

News Release

For Immediate Release
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“Santa’s Village” to launch Christmas Season at Grand Bear Lodge

Possible new location for famous theme park at Grizzly Jack’s Resort in Utica, Illinois.

UTICA, IL-----Three years have passed since the Santa’s Village theme park in East Dundee closed its doors. A few attempts have been made on reopening the park at its old location, but without success. Well, now Santa is looking at a possible new location.

Santa Claus and officials from Grizzly Jack’s Grand Bear Lodge and Resort in Utica met last week to discuss possible plans on recreating a Santa’s Village on the property of the 90 million dollar resort. The Resort already owns some of the famous rides and props from the East Dundee theme park. Future plans would also possibly include some of the historic buildings and static displays from the IL Rts. 25 and 72 location.

“Santa’s Village remains a great memory for many people across the Midwest.” stated Joe Hook, general managing partner of [Grizzly Jack’s Resort](#). “We look forward to creating this new magic for generations to come.”

The new park is in the planning stages and would not open for about two years, but that won’t stop the Resort from having many events and attractions this upcoming Christmas and into next summer that relate to Santa’s Village. There is even a new webpage, www.SantasVillageAtGrandBear.com where people can ask questions, make comments and suggestions on the project.

The Christmas season at Grand Bear Lodge will kick off on Friday November 28th with Santa Claus arriving at the resort. Santa will be Phillip L. Wenz, the [Santa from Santa’s Village](#). He will also be making appearances on Sundays during the Holidays at the Resort’s “Sunday Brunch with Santa.” On Wednesday, December 10th, Santa will hold a very special “Storytime” at the Lodge.

Wenz will also be putting on display some of his memorabilia collection from Santa’s Village.

Plans next summer include a portion of the Resorts property to be developed into a temporary home for Santa’s Village. Guest will be able to ride historic attractions like the Snow Ball ride and the Convoy Trucks. Even Santa will be there with some of his original park props including the frozen North Pole. Negotiations for other props from the original location are being considered by the East Dundee property owner [Sterling Bay/Griffon Associates](#).

"The site of the former amusement park at IL Rts. 72 and 25 in East Dundee is at the center of what will one day be a significant development for the village of East Dundee and the surrounding communities." stated Patrick O’Connor, partner with Sterling Bay. “Whether that development includes some elements of the former Santa’s Village theme park is yet to be seen. Despite the current economic slowdown, we continue discussions with a number of interested parties."

Santa’s Village in East Dundee opened in May of 1959 and officially closed its doors in May of 2006.

“There has always been open dialogue on the subject of Santa’s Village with Sterling Bay and Grizzly Jack’s Resort since the park’s assets were auctioned in October 2006.” commented Santa Phillip L. Wenz. “Everyone involved knows each other and everyone wants to do the right thing for Grizzly Jack’s, the East Dundee property and the future of Santa’s Village.”

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About Santa's Village at Grand Bear Lodge

A webpage where people can make ask questions, make comments and suggestions on the project. Please visit www.SantasVillageAtGrandBear.com

About Grizzly Jack's Grand Bear Lodge and Resort

Grizzly Jack's Grand Bear Lodge and Resort has expressed building a Santa's Village near their current property off IL Rte. 178. The Lodge has Illinois' first indoor water park along with miniature golf and a 36,000 square foot indoor amusement park. The park would become part of an ever growing destination that already includes resort suites, vacation villas, and cabins. Over 2 million visitors visit the attractions and state parks near Utica each year. For more information on Grizzly Jack's, please visit www.grizzlyjacksresort.com

About Sterling Bay Companies

Sterling Bay Companies is a full service commercial real estate firm based in Chicago. Founded in 1986, Sterling Bay has been actively involved in the development or redevelopment of over \$300 million of office, retail, industrial, telecom, and laboratory properties. From West Loop brick and timber rehabs to Class A office campuses, Sterling Bay has built commercial real estate success with a hands on approach and an unrelenting commitment to their projects. For more information on Sterling Bay, please visit www.sterlingbay.net

About Santa Claus, Phillip L. Wenz

Phillip L. Wenz donned his first Santa Claus suit at the age of four. By the time he was fourteen he was in his first parade, and by the ripe old age of twenty-four, he became the year round Santa Claus for the iconic Santa's Village in East Dundee, Illinois. An association he has now had for more than twenty years. Wenz has appeared in nationally televised parades, commercials, and at some of the nation's largest corporate and civic holiday events. His resume also includes work in Santa Claus, Indiana at the Historic Candy Castle, consulting on Christmas programs, and being a published author. For more information on Santa Claus or Santa's Village please visit www.SantafromSantasVillage.com

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