



FIRST NIGHT MORRIS 2012

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First Night Morris County Is Set For a Banner 20th Year

Morristown, NJ – This year marks the twentieth year Morris County will welcome in the New Year with a First Night celebration. The event is New Jersey's Largest First Night celebration and takes place in the county seat of Morristown. It features more than 70 performances in an alcohol-free, and family-friendly environment with nearly 10,000 attending each year. The event features hundreds of quality performers in a wide variety of genres: dance, comedy, rock, jazz, blues, classical, a Battle of the Bands, and so much more. There are plenty of children's performances and activities including the Harlem Wizards Duo, jugglers, face painting, and an interactive reptile show! Admission includes entry into as many performances as attendees can manage to see along with discounted dining at ten restaurant partners through First Dine and our legendary Fireworks shows at 9:15 PM and Midnight. First Night® Morris County offers budget-friendly tickets for purchase via its website, FirstNightMorris.com, and at the Mayo Performing Arts Center (formerly Community Theatre) Box Office.

The dedicated volunteers of First Night Morris County drive the event's success, with more than over 120 volunteers involved each year. This year one such volunteer is Board Chairman, Michael Schmidt. Schmidt served as Treasurer for First Night Morris County last year and has made an immediate impact as Chairman. The organization has seen a 25% growth in sponsorship revenues, features a re-designed marketing campaign including a new website, the successful launch of an Advisory Board and a fund-raising program designed to assist other non-profits, known as the Community Reinvestment Program. "We must always stay true to the principles of this event, yet we also must remain current with our ever changing environment. This year we have done a terrific job of accomplishing both. Through attending First Night Morris County as a youth, performing at the event in 2001, volunteering last year, and now Chairing the Board of Trustees, I have seen this event from all perspectives, and I believe in the organization's potential to be more than just a celebration. We can be a truly educational experience and provide an opportunity for the community to come together and experience all that our great town and county have to offer," stated Schmidt.

A staple of First Night Morris County is the outstanding performers at an unbeatable value. The programming and venue coordination are led by Dr. Lynn Siebert of the Arts Council of the Morris Area and Event Manager, Brandi Marks of Full House Events. Each year Dr. Siebert utilizes a 5-prong strategy to ensure the highest quality performers are programmed in the right venues to allow for the best possible First Night experience.

There is always a wide variety of quality acts available for attendees to enjoy. For First Night Morris 2012, nearly 70% of the program features either new artists or artists returning after several years. Jazz enthusiasts will be thrilled with performance by the legendary guitar “god”, Bucky Pizzarelli, in his first appearance at First Night Morris County as a Special Guest with the fabulous Frank Vignola and Vinny Raniolo. Relive the early glory days of the Rolling Stones with The Glimmer Twins who recreate the look and sound of young Mick Jagger, Keith Richards and their iconic rock ‘n roll band. The Mayhem Poets tear into contemporary life with wit, poetry and passion. See world-renowned Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company’s brilliant choreography and stunning visuals. The Sweet Plantain Quartet – equally at home with Alicia Keys, Smokey Robinson or Russia’s classical circles – blends Beethoven and Bach with jazz and Latin music – and, speaking of strings, be sure to catch some Norwegian Hardanger fiddle music played by Princeton Music Professor Dan Trueman. Celebrate the samba with Bossa Brasil® or do some salsa dancing to the music of Los Ciegos Del Barrio (“Blind Boys of the ‘Hood”...who are actually legally blind!). Catch a few “last laughs” of the year – with comedians Chuck Marti and Moody McCarthy, or lift your spirits with the rousing voices of GospelWays. Scott Joplin’s ragtime, magicians, street performers, jugglers, the Harlem Wizards Duo, blues, bluegrass, funk, folk, Irish step dancers, classical choral and chamber music, an original hip-hop musical (with beat boxer) and a host of other old and new acts will round out the offerings. Mix in 2 visual arts exhibits and 2 sets of fireworks and you have an unbeatable way to herald 2012!

Admission tickets are on sale now and can be purchased at a discounted rate through December 26 at FirstNightMorris.com. Tickets are available through New Year’s Eve, but take advantage of our early bird specials. The website also includes detailed information on performances, discounted dining, and a new interactive event planner to help attendees plan out their evening.