



JANUARY 3, 2005

Record Numbers Attend the 17th Annual Ball Drop

Unseasonable warmth brings out crowds to Ball Drop

Every year Western New York's premier New Year's Eve celebration grows larger and larger. The police estimated the crowd of 40,000+ for the 2005 Ball Drop surpassed any other years' totals! Perfect conditions, weather in the low '50's and no snow or rain, combined with a major publicity push helped to make it a most memorable night.

This year's major sponsors of the event were Independent Health, Jim Ball Pontiac-Buick-GMC-ReSale, 7 News WKBW-TV, and the developer of the Electric Tower, Iskalo Development Corp.

Channel 7 uplinked to their satellite and the telecast was seen as far away as Mexico! Anchors Keith Radford and Susan Banks were on the telecast from 11 p.m. through the fireworks finale at 12:10AM in 2005. Julie Fine shared the stage with 97 Rock's Larry Norton and showman Lance Diamond while 97 Rock morning co-anchor Rob Lederman broadcast live on 97 Rock from in front of the Electric Tower from 7 p.m. to 12 midnight.

A VIP party was held by invitation only for major sponsors and their guests and was hosted by Mr. Jim Ball and his staff at the magnificent 16th floor of the Key Center, providing a great aerial view of the Electric Tower and the thousands gathered in front. Guests were treated to top-shelf libations, delicious desserts, and were able to listen to the live reports from 97 Rock and keep one eye out the window and the other on plasma screens showing Channel 7's coverage.

The crowd of approximately 45,000 chanted the count backwards from 10 and, at midnight right on the dot, the ball dropped and a huge animated sign lit up to 2005 as blasts of fireworks ignited Buffalo from multiple locations on the Electric Tower and a nearby aerial display launched to cover all of the downtown core. It was all timed to classic rock music specially selected by 97 Rock.



The ball dropped precisely at midnight to welcome in 2005.

" This building was patterned after the Tower of Light at the 1901 Pan-American Exposition. Its image has been associated with great Buffalo celebrations for over a century. We are pleased to help continue this tradition."

**Paul B. Iskalo, President
Iskalo Development Corp.**

Proceeds of the event were to benefit the Police Athletic League. Major coordination of the event was provided by P.A.L. Executive Director Sue Gonzalez.

After the fireworks, crowds jammed the official host after-party locations: D'Arcy McGee's Irish Pub and The Warehouse Night Club on Franklin Street.

Guests who wanted to stay downtown took advantage of a special 97 Ball Drop package at the official host hotel, Comfort Suites.

Additional media who covering the event included Channel's 2, 4, 49, and the Buffalo News.