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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Say Farewell to the Old Year, Welcome the New Year at First Night State College!

First Night State College will once again provide central Pennsylvania with a great way to mark the passing of the old year and the ringing in of the New Year. This alcohol-free community celebration of the visual and performing arts will take place in downtown State College and on the University Park Campus of Penn State on December 31, 2016.

A production of the Central Pennsylvania Festival of the Arts, 2017 First Night State College is a creative and healthy New Year's celebration meant to replace watching television and alcohol-fueled New Year's Eve revelry. First Night is an old-fashioned community celebration where all are welcome; young and old, singles and families, townsfolk and visitors.

2017 First Night State College will feature a display of outdoor ice carving, including large sculptures located in the 100 block of South Allen Street, while the ever-popular PNC Bank Russian Ice Slide will be in Sidney Friedman Park. At the end of the event, the First Night State College ice carving team will have carved over 30,000 pounds of ice! Watch these carvings evolve from 10:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. This year, the First Night State College ice carvers will create a wide array of giant ice displays that showcase their artistry.

Displays of smaller, one-block ice sculptures will take place in front of local sponsoring businesses and on the Mayor Welch Plaza at 243 South Allen Street, as well as in Sidney Friedman Park. There will be more than 90 of these sculptures this year. Ice will be on display commencing on the morning of December 31.

First Night State College will present three variety acts this year:

Yang Xiao Di became an apprentice acrobat at the age of six and rapidly excelled in a variety of Chinese acrobatic genres, including equilibratics, juggling, trapeze, teeterboard, the traditional Lion Dances and clowning. In a career with several renowned circus troupes, he travelled the globe. Today he is a senior instructor with the National Circus Project, an arts-in-education project that teaches American kids performing skills. He will be at the Penn State Downtown Theatre Center at 4:30 p.m.; 7:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m.

Laura Herts, a wacky, energetic female non-scary clown was born in Washington D.C. (the home of lots of different clowns) and began a world tour at the age of 18. Determined to evolve in the combining of theatre, physical comedy, and mime, she studied in Belgium at The School of Mime-Theatre Lassaa. After finishing her formal training, she created a unique world of clown-comedy derived from observations she made during her world travels. This is her first trip to First Night State

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College. She will perform at the State College Municipal Building at 5:00 p.m., 6:45 p.m., and 9:30 p.m.

The New York Times called The Gizmo Guys “master jugglers with ebullient energy and exquisite skill. . . . human virtuosity with a touch of lunacy.” That’s not praise they hand out every day! The Gizmo Guys, otherwise known as Allan Jacobs and Barrett Felker, have amazed and amused audiences around the world. They’ve played in more venues than we have room to name. And in their spare time, they’ve made television appearances, won international juggling competitions, and taught at top circus schools. Their act is filled with a frothy combination of infectious humor and dazzling technique. The Gizmo Guys will perform in the State Theatre at 3:30, 7:30 and 10:00 p.m. The performances are sponsored by Penn State Health.

There is something for every musical taste at First Night State College. Hot Soup, “the Andrews Sisters of the 21st century” will perform at State College Presbyterian Church at 10:00 p.m. Fans of rock and the blues will enjoy the performance of Miss Melanie and the Valley Rats at University Baptist and Brethren Church at 8:30 pm. Classical fans will enjoy cellist Kim Cook at St. Andrew’s Episcopal Church at 8:30 p.m. More information on these performances and many others can be found at firstnightstatecollege.com.

The State College High School Thespians will again “perform” as live mannequins in the windows of Appalachian Outdoors, 123 South Allen Street at 6:00 p.m.

Resolution sculptures are located in the lobby of the State College Municipal Building, in Sidney Friedman Park, and on the 100 block of South Allen Street. These installations are meant to provoke wistful recollection of former resolutions and optimistic dreaming about new ones.

Runners and fast walkers can speed into the New Year in the seventeenth First Night State College 5K Resolution Run, sponsored by Mt. Nittany Health. The run starts at 6:30 p.m. at the Corner of College Avenue and Allen Street and is one of the most popular events of First Night State College. We encourage participants to wear costumes for this bracing trip through downtown State College and the Penn State campus. Awards will be given to runners with the best times in addition to an award for the runner or group of runners with the best costume. Even if you aren’t a runner, you can join in the fun by cheering on the participants.

Penn State men’s hockey coach Guy Gadowsky will serve as the official race starter. Gadowsky has been Penn State’s coach since 2011, and was the Big Ten Coach of the Year in 2104-2105. Prior to joining the staff at Penn State, he coached at Princeton and the University of Alaska-Fairbanks. Gadowsky played collegiate hockey at Colorado College and then played professionally, including a stint on the Canadian National Team.

Those wanting a more theatrical trip through downtown can join in our Grand Procession, starting at St. Andrews Episcopal Church, 208 West Foster Avenue, and proceeding up Fraser Street to College Avenue beginning at 6:30 p.m. Participants bring to life a menagerie of large and small *papier mache* fantastic creatures, or join in the fun playing one of our African drums. The procession is sponsored by *The Centre Daily Times*.

Carriage rides will be offered beginning at 7:00 p.m. in front of the State College Municipal Building. The cost is a First Night button and \$5 per person. Rides are on a first-come, first-served basis. Due

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to high demand, not all of those wishing to ride may be accommodated. The rides are sponsored by Downtown State College, First National Bank, and Hold-It Self Storage.

First Night presents arts and crafts workshops at The Makery, 209 W. Calder Way from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. and in the Social Hall of State College Presbyterian Church, from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. Wall to Wall: A Community Drawing Project, will be at the Woskob Family Gallery, 146 S. Allen Street, from 1:00 p.m. to 10 p.m. Adult performing arts workshops include Shannon Bishop leading a belly dance workshop at 1:30 p.m., and Jim Colbert leading a songwriting clinic at 3:30 pm in the State Theatre Attic. The Allegheny Ukulele Collective will offer a ukulele workshop in State College Presbyterian Church at 7:30 p.m. Admission to all workshops is by First Night button.

Admission to all indoor performances is with the 2017 First Night State College button. Buttons are \$10 and can be purchased at the door of events and select downtown businesses. When accompanied by an adult, children 12 and under are free. First Night State College button retail outlets include: Appalachian Outdoors, Borough of State College Finance Office, Centre County/Penn State Visitor Center, Christian Science Reading Room and Bookstore, The Corner Room, Days Inn Penn State, The Gallery Shop (Lemont), The Makery, The Original Waffle Shop (W. College Avenue and North Atherton Street), Otto's Pub and Brewery, Penn State Federal Credit Union, Pegula Ice Arena, Schlow Centre Region Library, State College Framing Company, State Theatre, 2000 Degrees, UPS Store (Colonnade Way), and Wolf Furniture.

Special button 4-packs are available for \$35 through December 24 at these select locations: Centre County/Penn State Visitors' Center, 800 E. Park Avenue, State College, and the Penn State Federal Credit Union, 1937 North Atherton Street, State College and 123 Amberleigh Lane, Bellefonte.

Centre Area Transportation Authority will offer free and fully accessible White Loop service on Saturday, December 31st from 4:30 p.m. to 11:30 p.m., with buses departing every 10 minutes. The bus stops include Beaver and Allen (Schlow Library) and the Pegula Ice CATA's downtown office at Schlow Centre Region Library will be open from 5:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. on December 31. First Night patrons are invited to stop in for complimentary snacks, hot chocolate, or just to say "Happy New Year!" Accessible rest rooms are available.

First Night relies on volunteers to staff performance venues on December 31. Volunteers should be at least 18 years of age or 16 when accompanied by a parent or guardian. Those interested in volunteering should contact the First Night office by telephone at (814) 237-3682 or by email at office@arts-festival.com.

The official website of First Night State College is firstnightstatecollege.com. The 2017 First Night State College *Official Program Guide*, published by Barash Publications is available as an insert in *Town & Gown* magazine. First Night's official media sponsors are WTAJ-TV, CBS Channel 10, WJAC-TV, StateCollege.com, OnwardState.com, and *The Centre Daily Times*.

First Night State College is produced by the Central Pennsylvania Festival of the Arts and is sponsored in part by the Borough of State College with grant support from the Centre County Commissioners and Central Pennsylvania Convention and Visitors Bureau. The Central Pennsylvania Festival of the Arts receives state arts funding support through a grant from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, a state agency funded by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency.

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