

NEWS RELEASE

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BUILD IT AND THEY WILL COME

PENSACOLA, FL – Before Michael Dicks turns off the light in his shop, he stops to take one more look at his creation. The first of its kind, he knows this pelican has a lot riding on its back.

All eyes will be on the newly created pelican, for the first ever New Year's Eve "Pelican Drop." Gulf Coast residents will ring in the New Year at Pensacola's Downtown Countdown 2008. The family friendly event will host live music, fireworks, and Dick's pride and joy – the 13-foot tall, half-ton illuminated pelican.

Weeks of 14-hour days are paying off for Dicks and his colleagues, Jason Holstein and David Simpson. Together, the three men form Emmett Andrews, a local custom furniture and cabinetmaker company. Inspired by the idea of a "Pelican Drop," Dicks and his team have perfectly welded four hundred pounds of metal together in preparation for holding ten thousand lights that will illuminate downtown Pensacola.

"I like to think of it as more sculpture than parts," Dicks said. "I've been trying to walk the fine line between form and function. To me it's art – and it's exciting to see it all coming together."

Dicks spent hours studying the local brown pelicans on Bayfront Parkway. He took hundreds of photos, from which he created a design true to form. The pelican's dimensions are based on his research, standing at nine feet tall with a 13-foot wingspan.

Dicks looks forward to seeing his work of art in action on New Years Eve, as the illuminated pelican drops at the stroke of midnight amidst fireworks and confetti.

Downtown Countdown 2008, sponsored by the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA), will take over Pensacola's Downtown from 5 p.m. until 1 a.m., bringing people of all ages together for the ultimate city party celebrating the countdown to 2009. It will include carnival-themed children's area and two entertainment stages showcasing a performance by the KISS Army tribute band. The highlight of the event will be the midnight Pelican Drop.

"Throughout the evening the giant illuminated Pelican will be perched above the celebration on a 100-foot platform at the intersection of Palafox and Government Streets at Ferdinand Plaza," CRA Director Thaddeus Cohen explained. "The Countdown will draw all eyes to the Pelican, with a Children's Drop at 8 p.m. followed by a traditional midnight drop."

For more information, please visit www.pensacolapelicanthrop.com or contact Terri Kuvach, Special Events Coordinator, Community Redevelopment Agency, (850) 435-1695.

SOURCES:

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