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Contact:
Melinda Skutnick **|** Lyerly Agency
704-525-3937 ext. 125
mskutnick@lyerly.com

MAKE MERRY MEMORIES IN CHARMING BELMONT, N.C.
Traditions new and old to shimmer this season Belmont to Christmas Town USA

BELMONT, N.C. **(11/20/18)** – A Carolina city filled with sweet, southern charm adds monthlong merriment this holiday season. Belmont, N.C., shares a little jingle and jolly in 2018 with festive, family-friendly events for all ages. From annual occasions to inaugural activities, wintry streetscapes to glowing gardens, this small city just west of nearby Charlotte will shine throughout the season.

Guests from around the globe to across Belmont's Gaston County visit many of the area's annual activities, including Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden's lavish Holidays at the Garden celebration and nearby McAdenville's transformation into the renowned Christmas Town USA. These twinkling traditions beckon bright eyes to view these decadent displays of holiday spirit. Alongside these annual attractions, Belmont boasts new events for the 2018 season.

Said Jim Hoffman, chairman of Belmont Tourism Development Authority, "Belmont is known for its southern charm, but we're quickly becoming known as a place for families and abundant activity as well. That is displayed fully at Christmastime. Whether it's experiencing the wonder and awe of a million glowing lights at the Garden or it's becoming steeped in the nostalgia of historic Belmont's brick-lined sidewalks or McAdenville's Christmas Town traditions. Or even if it's going quite contemporary by donning a big white beard for the first Santa Hustle downtown this December, there is something for everyone, from near or far, here in Belmont during this joyful time of year."

The jolly fun begins in late November across the Belmont area. At DSBG, experience "A Mile of a Million Lights" at this year's *Holidays at the Garden*, which opens Nov 23. Bigger and better than ever before, this event features more lights than years past including new lights of fire and ice in the perennial gardens. Explore the nearly 400-acre venue's winter wonderland with a towering orchid tree, model train displays, Children's Discovery Trail of activities, live music and holiday shopping opportunities. Make it an evening to remember with some roasted marshmallows over a crackling fire, some hot cider and a visit with the big man, Santa Claus. The event continues through Jan. 6.

Christmas Town USA lives up to its moniker beginning Nov. 30 when the city's lights start to sparkle nightly following the annual Tree Lighting Ceremony. McAdenville, just three miles from Belmont, welcomes thousands of worldwide visitors each year since its 1956 debut. Its noncommercial holiday display is brimming with nostalgia – street-lined lit homes, more than 375 decorated trees, 200 shining lamppost wreathes, chiming Christmas music, a life-size Nativity scene and a large gleaming lake fountain, reflecting its brilliant colors along the water. For more than six decades, this globally renowned tradition has warmed hearts even on the coldest of North Carolina nights. Christmas Town USA and its accompanying festivities – including the annual Yule Log Ceremony, a spectacle since 1950 – will shimmer through Dec 26.

On Dec. 1, Belmont welcomes a new holiday event to town – the *Festival of Trees*. This inaugural seasonal celebration will light up historic downtown as the city's businesses and nonprofits decorate trees throughout Stowe Park and nearby Main Street, including within and outside the Historic District's shops. This new holiday tradition shines brightly through Dec. 31. It helps illuminate two of the city's finest annual traditions – the Christmas Tree Lighting at Belmont City Hall on Dec. 1 at 6 p.m., to feature a candlelight ceremony and Christmas carols, and the Belmont Christmas Parade on Dec. 4 at 3:30 p.m., marching through historic downtown with festive delight.

As the merry month nears its end, another inaugural event takes its starting position – the first Santa Hustle 5K and Half Marathon. Participants are invited to dress the part with Santa hats and beards as they run through historic downtown Belmont on Dec. 22. An epic afterparty with, of course, candy and cookies awaits at the finish line. Fun for the entire family, a one-mile Rudolph Run welcomes kids to join in the day's festivities.

"Belmont is blossoming with activity and it's wonderful to see inaugural events also blooming alongside long-standing traditions holiday season," said Ted Hall, president of the Chamber of Commerce. "With businesses decking the halls and our communities pulling out all the seasonal stops, we're ready to welcome guests from around the world to experience our sweet southern hospitality during this beautiful and bright time of year."

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About Belmont, N.C.
Belmont, N.C., is located in Gaston County, 15 minutes west of Uptown Charlotte. Whether you're visiting us for the first time for a vacation getaway or returning for a daytime adventure, you're sure to enjoy a truly unique experience in Belmont. Once a place where textile industries served as the lifeblood of the community, the city now stands as a successful example of commerce and redevelopment, while maintaining charm and hospitality. With picturesque nuances brushed throughout the town, Belmont offers a scenic view of historical homes, vintage streetlamps, red brick sidewalks and memories of a simpler time. It's a community that embraces entertainment, the arts, unique local retail and a variety of special events. For more information, visit us online at www.visitbelmontnc.org.