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For immediate release

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Ticket Sales for China Lights Begin Aug. 8

Chinese Lantern Festival at Boerner Botanical Gardens, Sept. 13–Oct. 20

MILWAUKEE (Aug. 7, 2019) — Organizers of China Lights, the wildly popular Chinese lantern festival at Milwaukee County’s renowned Boerner Botanical Gardens, announced today that tickets to China Lights: Treasures of China go on sale tomorrow, Aug. 8, at 10:08 a.m. at chinalights.org and at various Parks locations.

“China Lights is a one-of-a-kind festival that is sure to reshape the way people interact with Milwaukee County parks,” said County Executive Chris Abele. “With new lantern displays, interactive exhibits and more, this year China Lights is sure to bring Milwaukee’s legacy of public art and iconic public parks onto the world stage in a way it never has before.”

The magical glow of 40 larger-than-life sculptural lantern displays will illuminate the renowned nine-acre Boerner Botanical Gardens, in Whitnall Park at 9400 Boerner Drive, Hales Corners, WI. The festival, presented by Tri City National Bank, will also celebrate Asian folk-culture with professional entertainment sponsored by We Energies, a bustling marketplace, and a variety of food and beverage selections. The event runs from Sept. 13–Oct. 20, Tuesday through Sunday, from 5:30–10 p.m., with a 5 p.m. opening for people who purchase the VIP ticket package. The festival will be closed Mondays.

“This year, the China Lights lantern festival runs one week longer to accommodate more people, more comfortably,” said Ralph Garity, the event producer and president of Festival Pro, LLC. “We are also happy to offer tickets to this 95-percent-new show at last year’s prices.”

Lantern Displays

Along the three-quarter-mile walking route through the Botanical Gardens, lantern displays of cultural treasures will be featured. The 25-foot-tall Temple of Heaven will fill the area in front of the Education and Visitor Center, The Great Wall of China will meander through the Rotary Garden and offer numerous beacon towers for photo ops, and the Terra Cotta Warriors will be displayed as if in the original archeological dig site.

The only returning display at China Lights will be the highly popular Moon Swings in the interactive area. (Even the 150-foot-long dragon will be new and will have two baby dragons in tow.) Designed with children in mind, the interactive area will feature a display of animated dinosaurs, in a nod to China's recent recognition by Smithsonian Magazine as "the new epicenter of paleontology."

Weekend Themes

Special weekend themes will be the following:

- Sept. 13–15, Opening Weekend, sponsored by Tri City National Bank
- Sept. 20–22, Treasures Weekend, sponsored by Gruber Law Offices
- Sept. 27–29, Asian Cuisine/Chicago Weekend, sponsored by WGN Radio
- Oct. 4–6, Moon Festival Weekend, presented by the Milwaukee Chinese Community Center and OCA–Wisconsin
- Oct. 11–13, Cultural Weekend, sponsored by the Reiman Foundation
- Oct 18–20, Closing Weekend, sponsored by We Energies

Cultural Entertainment

Each night at about 6:15 p.m., entertainment staff, dressed as a lion, will lead a procession through the audience in the Shrub Mall of the Botanical Gardens. The parade will conclude at the main stage in time for the first performance of the night.

Stage shows will highlight folk arts and culture, with professional acrobats and face-changing performers from China. Entertainment will vary nightly, and bonus shows will be added Fridays through Sundays. Schedules for the two performance stages will be posted at the Welcome Gate.

Food & Beverage

Throughout the festival a wide variety of Asian and Western food and beverage selections will be available, from Sweet & Sour Chicken with egg rolls to Klement's hot dogs, and from sake to Miller Lite.

Visitors may choose from a variety of areas to dine. The new Zhou's Garden Café will offer an intimate feeling, with small-table seating and garden string lights overhead. Ralph's Wine and Sake Bar will return with tables for two, and two areas will have picnic-table seating near the performance stages.

New Dragon Reserve Lot, Complimentary Parking & Shuttle Service

New this year will be the Dragon Reserve Lot with paved, paid reserved parking nearest the China Lights entrance. Tickets for this lot may be purchased online only. In addition, first-come, first-served, complimentary parking will be available at nine fully lighted parking lots. Complimentary shuttle

service, with an introduction to the show, will serve the four outer lots. Additional street parking will be available where marked.

The Dragon Reserve Lot will also be available on a first-come, first-served basis to people with disabilities who have state-issued disabled parking or disabled Veteran parking license plates, or the state-issued disabled parking identification card.

Designated drop-off areas for authorized taxis/uber and motorcoaches will also be located near the China Lights entrance. Motorcoach operators must make advance arrangements.

Admission/Fees

China Lights admission tickets will be valid any night of the regular 2019 schedule. Ticket prices are the following: Child, age 5-17, \$12; Adult, age 18-59, \$20; Senior, age 60+, \$12; one-visit individual VIP package, \$30; and unlimited-visit individual Season Pass, \$50. The VIP package includes early entry (5 p.m.), a souvenir, a tour (5:15 p.m.), participation in the Illumination Parade (6:15 p.m.), VIP show seating, and the mobile guide. The mobile guide, which requires a cell phone for use, provides a cultural perspective on the displays. The guide is also available for \$5 on-site.

Advance tickets may be purchased on-line at chinalights.org. Tickets may also be purchased in person at Boerner Botanical Gardens, Milwaukee County Parks Public Services Office (9480 Watertown Plank Road), and major Parks golf courses.

Same-night tickets will be available on-site at the outdoor ticket office starting at 4 p.m.

For more information, call 888-733-1888 or visit chinalights.org.

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BACKGROUND

For the past four years, Festival Pro LLC, a Milwaukee-based special-events producer, has worked with Sichuan Tianyu Arts & Culture, Inc., in cooperation with Zigong City and the Sichuan Provincial Department of Commerce, to bring the China Lights lantern festival to Milwaukee

In 2016, Milwaukee became the first Midwestern city to host the unequalled China Lights. In each of the past three years, more than 100,000 visitors attended the show.

As part of China's five-year economic plan, in 2015 the Sichuan Provincial Department of Commerce developed a campaign with the goal of holding 100 lantern shows in 100 cities worldwide to spread Chinese traditional culture and promote cultural exchange. The custom of lighting lanterns has occurred for thousands of years.

According to the Zigong Lantern Culture & Industry Group, Zigong City now boasts nearly 600 registered lantern-making companies with 40,000 employees.