



DECEMBER 16, 2005

Ball Drop Press Conference Announcing 18th Annual

Event Proceeds to Benefit the Buffalo Police Athletic League

New Year's to Mark Passing of Torch

The changing of the guard in Buffalo City Hall will be commemorated New Year's Eve at the downtown ball drop heralding the new year.

Mayor Anthony M. Masiello was joined by Mayor-elect Byron W. Brown at a news conference Friday in City Hall, where plans for the event were announced. Both promised to take the stage in Roosevelt Square on Dec. 31.

Representatives were also there for the event's sponsors: Jim Ball Pontiac-Buick-GMC & Resale, Independent Health Foundation, Iskalo Development Corp. and WKBW-TV. Proceeds from the celebration will benefit the Police Athletic League.

WGRF 97 Rock began the annual ball drop and fireworks display at the Electric Tower in 1988, when the radio station returned to Buffalo airwaves. An estimated 15,000 people attended that first year, according to organizers.

The ball is 4 feet in diameter, made of Plexiglas and has more than 1,000 clear light bulbs. This is the second ball produced for the event, using more sophisticated computer technology to control its display.

New to the 10-minute fireworks display, which is choreographed to classic rock songs, are fireworks that will follow the contour of the building from the bottom up, said Paul Maurer, general sales manager for 97 Rock.

Iskalo Development Corp. is the new owner of the Electric Tower, which was built in 1912 and modeled after the Tower of Light at the 1901 Pan American Exposition in Buffalo. Iskalo bought the Washington Street building from Niagara Mohawk Power Corp. - now National Grid - last year and is renovating its interior into high-end office space.

Live entertainment begins at 11 p.m. New Year's Eve in Roosevelt Square. Maurer is urging people attending First Night activities at the Buffalo Convention Center to attend.



Present and future Mayors look on as Paul B. Iskalo speaks.

"Iskalo Development considers it an honor and a privilege to host this region's premier New Year's Eve celebration, and we look forward to ringing in many more New Years at the Electric Tower."



Interviews for same day television broadcast.