



Downtown Countdown & Pelican Drop

By Emily Lullo



Event Schedule

Main Stage

9 pm-10:30 pm: Musical Fantasy

10:45 pm-12:15 am: Andy Grammar

GoPensacola Stage

8 pm-9:30 pm: Bad Habits

10 pm-11:30 pm: Mo Jiles

CAT Country/International Paper Stage (Intendencia St.)

5 pm to 8 pm: Children's Pelican Celebration

8 pm-9:30 pm: The Retreat

10 pm-11:30 pm: Alvarado Road Show

This year has been great and all, but we're ready for something new. The holidays have effectively ravaged both our waistlines and our wallets, and there's little left to do in that end of year torpor but reflect briefly on the last 12 months as you tear open your new 2012 kitten calendar. Yes, it's time to bid farewell to 2011 in true Pensacola style. And there's only one way to do that—at Pensacola's Downtown Countdown and Pelican Drop.

On Saturday, December 31, starting at 5 pm the streets of Downtown will close to traffic so they can play host to thousands of revelers as they ring in 2012. The giant street party will include live entertainment, children's activities and will conclude with the grand finale when a giant illuminated pelican will descend from its perch high above the intersection of Palafox and Government streets as fireworks light up

the night sky.

The 17 foot, 1,000 pound, 3,000 watt bird won't be the only attraction of the night though. Head Downtown to a packed Palafox Place, which is expected to be filled with around 50,000 people. Local businesses will be open so if you haven't been Downtown in a while, check out what's new to this growing district. Three stages will fill the chilly air with music throughout the evening, so be ready to dance the night away on Palafox.

The CAT Country stage will also host the International Paper-sponsored children's area, which will include arts and crafts, a trailer with gaming stations and a bubble stomp at 8 pm.

"There will be kid's karaoke, which is always a hit and we'll also have two bounce houses," says organizer Terri Kuvach. "It gives the children who need to go home and go to bed

something to celebrate as well."

Downtown street closures will begin on the morning of December 31 and continue until 1 am. Public parking will be available throughout Downtown and so will portable public restrooms. This event is a huge draw for Gulf Coast residents, so be prepared for big crowds and have patience.

While you're Downtown for the night, head to one or more of the many bars, restaurants or retailers in the area, or get a room at a Downtown hotel. And of course, make sure you have made plans to get home from this event safely. Now grab some bubbly and get ready to ring in the new year Pensacola style. For more info check out pensacolapelicanandrop.com.

Happy New Year, Downtown Pensacola! ★