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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

This is part of an occasional series by the Sanpete County Travel and Utah Heritage Highway 89 Alliance on the people and places along U.S. Highway 89.

## **Lighting carnival on Mt. Pleasant Main Street** (could include Santa kidnapping, shootout)

*By Christian Probasco  
For the National Mormon Pioneer Heritage Area*

MT. PLEASANT—Mt. Pleasant will hold its annual ceremony to switch on thousands of Christmas lights on the storefronts of the city's historic Main Street the evening of Saturday, Nov. 28.

The celebration has grown over the years to include carols, entertainment, fireworks and free hay rides. This year, organizers say there is a strong possibility a group known as the Grincho Gang will attempt to kidnap Santa Claus. The result could be an Old West shootout between the Grinches and the town marshal.

The lights will be switched on at 6:15 p.m. to the roar of a cannon, cheering revelers, a musket volley by the Blackhawk Mountain Men and the flash of fireworks.

Last year the event drew 1,500 people, packing the downtown area of a city with a population of only about 2,700. There were long lines to see Santa and to sample the free hot chocolate and cookies, not to mention crowds around all the gaming booths.

Participants warmed their hands at fire drums. Children kept warm playing games and scrambling for sweets fired from a cannon loaded with candy.

City Councilwoman Coleen Oltrogge, who coordinates the celebration, expects this year's jamboree to be even bigger. There will be 30 booths featuring such games as spin-the-wheel, Nerf-gun ring-the-bell, football tosses, an obstacle course, a scavenger hunt and trivial pursuit.

In quad-pulls, sponsored by Ron Greene Sports Center, contestants compete in a two-way race to drag family members riding off-road quads down a 50 foot course.

As usual, Santa and Mrs. Claus will be on hand to take requests for Christmas gifts. More than 150 toys will be given away.

Entertainment will be provided by carolers from the local elementary school and North Sanpete High School. There will also be a raffle. The grand prize will be a snowboard, boots and bindings from City Slickers Sport Shop, and a snowkite plus kite lessons from Windzup Kites.

The city's historic Carnegie Library, the Sanpitch Arena now under construction, and the city's Youth City Council will all have fundraisers by selling chili, scones and nachos, and hotdogs, respectively.

Steve Kunik, one of the organizers, says rumors abound that the Seussian-Western "Grincho Gang" will try to kidnap Santa and Mrs. Claus. Kunik's close friend, Marshal "Who" and a young Cindy Lou will be on hand to provide security but they may need deputies to thwart the Grinchos' plans. There may be a shootout. Children are encouraged to apply for reserve deputy jobs.

The celebration will continue until 9 p.m.

"It will be a great experience for everybody involved," promises Councilwoman Oltrogge.

### **CONTACT:**

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