

ZooLights Illuminate

continued ▲ from page 9

"ZooLights is a great way to start the holiday season," said Kim Smith, zoo director. "We're looking forward to unveiling some spectacular new light displays on Thanksgiving weekend."

New to ZooLights this winter are strings of lights that depict cascading snow. Visitors should also keep an eye out for silhouettes of gnomes: the fantastical garden-dwellers are part of a scavenger hunt that can win sharp-eyed visitors a prize at the Zoo Store.

Much-loved displays from previous years make an encore appearance. Life-size, 3-D beasts linger on the zoo's concert lawn, which is transformed into a 180-foot-long meandering river of light. Hippos graze near the water while crocodiles lie in wait, ready to snap their jaws on unsuspecting prey. Other returning favorites include leaping reindeer, trumpeting elephants, playful penguins and tobogganing polar bears.

In keeping with the zoo's commitment to sustainability, most of the lights displayed are

light-emitting diodes (LEDs), which use only about one percent of the power of standard holiday lights, and about 10 percent of the power in mini-lights.

Costumed animal mascots and elves will provide entertainment as well as fun photo opportunities, and sounds of the season will resound throughout the Elephant Plaza during the festival, with more than 100 groups performing holiday musical selections.

ZooLights hours are Sunday through Thursday, 5 p.m. to 8 p.m., and Friday through Saturday, 5 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Inspired by Vegan Cooking

continued ▲ from page 8

Center known as the Living Well Bistro.

"It is 100 percent organic Vegan food," he said. "You can get bowl of food for five bucks. It is designed to be accessible."

He said, however, he encourages individuals to cook plant-based within their own homes as well.

Although a lot of people are intimidated by the transition, he said cooking vegan is much easier than most people believe.

"If you can boil water you got it," he said. "It is so easy, it is deceptively easy."

Although happy to say there are more and more vegan Thanksgivings taking place, he said, he celebrates and gives thanks every day for his meals.

"I don't kill for my meals," he said. "As a compassionate person and non-violent activist, I believe it takes more courage to be peaceful than it does to be violent."

"This year," he said, "give thanks to the plant kingdom."

Holiday Travel Tips

continued ▲ from page 9

Dec. 22, 23 and 27 — PDX will serve approximately 44,000 travelers each day, compared to the normal daily average of 36,000 this time of year.

Enhanced security

Security remains top priority at PDX, and the Transportation Security Administration is now using the millimeter wave Advanced Imaging Technology system to enhance security and screen passengers at security checkpoints. In addition, children under 12 years old are no longer required to remove shoes as part of the revised risk-based, intelligence driven screening process that also helps reduce the number of physical pat-downs on children.

Plan ahead

PDX encourages travelers to check flight schedule information and travel tips before leaving home. Tips and information are available at pdx.com and by dialing 877-PDX-INFO. Follow PDX now on Twitter at flyPDX to learn about airport operations, special events and exciting new offers. The TSA also offers security-related travel tips and a complete list of items prohibited on flights at tsa.gov.

Park 'n Hug

PDX encourages motorists

to "Park 'n Hug" by parking in the short-term parking garage (\$3 per hour) and walking inside the airport to pick up holiday guests, helping avoid congestion on terminal roadways. Stopping curbside at the airport terminal is only allowed for immediate unloading or loading of travelers who are already waiting with luggage at the curb. Motorists can also park in the free cell phone waiting area, wait for a call announcing an arrival, and then quickly pull up to the terminal to pick up guests. Signs on Airport Way and 82nd Avenue approaching the airport will guide motorists to the cell phone waiting area on Air Cargo Road, just west of 82nd Avenue.

Holiday Events

As part of the PDX Holidays Take Flight campaign, travelers can enjoy an assortment of food and beverage samples and tastings inside and outside shops; live musical entertainment and special holiday events. Entertainment schedules are listed at pdx.com under tabs for restaurants, shops and services. Spirit Airlines is sponsoring a holiday drawing and giving away a pair of nonstop, round-trip tickets on their new route from Portland to Las Vegas. Contest rules and entry forms are available at pdx.com.

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