



PRESS RELEASE

For photos, b-roll, or
interviews, contact:
Theresa Vetsch-Sandoval
tvetsch@thesquarepdx.org
503-776-0951

THE NUMBERS ARE IN: DOWNTOWN PORTLAND'S PIONEER COURTHOUSE SQUARE WAS THE PLACE TO BE OVER THE HOLIDAYS.



PORTLAND, OREGON – (January 21, 2026) – Portland’s Pioneer Courthouse Square drew 225,000 visitors throughout the holiday season with the annual Tree Lighting Ceremony, public Menorah Lighting and the Great Figgy Pudding Caroling Competition seeing the highest attendance increases. Overall, The Square attracted its largest holiday event crowds since the pandemic with a **56% increase in total visitors over the last three years**.

The **City’s Tree Lighting Ceremony**, held on the day after Thanksgiving, attracted its largest crowd ever with more than **27,000 people** filling not only The Square, but the downtown blocks surrounding it. The first night of the **public menorah lighting** also attracted its **largest gathering** of nearly 1,000 registered participants. The holiday event experiencing **substantial growth** over last year, was the [Great Figgy Pudding Caroling Competition](#) with more than **6,900 attendees** and 15 caroling groups filling 10 blocks of downtown.

With the return of the City's **New Year's Eve Downtown** celebration, in partnership with the City of Portland's Office of Events & Film, a large-scale dance party with two drone shows drove a **24% increase in pedestrian traffic** over the same day last year.

"Bringing people together is exactly what Pioneer Courthouse Square was designed to do when it was created more than 40 years ago," said Courtney Posey, President of the Pioneer Courthouse Square Board of Trustees.

These large-scale free public community events are **critical to supporting a healthy, active and connected Downtown** and would not be possible without the public/ private collaboration between The Square's nonprofit management team that produces the events and the City of Portland. The **coordinated** effort between the Portland Police Bureau, Bureau of Emergency Management, Bureau of Transportation, Portland Parks & Recreation, Prosper Portland and TriMet assured all of the holiday events at The Square occurred safely and that attendees were welcomed into the heart of our City for many joyful moments of shared celebration.

"Last month, 22,000 people chose to celebrate our City and downtown at the New Year's Eve drone shows at Pioneer Square," said Mayor Keith Wilson. "That commitment from our community and the tireless work of our partners – The Square, Prosper Portland, True West, TriMet, and our City bureaus – is building momentum as we restore downtown foot traffic numbers to pre-pandemic levels. The upcoming Portland Winter Light Festival and Staycation Winter Edition will provide us with another opportunity to celebrate all that Portland has to offer. I encourage you to join us and see for yourself how we are activating Central City with engaging events for the whole family."

A **heartfelt thank you** goes to the sponsor and programmatic partner organizations who supported last year's holiday programming: SmartPark, Stimson Lumber Company, Nordstrom, Travel Oregon, Prosper Portland, Pink Martini, Columbia Sportswear, Adidas, True West, Portland Mall Management, Ness Campbell Crane, Highway Heavy Hauling, Equipment Share, Pioneer Place, Oregon State University Foundation, Ben & Jerry's, Really Big Video, KGW 8, 101.9 KINK and The Oregonian.

In its last fiscal year of operations, The Square attracted **1.3M visitors**, which positions it as the most frequented block in downtown Portland. With nearly **300 events** each year, The Square's arts and culture programming generates more than **\$42M in economic income** for The City each year.

The Square looks forward to bringing more events and celebrations to the heart of downtown in 2026 with its role as a central Downtown location for the [Portland Winter Light Festival](#) next month, the creative home of the [PDX Live Summer Concert Series](#) and dozens of community cultural festivals and celebrations to bring us together once again.

*Placer.ai (visitor, attendee and pedestrian traffic counts)

####

About Pioneer Courthouse Square: Pioneer Courthouse Square is where Portland comes together. Through artistic, cultural, and civic programming, the nonprofit operating The Square strives to be the foundation of a diverse and thriving downtown, and in turn a better Portland. With nearly 300 events per year, The Square is home to many of Portland's favorite community traditions including concerts, festivals of food and drink, and cultural celebrations.