AN INDOOR Winter Wonder land

DUKE WORLD OF ENERGY CELEBRATES CHRISTMAS WITH FESTIVAL OF TREES

BY MONICA KREBER
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SENECA — Duke World of Energy has decided to really get into the Christmas spirit this year with a variety of holiday activities.

This past month, World of Energy has been a Toys for Tots drop-off location, and it is also the location of a brand new tree festival. Walking into the lobby at World of Energy, visitors are greeted by an evergreen forest of 20 Christmas trees, all decorated and lit up for the public to come and see.

World of Energy kicked off its Christmas season with a holiday tree-lighting drop-in on Dec. 3. People were invited to help usher in the holiday season with live music and refreshments, and watch the trees come to life.

The 20 decorated trees represent local businesses, churches and organizations.

Amanda Dow with corporate communications at Duke Energy said the planning process for the Festival of Trees started four months ago.

"We sent out information to local businesses and organizations and just asked them, if they wanted to reserve a tree, to fill out a form," she said. "They were responsible for decorating it however they saw fit, and they could put out information with their tree about their business or organization."

'Everybody went above and beyond to decorate their trees.'

Amanda Dow

By putting out their business information along with their trees, the festival is also a way for organizations to do some networking.

"We have everything from the Oconee Christian Academy to Walls Fargo. Everybody went above and beyond to



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The displayed Christmas trees include information about 20 different businesses and organizations in the area.



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The public is invited to come to see Santa on Saturday from 1-3 p.m. at the Festival of Trees.

decorate their trees and show what business or organization they were with," Dow said.

The trees will be up until Dec. 28. After that, the trees will be taken down, and Dow said World of Energy has plans to do the festival again next year.

"The public can come and look at the trees any time World of Energy is open — which is Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Saturday from noon to 5 (p.m.)," she said. "We will be closed Christmas Eve and Christmas Day."

While there is no charge to come and check out the trees, Dow encourages the public to bring an unwrapped toy for the Toys for Tots drive; the program has a tree of its own on display.

"Our team at the World of Energy had sat down and talked about different events that we put on — because we do community events throughout the year so the community can come to World of Energy and become familiar with it and the things we offer," she said. "The festival was just a new idea we came up with that we thought would be beneficial to the community so that businesses and organizations can get information out about their company. Also, it is something the community can take part in and enjoy."

World of Energy is planning another Christmas event this Saturday. Santa Claus will make a visit to the World of Energy from 1 p.m. until 3 p.m. Children are invited to come and tell Santa their wish list and have their picture taken. Parents can bring their own cameras as well. Following Santa's visit, "The Polar Express" will be showing on the auditorium's big screen at 3 p.m.

"World of Energy has always reached out to the community with the various events that we do," Dow said. "I think that is the mission of the education center — to do outreach in the community so they feel welcome to come to the grounds of the nuclear facility and enjoy it, but also learn while they are there."

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