

Illinois Historic Preservation Agency

NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Dana-Thomas House to reopen December 1

Family Night December 16, Luminaria Evening December 18 at Frank Lloyd Wright-designed house in Springfield; Foundation Holiday Reception December 9

SPRINGFIELD – The Dana-Thomas House State Historic Site in Springfield will reopen to the public Thursday, December 1 and will be fully decorated for the holiday season through Saturday, December 31, including the return of several popular holiday events.

The Dana-Thomas House has been closed since January 1 for a state-funded rehabilitation project that addressed most of the mechanical systems and much of the interior and exterior finishes, as well as security and accessibility issues. The \$2.5 million rehabilitation work was necessary due to the wear and tear on the house and its systems following 20 years of public visitation.

Friday, December 16 from 4 to 8 p.m. is Family Night, with all persons admitted free, although a donation of \$1 per person is suggested. Regular holiday tours will be conducted during the daytime with the usual suggested donation of \$5 for adults and \$3 for children. Music will fill the house during the afternoon and evening. Evening tours allow the public to see this pristine example of Wright's American architecture with its 1910 era light levels and to enjoy the many illuminated holiday trees and the decorations.

The season's most popular event at the Dana-Thomas House, Luminaria Evening, will be held Sunday, December 18 from 4 to 8 p.m. About 1,000 luminaria will line the sidewalks and horizontal ledges of the sprawling, 12,600-square-foot Prairie style structure. Tours on Luminaria Evening are silent except for the live music being played in the house. Regular holiday tours will occur until 3:30 p.m., with the Luminaria display starting about 4 p.m. Now in its 25th year, this event attracts hundreds of visitors, as well as hundreds more who drive or walk by to see the lighted home. The suggested donation is \$5 for adults and \$3 for children.

The Dana-Thomas House Foundation Holiday Reception will be held Friday, December 9 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. and will feature live music, food and beverages, and appearances by Susan Lawrence Dana and Santa Claus. Advance reservations are required by calling (217) 788-9452. The cost is \$20 for Foundation members and Dana-Thomas House volunteers, and \$25 for the general public.

The Sumac Shop in the Dana-Thomas House Visitors Center is open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Wednesday through Sunday, and until 8 p.m. on December 16 and 18. In existence for 27 years, the Sumac Shop is managed by the Dana-Thomas House Foundation, with profits benefiting Foundation and site programs, lectures, tours, acquisitions, and related educational activities. The store has gained a national reputation for the quality and uniqueness of its products, which include books and monographs, cards and postcards, Wright reproduction and adaptation items, jewelry, period decorative arts, and related gift items.

All holiday events at the site are sponsored by the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, which administers the Dana-Thomas House State Historic Site, and the Dana-Thomas House Foundation.

The Dana-Thomas House State Historic Site was designed by world-famous architect Frank Lloyd Wright and built in 1902 – 1904 for Springfield socialite Susan Lawrence Dana. The restored house is the most complete of Wright's early Prairie Style dwellings, with more than 100 pieces of original Wright-designed furniture and more than 450 art glass windows and fixtures. It is open Wednesday through Sunday for public tours, but will be closed on Christmas Day and New Year's Day.

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