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# F O C U S D O W N T O W N

DEC 07 | JAN 08

News, Issues & Events from City of San Antonio Downtown Operations

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## Mark Your Calendar

**January 1**

Last night of lights on the Riverwalk

**January 9**

Deadline to apply for Riverwalk Capital Improvements Board  
info: 207-3677 or [www.sanantonio.gov/clerk](http://www.sanantonio.gov/clerk)

**January 13**

Paseo del Rio Mud Festival

## OUT & ABOUT DOWNTOWN

by Paula X. Stallcup  
Director, Downtown Operations



Welcome! In fiscal year 2007, the City Manager reorganized various City departments and functions to create the Downtown Operations Department. Our mission is to provide centralized service and support for downtown San Antonio, which welcomes close to 20 million visitors annually and is home to more than 3,200 residents.

Our team is here to maintain and improve the unique history and culture which makes downtown San Antonio the state's top destination for both leisure and business travelers, and one of Texas' fastest growing urban residential areas.

We are committed to serving the needs of downtown businesses, residents and stakeholders, and have launched this newsletter to keep you better informed of issues relating to downtown. In our newsletters, we'll cover policy issues, upcoming events, improvements that have been implemented and other initiatives that are of interest to you.

We're always interested in your comments. So please call me if you have feedback, questions or need additional information. My number is 207-6377 or e-mail me at [downtown@sanantonio.gov](mailto:downtown@sanantonio.gov). All of us here at Downtown Operations look forward to hearing from you.

## Heralding in The New Year: A Spirited Tradition

by Tonya Drake, Special Projects Manager



This year, San Antonio's immensely popular New Year's Eve celebration - Celebrate San Antonio - takes on a special significance. It's the kick-off event of the 40th anniversary of HemisFair.

Beginning at 6:00 in the evening and ending 30

info: 227-4262 or  
<http://www.thesanantonioriverwalk.org>

**April 6**  
 HemisFair 40th Anniversary Bash  
 info: 207-3677

## Holiday Lights

120,000 Christmas lights sparkling on trees along the River Walk dazzle visitors and locals alike during the holiday season.

## New Year's Bash Launches HemisFair 40th Anniversary HemisFair Tower



Plans are well underway for a major celebration of the 40th Anniversary of HemisFair. April 6th, 1968 marked the rousing opening of one of the most major undertakings this city has ever experienced.

HemisFair '68 forever changed downtown and the skyline with the construction of the Tower of the Americas. This New Year's Eve, former mayor Lila Cockrell, representing the Parks Foundation, will officially open the celebration.

Fast forward 40 years to see San Antonio recognizing the anniversary with a yearlong celebration slated to kick off on Sunday, April 6, 2008 along with the festivities of the NCAA's Final Four Big Dance scheduled for April 4-7.

The April 6th event is planned by the HemisFair Committee. Many of the original sponsors for HemisFair '68 are also current sponsors of the NCAA.

Proposed plans for April 6th include a 1 p.m. launching of a hot air balloon from the park, signifying the rising of new hopes for HemisFair Park. This will be followed by a brief

minutes past midnight, our Big Bash is always the first event of the New Year. The huge fiesta is on South Alamo Street between Market and Durango and throughout historic La Villita. The party features great San Antonio cuisine, games, rides and entertainment for the whole family.

We'll greet the arrival of 2008 with a spectacular, 17-minute-long fireworks extravaganza. Urban 15's Carnaval de San Anto opens the festivities in front of the Main Stage at the entrance to HemisFair Park. La Villita's Maverick Plaza International Stage and the AT&T Mexican Regional Stage will feature soul, salsa, classic rock, international rhythms and dancing all night long.

The H-E-B Family Stage at the Arneson River Theatre will feature a variety of family entertainment including carnival games and rides in the children's area on Villita Street. Revelers can sustain themselves at more than 50 food and beverage booths.

This lively tradition, which is the largest free New Year's Eve festival in Texas, attracts more than 200,000 people to downtown. Celebrate San Antonio is produced by the San Antonio Parks Foundation, and the City of San Antonio's Department of Downtown Operations, along with many other Departments. Our thanks to the many sponsors of this sensational celebration. For more information, call 210-212-8423.

## Urban Marketing Collaborative: A Closer Look at La Villita & Market Square

by Bruce Martin, Contract Manager



El Mercado / Market Square A recent study sponsored by the Convention and Visitors Bureau recommended that retail management studies be conducted to help improve sales and evaluate management and infrastructure of La Villita and Market Square.

In response to these recommendations, Downtown Operations contracted with the consulting firm Urban Marketing Collaborative and the San Antonio-based firms of Ximenes & Associates and Core Research to evaluate factors affecting the competitive environment - such as management, operations, marketing, parking and physical design - and identify concerns and

opportunities for increasing traffic and revenues in La Villita and Market Square.

Results of a telephone survey of over 400 residents indicated that 89% of San Antonio residents visited downtown at least once in the past year, while 49% visited La Villita. The popular City-owned La Villita area earned favorable ratings for appearance and shopping, while merchandising ranged from excellent to mediocre. Because the area is partially walled in, visibility and accessibility are key.

The same survey also indicated that 58% of San Antonio area residents had visited Market Square in the past year, but 80% of sales are generated by tourists. Market Square ranked highly in shopping, restaurants and appearance, although there were concerns about building structures, storage, washrooms and confusion over inconsistent hours. Preliminary conclusions suggest longer operating hours, but also noted the venue is considered unique on local, regional and national levels.

The study will be completed in early 2008 and a presentation will be made to City Council summarizing the findings and recommendations.

ceremony recognizing the members of the original executive committee and their families.

A short video from The Institute of Texan Cultures (ITC) will be played highlighting some of the key moments that took place prior to and during the fair. A brief performance by Jim Cullum's Jazz Band will conclude this event.

At 2 p.m., the Institute will host an opening reception for a special exhibition celebrating HemisFair '68: HemisFair 1968: San Antonio's Introduction to the World. Various other activities are planned, including free rides to the observation deck of the Tower, free admission to ITC, the Mexican Cultural Institute and Universidad de Autonoma de Mexico.

There will also be free live entertainment on a stage near the Tower featuring ethnic dance groups and performers from ITC, Magik Theatre and dance or music groups from Mexico provided by MCI and/or UNAM.

To learn more, please email Colleen Swain at [colleen.swain@sanantonio.gov](mailto:colleen.swain@sanantonio.gov).

## Where to Park? Count the Ways!

There are 6,472 public parking spaces downtown in surface lots and multi-level garages, 2,000 regular parking meters and 60 event meters for Alamodome events.

In an effort to address short-term parking needs for tour and school buses, the City has developed free options at three downtown locations. These options are conveniently located to allow the bus driver to drop off passengers at downtown destinations, park in a designated area, then pick up the group where they were dropped off.

The three locations are: Alamodome, parking lot "A", IH 37 & Durango; Crockett Street between Live Oak & Cherry; and Urban Loop, between Nueva & Santa Rosa.

There are just a few simple rules and procedures that must be followed to utilize this free tour and

## Parking Downtown: Studying Our Options

by Kenneth Appedole, Parking Division Manager

Plentiful parking downtownIn late 2006, the City undertook a study to develop a Comprehensive Parking Management Program. The purpose was to create a long-term strategy for the City's parking operations that's in the best interests of downtown residents, businesses and visitors.



The study focuses on a 125-block area in the Central Business District, bounded by Martin and Houston Streets on the north, Cherry Street on the east, Durango Boulevard on the south, and I-35/I-10 on the west. The program is designed to effectively manage the City's parking assets, stimulate economic development and integrate best management practices.

The City held meetings with downtown stakeholders and also formed a Parking Rate Structure Task Force comprised of representatives from the downtown community. The task force provided recommendations on parking fee structures that would be closer to market rates in order to fund repair and rehabilitation projects and make technological improvements.

These recommendations will be included in a presentation to City Council early next year. More information will be posted on the Downtown Operations website at <http://www.sanantonio.gov/dtops>.

## Light it Up, Drain it Down

by Lincoln St. George, Downtown Operations Manager



Holiday lights on the RiverwalkTourists and San Antonians alike thrill to the thousands of lights that adorn the trees along the River Walk. 120,000 of them! The whole project is a joint effort among the Paseo del Rio Association, the Downtown Operations and Parks and Recreation Departments.

Crews start stringing lights in September and finish by November. They work feverishly up to the Friday after Thanksgiving, when the magical river lighting ceremony and parade are held. About 250,000 people come for the sparkling event and the River Walk gets 900,000 visitors who come during the holiday season to enjoy the lights that stay on until Jan. 1st.

What many don't realize is that as soon as the lights come down, we drain the river for its annual cleaning. About 21 employees from Downtown Operations take part in cleaning the river. Public Works uses heavy machinery to clean the concrete-bottomed river channel that runs from Alamo St. on the south to Lexington to the north.

The whole process takes from the 2nd to the 11th of January. Crews will be in the River Loop restaurant area collecting trash, repairing walls and displacing silt. By January 11th, the River channel is filled back up.

On January 13, 2008 from 2p.m. till 6p.m. the Paseo del Rio Association will host the annual Mud Festival, when civic & media personalities vie for the title of Mud Queen & Mud King by competing to see who can raise the most quarter votes for the Association. The festival - which is attended by more than 15,000 people - features a Mud Pie Ball, Mud Coronation, Mud Parade, and an arts & crafts show. For more information, visit the Paseo del Rio Association online or call (210) 227-4262.

school and(delete) bus parking. For more information and to make reservations (recommended for the Alamodome parking lot), call the Dome Security Office between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m. 207-3680.

### Muddy Treasure

The items most frequently found during the annual winter river clean up are cell phones, cameras, parade chairs, restaurant cups and silverware.

People who have lost items in the river during the year can call downtown operations at (210) 207-3677 to make a report. Items found during the river cleaning will be returned if contact information is on file.

## A Stimulating Opportunity To Serve Apply For The River Walk Capital Improvements Advisory Board



Riverwalk south of Nueva Street Dam Applications are being sought for the River Walk Capital Improvements Advisory Board. The Board advises City Council on spending priorities from a City revenue accounting fund dedicated to capital improvements and development of the River Walk. Currently there are three openings in the categories of Riverbend Lessee, Business

Owner-Not a River Walk Lessee, and Downtown Resident-Not a Lessee.

Citizens who are interested may obtain an application from the Office of the City Clerk, located on the second floor of City Hall, or on the City's website at [www.sanantonio.gov/clerk](http://www.sanantonio.gov/clerk). Completed applications can be faxed to (210) 207-6938 or mailed to the Office of the City Clerk at the following address: City of San Antonio, Office of the City Clerk, ATTN: Boards and Commissions, P.O. Box 839966, San Antonio, Texas 78283-3966. For more information on this board or other City boards, call 207-7257 or 207-7252.

## City of San Antonio - Downtown Operations

The mission of the Downtown Operations Department is to provide centralized services for activities related to maintaining the core of San Antonio in an exemplary condition and support downtown facilities, programs and events that highlight the city's unique qualities as a business center and tourist destination.

202 E. Nueva San Antonio, Texas 78205

[www.sanantonio.gov/dtops](http://www.sanantonio.gov/dtops)

Hours: Monday-Friday 7:45am-4:30pm

Phone: 210-207-3677

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