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Local/State

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**FUNDING DOWNTOWN HOLIDAY DÉCOR REPAIRS
SUCCESSFUL FOR THANKSGIVING INSTALLATION**

MISSOULA – With significant support from the Missoula Downtown Foundation (MDF) and the City of Missoula, the Missoula Downtown Association (MDA) has funded the holiday décor infrastructure repairs to light and decorate Downtown Missoula for this holiday season. In order to install the décor before Thanksgiving, the MDA and MDF had only four weeks to raise \$14,500 needed for repairs. With several different partners and donors pitching in, an additional \$10,000 was raised to put towards next year's repairs.

The 30 year old electrical infrastructure supporting the Downtown holiday décor was failing and efforts were put in place last summer to repair the system. Due to the short time frame to raise funds, the \$35,000 project was split into two phases. Phase I included electrical box and wiring upgrades to 70 of the 115 light poles utilized for holiday décor. Phase II will include replacing distribution wires and switching all décor to a LED lighting system. Currently, incandescent bulbs light the Downtown holiday décor requiring additional distribution wiring and electricity.

"We had an overwhelming response to this project and it is clear that creating a festive atmosphere Downtown during the holiday season is important to our community," states Heidi Starrett, President of the MDA Board of Directors. "This year's improvements along with future repairs will benefit the entire community for many holiday seasons to come."

At the end of September, MDF kicked off a 'Light-A-Pole Campaign' to fund Phase I repairs. Roemer's Tire Factory donated funds to the effort through tires purchased during the month of October. In addition, the remaining funds needed for Phase I and Phase II have come from a \$10,000 gift from a community member, funding from the City of Missoula, Light-A-Pole sponsorships from local businesses such as First Security Bank, Choices Counseling, Blackfoot Telecommunications Group, Datsopoulos, MacDonald, & Lind, and from contributions from the MDA and its partner organization, the Downtown BID. An in-kind donation of labor was given by Liberty Electric, the contractor hired for the repairs.

"On behalf of all three Downtown Missoula Partnership organizations, we thank everyone who has come forward to support this effort," states Colleen Rudio, President of the MDF Board of Directors. "The Missoula community has listened to the needs of Downtown, embraced it, and helped fund Phase I entirely as well as an additional \$10,000 towards our \$20,500 goal for next year. We have other Downtown projects on the docket for 2016, and with this fundraising effort, we have a great start to finalizing Phase II repairs by the end of the year. This will allow us to turn our attention to other projects, such as Downtown Wayfinding and a new Caras Park Pavilion canopy and sound system."

Downtown Holiday Décor installation will be completed this week and turned on at dusk on Friday, November 27. To donate to Phase II of this campaign, to the MDF's annual fall Friends of Downtown Campaign, or to other Downtown projects, go to downtownMISSOULAfriends.org or call 406.543.4238.

For more information, contact Noreen Humes, Community Development Manager at Noreen@downtownmissoula.com or 406.543.4238.