



5856 Route 981
Latrobe, PA 15650
Phone 724-532-3300
Fax 724-532-3399

Backgrounder

Overly's County Christmas® will add a sparkle to the holiday season for its 53rd year in 2009. This must-see holiday attraction draws thousands to Westmoreland Fairgrounds each year, but many may be surprised to learn that this dynamic spectacle first began with only a few strands of lights.

Initially, the late Harry Overly adorned his Armburst home with holiday decorations only to delight his children. However, by adding more and more lights every year, Overly transformed his seven-acre property into a dramatic illuminated attraction that captivated visitors of all ages and drew spectators from all over the region.

One year, a woman handed Harry Overly (dressed as Santa Claus) a dollar as a token of her appreciation for the wonderful display. When he replied that there was no charge to see the lights, she told him to donate the money to his favorite charity. That kind gesture is what sparked Harry Overly's idea to use the light display as a means of raising funds to benefit children's causes.

The display resided at Harry Overly's home for 35 years, and the family was able to donate the first \$1 million in proceeds (which had been given mostly in coins) to the Free Care Fund at Pittsburgh Children's Hospital and children's medical services at Westmoreland Regional Hospital in Greensburg.

However, once the display outgrew Harry Overly's property, the quest began to find a new location for this popular exhibition. Idlewild Park in Ligonier served as a temporary home in 1992, and the following year, Westmoreland Fairgrounds became the permanent location of Overly's County Christmas.

In 1993, Overly's Country Christmas was incorporated into a nonprofit charitable organization in order to perpetuate its founder's dream of combining the magic of Christmas with acts of generosity that benefit children.

Each year, over 150,000 visitors view the spectacular light show and explore the gift shops, snack at the food stands, enjoy the bonfire and experience the other exciting features of the walk-through Christmas Village. The attraction has not only become a favorite activity for locals, but it has also received national acclaim both on television and in print.

Dedicated to helping those in need, Overly's County Christmas gives back to the community in many ways. Through its partnerships with the Pet Adoption League, the Westmoreland County Food Bank and the Mt. Pleasant Area Salvation Army, as well as its Family Moments program, Overly's Country Christmas has helped to make the holidays brighter for many.

With nearly 600 volunteers, 2.1 million lights and a mission to spread the "spirit of giving," Overly's County Christmas has become a family tradition for many visitors, and it promises to create beautiful memories for many years to come.