live music. Call for details.

East Texas

Approximately 90 miles east of Dallas, between Tyler and Lindale, **Santa Land** is on the north service road of I-20 at exit 557 (Jim Hogg Rd). Hours: nightly 6-10:30, Nov 1-Jan 4. Fee: \$12 for family vehicles, \$25 for larger vehicles. New this year are trailer rides (\$5 per person for groups of 25-50), an enlarged gift shop, and Christmas tree sales. For details write to 11455 I-20 W., Tyler 75706 (903/882-1518). Web site: www.santalandinc.com.

Fifteen miles west of Santa Land is **Wonderland by Night**, located at Van on the north service road of I-20 between exits 540 and 544. Hours: nightly 6-10:30 Nov 1-Jan 3. Fee: \$10 minimum for family vehicles (\$2 per person for commercial vehicles). Open-air tram rides are available for groups of 25 or more (\$5 per person; reservation only). Write to Box 1669, Van 75790 (903/963-8828).

In the community of Laneville (Rusk Co.) take a mile-long tractor or horse-drawn hayride through 20 wooded acres at the **Laneville Christmas Lights Display**. The non-profit show offers animated, lighted displays--plus religious and secular scenes

featuring live music and skits performed by area volunteers. The event started in 1986 when Troy Arnold offered neighbors a “hayride with Santa” on his farm. From Henderson take US 79 W. 1 mi. to FM 225, go south (left) 10 mi. to CR 4174, then go east (left) 1 mi. to the entrance. Hours: 7-9 Dec 1-3 and Dec 8-24. Fee: donation. Write to the Henderson Area Chamber of Commerce, 201 N. Main, Henderson 75652 (903/7657-5528 or 903/*to come (call Mr. Perry, listed in resources)*, evenings).

In Athens, drive the one-mile trail of **Christmas Park, Land of Lights** on N. Loop 317 (Jed Robinson Loop) between US 175 and Texas 31. Fee: \$10 for cars, \$12 for vans, \$2 per person for larger vehicles. Hours: nightly 6-10:30 Nov 18-Jan 1. Write to 610 W. Corsicana St, Athens 75751 (903/675-7469).

North Texas

Grand Prairie’s **Prairie Lights** is at Lynn Creek Park on Joe Pool Lake. Take I-20 to Great Southwest Pkwy. and go south 2 mi to the park entrance. Hours: nightly 6-10, Nov 17-Jan 1. Fee: \$10 for family vehicles, \$15 for commercial vehicles, \$30 for mini-motorcoaches, \$60 for motorcoaches. Write to the Grand Prairie Chamber of Commerce, 900 Conover Dr, Grand Prairie 75051 (972/264-1558). Also visible from the Prairie Lights on Dec. 9 is the 10th annual lighted boat parade sponsored by Lynn Creek Marina (817/640-4200). Hours: approximately 6:30 (dark).

Prairie Lights’ sister park is in Allen (Collin Co. between Dallas and McKinney).

Northern Prairie Lights is on the west service road of US 75 at exit 36 (Exchange Pkwy). Hours and fees are the same as Prairie Lights. Write to the Allen Chamber of Commerce, 210 W. McDermott, Allen 75013 (972/727-5585).

Central Texas

Near Belton, Fort Hood sponsors **Nature in Lights** at the Belton Lake Outdoor Recreation Area. From I-35 take US 190 West to Loop 121. Turn north (right) and go to Sparta Rd, turn west (left) to the park entrance. Hours: nightly 5:30-11 Nov 10-Jan 2. Fee: \$5 for family vehicles (call for 15-passenger or larger vehicles). Haywagon

rides Fri-Sun leave every 15 min. Fee: \$6 adults and \$3 for 10 and under. Write to III Corps & Fort Hood, Morale, Welfare and Recreation Program, Box X, Fort Hood 76544-9986 (254/287-0337). *[note: the box # is 'X'....i'm not leaving a blank]*

Santa's Wonderland is at 18898 Highway 6 South, Box 10151, College Station 77842 (979/690-7212--Web site: santas-wonderland.com). From College Station go south on Texas 6, take the Texas World Speedway exit, and stay on the service road 1 mi to the entrance. Hours: nightly Nov 1-Jan 5; Sun-Thu 6-11 and Fri-Sat 6-midnight. Fee: \$11 for family vehicles (up to 10 people); \$21 for larger vehicles (up to 15); call for more than 15. Hayrides are available for groups of 15 or more, except in inclement weather (reservation only). Fee: \$6 adult, \$4 children, 12 and under. Call the above number for rental of "Tombstone, Texas" year-round or check its Web site: www.tombstonetexas.com.

West Texas/Panhandle

Celebration Park is on the south service road of I-20 between exits 294 and 297, approximately 3 miles east of Abilene. Hours: nightly 6:30-10, Nov 11-Dec 30. Fee: \$10 for family vehicles, \$15 for larger vehicles. New attractions include photos with Santa, Christmas karaoke, and an indoor music and laser light show (additional fee). Write to Box 7388, Abilene 79608 (915/691-1034). Web site: www.celebrationpark.com.

Amarillo's **Nites of Lites** is at John Stiff Park. Take I-40 to Coulter St and go south 2 mi to 45th St, then turn east and go 1 mi to the park entrance. Hours: nightly 6-11, Nov 24-Jan 1. Fee: donation. Write to Keep Amarillo Beautiful, 6016 Dreyfuss, Amarillo 79106 (806/378-9305).

El Paso County is sponsoring its first annual **Ascarate Park Lights Display** nightly dusk to midnight, Nov 26-Jan 1. Take I-10 to Trowbridge Dr., go south 2.5 mi to Delta Dr., then turn west .75 mi to the park. Fee: TBA. Write to El Paso Co. Parks &

Recreation Dept., 6900 Delta Dr., El Paso 79905 (915/772-5605). Web site:
www.co.el-paso.tx.us

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