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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: October 18, 2019

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SPRINGFIELD PARK DISTRICT & THE REES MEMORIAL CARILLON SOCIETY ARE EXCITED TO BRING YOU THE 15TH ANNUAL JACK-O-LANTERN SPECTACULAR (JOLS) AT WASHINGTON PARK BENEFITTING THE REES MEMORIAL CARILLON

Washington Park Botanical Garden
1740 W. Fayette Avenue, Springfield IL 62704
39°47'22.4"N 89°41'04.1"W (GPS Park)



[Springfield, IL] – The Springfield Park District is pleased to partner annually with the Rees Carillon Society to carve over 2000 jack-o-lanterns, stage them all throughout the Washington Park Botanical Garden & Carillon grounds and light them for two consecutive nights for patrons to pay a small admission and come enjoy the sparkling splendor!

The annual **Jack-O-Lantern Spectacular** and **Carve for the Carillon** were founded by former Rees Carillon Society Board Member Brenda Poston. These events are inspired by the Jack-O-Lantern Spectacular in Providence, Rhode Island - featuring the talents of professional artists only. Springfield's event differs in that everyone is invited--from students, individuals, families and artists--from the community to participate and carve their own pumpkin at Carve for the Carillon (the second weekend each October). The following Friday and Saturday, more than 2,000 illuminated hand-carved jack-o-lanterns are displayed around the Carillon and the Washington Park Botanical Garden - showcasing carving talents of area residents, artists and District 186 students. Springfield's events are participatory, and family focused.

JOLS features special Carillon music, lighting, sound effects, a unique Tree of Lights and food vendors and so much more! Fundraising proceeds include corporate sponsorship and admissions. Attendance ranges from 5,000 to 8,000 annually. Proceeds go to benefit the Thomas Rees Memorial Carillon.

This is our 15th year for the event and it is a Springfield FAVORITE! ...a must do for your October fall family **FUN** calendar. The partnership between the Springfield Park District and the Rees Carillon Society is a strong one and it's events such as these that showcase the beauty of these two Park District facilities and help to raise money to continue to fund operations, special events and ongoing maintenance to the Carillon Tower.



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The Washington Park Botanical staff works very hard for months leading up to the event to get all the facets and showcase exhibits JUST RIGHT! General Manager Alexa Bryan Potts has served on the planning committee for this event for the full 15 years with the Rees Society. This year co-chairing with Jennifer Johnson, Rees Carillon Society President and Connie Heskett, Carillon Belles President. *“Alexa is extremely talented and brings an amazing artistic element to events such as this one on Botanical grounds as she and her staff stage magical Halloween vignettes for guests to enjoy and take photos near. It is truly a Spectacular site to behold!”* – **states Lynn Saputo, Director of Recreation & Marketing**

In addition to the visual aesthetics, you will want to take in the sounds of spooky music played by the D.J. on site as well as elaborate themed musical concerts from our own Park District Carillonist, Carlo van Ulft. The Carillon is considered the world’s largest instrument, and the Thomas Rees Memorial Carillon is one of the largest and finest in the world!

The event runs tonight, October 18th from 6:30 pm – 9:30 pm and Saturday, October 19th 6:30 pm – 9:30 pm. Admission is just \$7 for Adults, Ages 4-11 \$5 and Children 3 and under are FREE!

BUT... the FUN doesn’t stop there – this year we have a NEW Event added to the weekend festivities! On Sunday, October 20th we will host the first ever Rees Memorial Carillon **PUMPKIN TOSS!** Patrons can purchase raffle tickets Friday and Saturday evening for a chance to be one of 8 lucky contestants chosen to ride the elevator at the Carillon up to the 5th floor and “toss” a pumpkin over the balcony towards a large target mapped out on the Botanical lawn. Prizes will be awarded to “pumpkin tossers” who make it closest to bullseye or center of the target. So plan to come out to the Carillon and Botanical grounds on **Sunday, October 20th from 12pm – 1pm** and join in the festivities! This event will take the place of our previous “Great Pumpkin Grab,” however you can still come to the grounds to try and locate your families carved pumpkin to take home, bring the kiddos and watch the fun **NEW Pumpkin Toss** in action!

Got Questions? Feel free to call the Botanical Garden at 217-546-4116. Also, please note that there will be an adjusted travel route through and around Washington Park near the Carillon for parking purposes and the Citizen’s Police Academy will be managing all parking logistics both nights. The Botanical and Carillon parking lot will be reserved for handicap parking only. There is a shuttle bus provided free of charge that runs both Friday and Saturday nights from Barney’s Parking lot off Wabash Avenue in Springfield. Avoid any parking issues, plan ahead to ride the Shuttle!

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For more information on this topic and any other Park District news related items, please visit our Website at www.springfieldparks.org