



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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NOSTALGIC SANTA'S WORKSHOP RETURNS TO UNIONTOWN MALL

Uniontown, PA – Victor Molek loves Christmas. So, as the owner of a storefront in the Uniontown Mall, he looks forward to seeing the holiday decorations – including the Santa's Workshop display – go up every season.

For the last few years, the Santa's Workshop display had been scaled down due to a dwindling number of fulltime mall staff and the health issues faced by Ron Smith, head of the mall's maintenance crew. So, Molek decided to gather some friends and fellow storefront owners to bring the old Santa's Workshop back to its former glory.

"The mall maintenance crew is a little bit older, and they weren't able to build this thing," Molek said. "I'm an old-fashioned Christmas lunatic, and I loved the old display."

Molek, who owns Pittsburgh Stellar Collectibles, approached mall General Manager Suzanne Luscombe about the possibility of some business owners pitching in to build the set themselves.

"I beat the bushes," Molek said. "The mall wanted it up by (Nov. 10). There were 13 or 14 people who worked like dogs on it."

Among those who helped were three generations of O'Briens, the family who owns Uniontown Liquidation Outlet. Molek said owners Dave and Kelly O'Brien, along with John, Morgan and Asher, all took part in building Santa's Workshop. Cody Ritz of Maverick Enterprises also helped in constructing the nostalgic piece. Smith, who has been head of maintenance at the mall since 1972, oversaw the project.

"We had to move each individual piece on dollies," Molek noted, adding that the entire process was captured on time-lapse cameras.

The Santa's Workshop display originally cost \$300,000 when it was purchased in the early 2000s and was refurbished several years ago for another \$100,000. "This is an impressive display," Molek said.

The display was last used in 2019. "It makes such a big difference," Molek explained. "We wanted to keep people in Uniontown and give them another reason to come to the mall during the holidays."

For those who enjoy Christmas nostalgia as much as Molek, he created a Facebook group called "Old Time Mall Christmas Uniontown, PA" which features many photos of the mall and shoppers from holidays past.

Santa is set to return to his workshop at the Uniontown Mall this Friday, November 29. To learn more, including Santa's workshop hours and how to reserve your spot for photos, visit www.shopuniontownmall.com.

To learn more about Fayette County, visit www.fayettecountypa.org.

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For more information, contact Kristi Kassimer Harper, Public Relations Specialist, at 724-437-4571, kkassimer@fayettecountypa.info or Jamie Rankin, Journalist, at 724-437-4571, jamierankin13@gmail.com.