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Voting begins in Boston's holiday storefront decorating contest

Posted by Matt Rocheleau December 13, 2011 10:45 AM

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By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

The city has announced its selection of 18 finalists in Boston's second annual "Deck the Windows of Boston Main Streets" contest, a friendly competition that encourages Hub merchants in neighborhood business districts to put their seasonal spirit on display by decorating their storefront.

Starting yesterday at 5 p.m. and continuing for the next week, the 18 finalists will square off as residents vote online for their favorite seasonally-themed window. To see photos of the finalists' storefronts, contest details and to vote, [click here](#).

The citywide competition will end Dec. 20, one day after public voting concludes, when city officials said Mayor Thomas M. Menino will visit the top vote-getting business for a celebration where he will announced the two runner-ups for best-dressed storefront windows in Boston.

The three-round contest officially began last week when local judges reviewed

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windows in each of the city's Main Streets districts and submitted a winner from each district.

The competition was introduced a year ago as a new component to the city's annual "Holidays on Main Streets" campaign, a small business initiative designed to highlight festive events in Boston's Main Streets districts.

Last year, [The Switch in Hyde Park](#) was selected the top holiday storefront in Boston from a field of more than 160 small businesses. More than 5,000 people voted online during the inaugural competition.

"We've had a wonderful turnout of Main Streets businesses that decorated their windows in the spirit of the season. Now I'm asking Bostonians to take stock of the very best and to vote on our website for their favorite display," Mayor Menino said in a statement. "In a week, voters will determine the top three most festive holiday windows in the Boston's Main Street Districts."

The participating Boston Main Street Districts announced the following local winners:

Stingray Body Art - Allston Village Main Streets
Genius Planet - Bowdoin/Geneva Main Streets
Imperial Pizza - Brighton Main Streets
101Bakery - Chinatown Main Street
Dudley Department Store - Dudley Square Main Streets
La Hacienda Restaurant & Bar - East Boston Main Streets
Latino Beauty Salon- Egleston Square Main Street
Karlene A. Valente Insurance Agency - Fields Corner Main Street
Da Mat Laundry Services - Four Corners Main Street
Lulu's Barbershop and Salon – Greater Grove Hall Main Streets
Essence of Thyme - Hyde Park Main Streets
SALMAGUNDI - JP Centre/South Main Streets
Penguin Pizza - Mission Hill Main Streets
Sebastian's Barber Shop - Roslindale Village Main Street
Gigi Hair Concepts - St. Mark's Area Main Street
Paraiso Restaurant - Upham's Corner Main Street
Teranga- Washington Gateway Main Street
Top It Off - West Roxbury Main Streets

Two Main Streets districts did not participate this year. Mattapan Square Main Streets [formed more than a year ago](#) and has not yet hired an executive director, but hopes to participate next holiday season, a city spokeswoman said. The Hyde/Jackson Square Main Streets, which [remains under investigation for “financial irregularities,”](#) is also currently without an executive director.

Founded in 1995, the Boston Main Streets program assists each district-level nonprofit organization through city funding to support neighborhood commercial centers by improving storefronts and public spaces.

Each of the 20 Main Streets districts receive “financial and technical assistance and intensive training in the Main Street approach” from the city as well as the National Trust Main Street Center, the city’s website says. “Six full time staff” assist the local districts, which “also have access to city architects, design staff, transportation planners and technical assistance specialists.”

Otherwise, the district-level organizations operate as nonprofits within that citywide program. They each conduct their own fund-raising efforts. The organizations manage the funds they raise via their own independent governing structure, treasurers and financial records. The groups recruit their own volunteers and host events to enhance a commercial district’s image and attract consumers.

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