

## The Polar Express is going to pull into a local town

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**La Plata, MD--** La Plata Business Association (LPBA) announces that it will host the second annual Shop La Plata celebration on Small Business Saturday® to be held on Nov. 28, from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. in the town of La Plata, Maryland.

All Aboard! The Polar Express pulls into the La Plata Train Station Museum for the big celebration, turning a storybook tale into a real life magical experience for the whole family. The conductor will welcome visitors aboard to enjoy sing-along carols; complimentary hot chocolate and cookies; and free activities for kids before the North Pole bound train departs at 3:00 p.m.

Santa Claus will arrive in grand style at 10:00 a.m. to board the Polar Express and give each child the first gift of Christmas, a bell that rings for all those that believe! A professional photographer will be available or you can take your own family photos with jolly ole St. Nick and Mrs. Claus until 1:00 p.m.

La Plata is Southern Maryland's most festive small-town dining and shopping destination for the holidays. Thirty-one of the town's favorite locally owned small shops, spas, studios, cafes and restaurants open their doors to greet joyful visitors on this day to kick off the busy holiday shopping season. Ask participating small merchants how to enter the giveaway for a chance to win the \$1,000 holiday shopping spree.

Come discover the good things made in Southern Maryland, including artsy and one-of-a-kind boutique gifts; unique holiday décor and ornaments; vintage musical instruments; antiques; aroma-therapies; and the finest jams, jellies and local honey, plus much more.

After the inaugural event last year, Julie Keyton and Theresa Shoptaw, co-owners of Centerpiece Boutique and Design, LLC said, "People were excited and happy to have a walking, old town feel right here in Charles County. We loved the spirit in the air. It was a pleasant and festive day and we look forward to doing it again real soon!"

Take a merry self-guided walking tour around town to enjoy the sights, tastes and sounds of the holiday season. Admire the decorated historic landmarks and storefronts; sip on seasonal spiced hot toddies; and enjoy festive live music and caroling. Ask participating small merchants for a ballot to cast your vote for the best traditional and whimsical exterior decor, in the Town of La Plata, Beautification Committee's Business Holiday Decorating Contest - People's Choice Award.

Be sure to visit the Holi-Pop Gallery curated by Southern Maryland artists that opens on Small Business Saturday® and explore the open-air La Plata Farmer's Market, featuring local artisans and skilled holiday crafters.

For your convenience, park at the Charles County Government Building's lot at 200 Baltimore Street and take the free-shuttle bus that will loop the downtown business district, making frequent stops at participating small merchants.

Donate bagged canned goods for the "Scouting for Food" program at participating small merchants and neighborhood champions beginning Nov. 7 through Small Business Saturday. LPBA has partnered with Zekiah District of the National Capital Area Council, Boy Scouts of America to collect the donations and deliver them to local food pantries to feed the hungry.

La Plata's holiday charm dates back to 1949 when a big star twinkled above the small-town until it was blown down by the Tornado of 2002. The historic town shines brilliantly once again with strings of white street lights and the warm glow of window candles that serve as a traditional welcome sign to travelers. The theme of 'A Christmas Carol,' Charles Dickens' timeless tale, travels beyond the stage of the Port Tobacco Players and extends throughout the town this holiday season.

Look for full page ads in the Maryland Independent on Wed., Nov. 25, for a list of participating small merchants and a schedule of events for the day. Stay updated and informed about the event by following #shoplaplata hashtag and "like" the La Plata Business Association Facebook page.

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