Despite weather, Shining Lightto open Monday.

Barry McDiarmid was counting on help putting up holiday lights from local youth Sunday.

But when a snowstorm blew into town, assistance from students in the Youth Community Improvement Program was postponed until this Sunday.

Weather has already hampered the efforts of McDiarmid and his family in setting up for the ninth annual Shining Light Celebration.

Each holiday season since 2000, the family has strung more than 125,000 lights and two miles of extension cords to transform the KOA Campground south of Gothenburg into a Christmas wonderland.

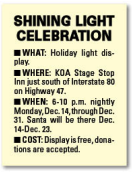
Freewill donations are accepted from light festival visitors which are given to charities.

The last snowstorm in November delayed the McDiarmids a bit from beginning to decorate the campground.

And bitter cold temperatures on Monday and Tuesday has made preparations for the outside light show more challenging.

“And with the winds predicted tomorrow (Tuesday) and the snow, I’m concerned about how

much we can get done," McDiarmid said.



SHINING LIGHT CELEBRATION

■ **WHAT:** Holiday light display.
■ **WHERE:** KOA Stage Stop Inn just south of Interstate 80 on Highway 47.
■ **WHEN:** 6-10 p.m. nightly Monday, Dec. 14, through Dec. 31. Santa will be there Dec. 14-Dec. 23.
■ **COST:** Display is free, donations are accepted.

Nonetheless, he said the holiday show will open Monday, Dec. 14, barring something dramatic.

"There will definitely be a display unless we get 10 feet of snow and people can't get in or the trees with lights fall down," McDiarmid said.

On Thursday, McDiarmid hoped to put up flood lights and then "link everything into the power boxes" so lights will come to life and he can determine what dark spots still need to be filled.

McDiarmid said he's not anticipating anything he can't cope with.

A massive ice storm three years ago closed the display several days before Christmas so volunteers could clean up fallen branches and trees.

The celebration reopened on Christmas Eve but closed two days early the next week because of a snowstorm.

"We've been there, done that," McDiarmid said with a laugh.

Last year, a windstorm ripped through the campground, tearing a painting of Santa Lucia into pieces and tossing it into the river. This year, McDiarmid said the painting has been repaired but is a smaller version.

Volunteers are still needed to help finish the display and to serve as traffic directors, donation attendants and refreshment servers.

The display opens Monday at 6 p.m. and remains open from 6-10 p.m. nightly through Dec. 31.

Santa will greet visitors from a cabin on Dec. 14-23.

For more information or to volunteer, contact McDiarmid at 537-7387.

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