

ENTERTAINMENT

Family-oriented New Year's Eve planned for Onondaga Lake Park

A pedestrian-only Lights on the Lake and live music are also part of the event.

By Mark Bialczak
Staff writer

A partnership between Onondaga County and Galaxy Communications will bring a family-friendly New Year's Eve celebration to Lights on the Lake.

On Friday, County Executive Joanie Mahoney and Galaxy owner Ed Levine revealed plans for First Night at the spot outside Griffon Visitor Center in Onondaga Lake Park



Kingston

where the stage will rise to host seven hours of music on Dec. 31.

National pop artist Sean Kingston will headline the event, and veteran Central New York rock musician Todd Hobin will put together a reunion of his band before that. Child-oriented bands will start the entertainment.

Lights on the Lake will be closed to motorists at 5 p.m. that day. The display of holiday lights that winds through Onondaga Lake Park will be open to walkers only.

Special events include a balloon drop for children at 7



Mike Greenlar / The Post-Standard, 2009

LIGHTS ON THE LAKE, the annual drive-through display of holiday lights in Onondaga Lake Park in Liverpool, will be pedestrian only for a planned New Year's Eve celebration this year.

p.m., a giant orange that will drop at midnight after former Syracuse University basketball star Gerry McNamara pushes a button at 11:59 p.m., and a fireworks display at midnight.

Tickets for First Night will be \$5. Children 5 and younger will get in free. Levine said tickets for First Night will go on sale around Thanksgiving at area NAPA stores and possibly other locations. Tickets for Lights on the Lake will not be good for the New Year's Eve event. Tickets for that six-week event are available at Wegmans stores.

Mahoney said the partnership will transfer the financial component for Lights on the Lake from the county to Galaxy.

Galaxy paid \$260,000 to the

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county, which will continue to put up the trail of lights. The county, in turn, paid Galaxy \$40,000 to promote Lights on the Lake.

Galaxy, which owns several local radio stations, will receive the revenue from First Night as well as Lights on the Lake. The county will receive revenue if weekend Lights on

the Lake attendance exceeds agreed-upon levels.

Levine said he hopes a crowd of 5,000 will attend First Night, and added his hope that it will become an annual event.

Levine said he got the idea for a big outdoor concert on New Year's Eve after noting the success of the Syracuse Crunch's outdoor hockey game last winter at the state fairgrounds.

"We know what winter can be like here. It's time to stop complaining and embrace what we have. This is a celebration of life in Central New York," Levine said.

Mark Bialczak can be reached at 470-2175 or mbialczak@syracuse.com.