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For immediate release

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NOTE:

Media interviews for a behind-the-scenes look are available with the Boerner Botanical Gardens Director and a China Lights representative/translator. Please call ahead.

## Construction, Installation of Displays for China Lights Lantern Festival Underway at Boerner Botanical Gardens

Milwaukee, WI (Sept. 14, 2016) — Since arriving in Milwaukee on Aug. 31<sup>st</sup>, a group of 28 artisans from China has been working on the 1,000 sculptural lantern components needed to create 40 larger-than-life displays that will set the Boerner Botanical Gardens aglow during China Lights, from Oct. 1–30.

Near the Botanical Gardens entrance, the 20-foot-high Lotus Fairy display has already been installed. On Thursday, if the weather cooperates, other displays will be added to the gardens. While visitors may see some of the displays as they are installed, others may be blocked from view due to safety concerns.

The China Lights artisans are representatives of Sichuan Tianyu, a professional design and manufacturing company in Zigong, China specializing in the production and organization of lantern festivals that include Chinese folk-culture activities and entertainment. Having produced the China Lights festival around the globe, Sichuan Tianyu has been recognized as a Key Enterprise of National Culture Export.

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“We believe lantern shows can improve culture communication between China and the World,” said Huiyuan (Bobo) Liu, a representative of Tianyu Arts and Culture, Inc., the US subsidiary.

To create the displays, different teams are needed. Artists draw the shape of the lanterns on the floor or on several pieces of plywood. Using the outlines as a guide, the welding team forms the metal to create a three-dimensional form. Next, the team of electricians and lighting artists wire various types and colors of LED lights inside the lantern frames. To achieve the desired effects, this team must be aware of the fabric color that the gluing team will use to cover the framework later in the process. Artists hand-paint the eyes and other details to bring the sculptures to life.

This week the artisans will be busy building a dragon head and body for the nearly 200-foot-long display and will be applying the finishing touches on each of the 24 pandas in Panda World.

The lanterns are built to survive rain and wind and last for weeks to months outdoors. Artisans maintain the sculptural lanterns throughout the festival.

China Lights will be open Tuesday–Sunday from 5:30–10 p.m. The festival will be closed Mondays. Boerner Botanical Gardens is located in Whitnall Park at 9400 Boerner Drive, Hales Corners, WI.

China Lights admission tickets will be valid any night of the regular 2016 schedule.

Admission is \$15 for adults (age 18–59) and \$10 for seniors (age 60 and up) and children (age 5-17). Children under age 5 will be admitted free. For \$30, a patron may purchase a one-visit VIP ticket, which includes a behind-the-scenes tour, optional participation in the Illumination Parade, fabric lantern, and mobile guide. Grass-lot parking is included with all admission tickets.

Preferred, close-up paved parking will be limited and available on a first-come, first-served basis for \$5 cash per night. Some spaces in this area will be designated for and are free to people with disabilities who have state-issued disabled parking or disabled Veteran parking license plates, or the state-issued disabled parking identification card.

Offered exclusively at the Botanical Gardens, in advance at the information desk or later at the box office, will be a season pass with unlimited visits for \$45, and a mobile guide, which requires a cell phone for use, for \$5.

Tickets may be purchased in advance on-line at [chinalights.org](http://chinalights.org), Boerner Botanical Gardens, and Milwaukee County Parks point-of-sale locations, including Parks Public Services (9480 Watertown Plank Road), regulation golf courses, The Domes, and the Milwaukee County Sports Complex.

Co-presenters of the event are the Park People of Milwaukee County and Travel Wisconsin. Event sponsors are the We Energies Foundation, Miller Lite, and Tri City National Bank.

For more information, visit [chinalights.org](http://chinalights.org).

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