

CELEBRATING 40 YEARS

The heart of hospitality

Sponsored content by Linda Bowers, chair, The Cultural Trust

Hurry! Hotels are filling up! Restaurants are closing reservations! Bakeries are running out of treats! It's true. During the Festival of Trees, downtown Davenport and all over the Quads, you'll see the festival's swirling tree logo everywhere.

Except during the pandemic, Festival of Trees has lifted the local economy beyond anyone's expectations. But more than that, it has elevated the Quad Cities as the hub of hospitality. While this area has always had its arms open wide to tourists and residents alike, during Festival of Trees, there's a special *je ne sais quoi* about the hotels, restaurants and shops. That *lagniappe* of something a little more you can feel in the air. The hug of a season bright.

That's no surprise, given how Festival of Trees has grown. From starting in one room at the RiverCenter to now occupying more than 70,000 square feet (that's the entirety of the RiverCenter) the festival is attended by more than 100,000 people who want to appreciate the work of over 3,000 volunteers, hundreds of designers and thousands of Center Stage performers. Not to mention the economic lift of over \$2.5 million each year.



Festival of Trees and its sponsors, like the Quad-City Times, are more than volunteers, attendees, performers and dollars. They are the heart and soul of hospitality in this region. Walk around downtown Davenport during the festival and feel the buzz, the energy, the hum.

Step inside RiverCenter and, for just a moment, look at all the visitors enjoying the splendor. Stop for a snack and listen to the chatter. Look at the line to visit Santa and read the anticipation on the children's faces.

That's the heart of hospitality at work.

Coming tomorrow: The art of welcome: Where hospitality becomes heritage — and Culture Champions make it happen

Scan here or visit
qcfestivaloftrees.com
to learn more!



40 STORIES IN 40 DAYS

Quad-City
Times