



# PRESS RELEASE

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CONTACT: KEITH CAREY  
Office 231 547-3257  
Mobile 231 622-2667

## A Bright Idea

*City Electric Fund, DDA partner to light Downtown Charlevoix trees*

At its regularly scheduled Monday evening meeting, the Charlevoix City Council supported partnering with the Charlevoix Downtown Development Authority (DDA) to usher in a new era of Downtown tree lighting. The 6-0 council vote means the Charlevoix Electric Fund and DDA will split the costs of acquiring 107,000 new energy efficient light emitting diode, or LED, tree lights for the 71 trees located on both sides of Bridge Street between Dixon Avenue and Hurlbut Street.

The move towards LED tree lights was prompted by suggestions from Charlevoix residents Mary Adams and Paul Weston. Downtown development consulting firm HyettPalma advocated expanding the Downtown tree lighting program in its *Charlevoix Downtown Blueprint 2007*, the Downtown revitalization strategy adopted by the DDA and the City Council this past spring.

Several benefits associated with the switch to LED tree lighting technology include:

- LED tree lights are rated for 100,000 hours of use while standard incandescent lights typically last for a maximum of 3,000 hours. Charlevoix's current lighting program requires the replacement of incandescent light strings every two years.

- LED tree lights are eco-friendly and use less than 10 percent of the electricity required to power traditional incandescent lights. The switch from incandescent lights will save thousands of dollars in energy costs annually.
- LED tree lights always remain cool to the touch. Because tree lighting is often used in close proximity to combustible materials this feature can greatly reduce the risk of fires.

“Not only will we be using a cool, new tree lighting technology, but we’ll be saving money while doing it,” said Keith Carey, Executive Director of the Charlevoix DDA. “LED lights cost more to purchase, but we’ll realize savings on our overall lighting program in just three years. And this includes extending our lighting season to the summer months!”

The purchase bid of the LED tree lights was awarded to low bidder Michigan Decorations LLC of Traverse City for the amount of \$32,960. This cost will be split evenly by the Charlevoix Electric Fund and the DDA. Michigan Decorations LLC was also the low bidder on the installation of the lights, submitting an installation bid in the amount of \$15,200. The DDA will pay for the removal of the old incandescent lights and the installation of the new LED strings. Michigan Decorations LLC anticipates having the new lights installed and operational by the end of November, weather permitting.

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