



Fairfield Mayor Harry Price, left, and Santa Claus address the crowd during the Christmas tree lighting ceremony in downtown Fairfield, Friday. The holiday event also included games and activities for kids. (Aaron Rosenblatt/Daily Republic)

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Thousands flood downtown for tree lighting, festival

By [Bill Hicks](#) [From page A1](#) | Daily Republic | December 05, 2015

FAIRFIELD — It's hard to deny the truth. Santa Claus draws a crowd.

That's exactly what the Fairfield Main Street Association was hoping with its annual Christmas tree lighting Friday night.

While the festively lit tree is located near the Solano County government building on Texas Street, the festivities were spread out across three blocks of Fairfield's downtown along Texas Street with streets blocked off for vendors, bounce houses and other attractions.

It's the type of event that might create a problem for local businesses, but many of the downtown businesses remained open for the event.

"We want to do something to help the businesses downtown," said Margaret Manzo of the Fairfield Main Street Association. "It's a community event, but we also want to help people discover some of the great businesses we have downtown."

By Manzo's recollection, the event hosted the largest crowd in more than five years and the added foot traffic was a hopeful sign for business owners.

"I think it's really great to help get people down here," said Evelyn Scrogings, owner of E&J Collectibles & Antiques.

Her business has been open less than two months downtown and the event was a good way to bring new potential customers to the store.

"Downtowns are going away all over the place," Scrogings said. "Anything that can help downtown areas is a good idea."

Fellow downtown business owner Shawna Clark, who was also enjoying the event as a patron, said she thinks events like this help remind people of some of the great businesses that exist downtown. Les Clark agreed.

"I think it's great to have something like this downtown," he said. "Not only are there some really great businesses down here but it gives a much better sense of community to have it downtown."

Not every business in the festival area remained open, but many did and used the opportunity to greet festival guests.

Manzo said it was important to offer an event where guests aren't necessarily being asked to buy sundry items. Instead, with caroling, bounce houses and pony rides, the event was focused on families gathering under just-cool-enough skies to enjoy events preceding the pending holidays.

There was no shortage of wintery joy. Not only were music and warm drinks plentiful, so too were gasps and shrieks of joy upon seeing one of the photo opportunities available downtown.

Certainly Santa Claus had his share of people waiting in line for a photo and a quick pitch for a preferred gift. But his popularity wasn't without rival. About a block away, an equally long line had gathered for a chance at a photo with Elsa and her friends from the Disney film "Frozen."

While it remained to be seen if people will wander downtown for shopping after the hot cocoa was all gone, most business owners were happy to be part of something so important to so many residents of Fairfield.

With each successive set of glowing young eyes catching site of a magical man in a red suit, point and exclaiming, "Look, Mommy," it's not hard to understand where that importance is derived from.

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