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## Minneola man shares holiday spirit with festive light show



"It lightens up the whole community," neighbor Debbie Reda says of lights at Jay Peterson's Minneola home. (Photo by Jay Peterson / November 30, 2010)

By Katie Adams, ORLANDO SENTINEL  
December 1, 2010

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MINNEOLA — When the sun goes down on Jayhil Drive, neighbors know the spectacle is about to begin.

Strings of colorful lights flash and twinkle while glowing snowflakes start dancing across a fence to music of the season. Christmas trees, reindeer, snowmen, candy canes and stars flicker as admirers from around Central Florida look on.

Jay Peterson, 39, is illuminating his home, which sits on a corner lot at 1119 Jayhil Drive, nightly by synchronizing music and lights for the enjoyment of neighbors and others. The show started Friday and runs through Jan. 2.

"The first year I did it, I was hooked," he said. "Once you do something like this, the possibilities are endless."

Peterson has been doing the shows since 2007. He starts planning each year's program in February. Inspired by videos of other homes with light shows he found on the Internet, the former DJ decided he wanted to create his own. Already tech savvy from synchronizing lights and music at nightclubs where he worked, Peterson said the programming came naturally to him, though it's tedious work.

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It takes him 12 hours to program each song for the 10-song show, which people can listen to by tuning to 99.9 on the FM dial so they can enjoy it without having to get out of the car.

Visitors can usually find Peterson standing outside, passing out candy canes and monitoring traffic, which can sometimes reach 60 cars at one time, Peterson said.

Neighbor Debbie Reda said those in the neighborhood look forward to Peterson's light show.

"It lightens up the whole community," she said. "He loves doing the lights, he loves doing the music and it just is really festive."

Reda called Peterson a big kid but a perfectionist when it comes to the light show.

"We're always teasing him, like 'what are you doing now, Jay?' as he's climbing a tree to trim the trees a month before so all the lights fit on the tree the way he wants them to," she said.

Peterson said all the work is worth it to know people enjoy the show.

"It's for the good," he said. "There's just so much bad stuff in the world. This brings everybody together at one time. It's just amazing."

Peterson — who has also done **Halloween** light shows the past two years — said he is often asked how much the holiday show costs. He's happy to say it only adds about \$50 to his electric bill during December and January.

He takes donations to make the show better each year, and raised about \$800 last year for this year's entertainment. That money doesn't go toward electricity costs.

The outdoor festival, as Peterson calls it, runs from 6:30 to 11 p.m. Sunday through Thursday and 6:30 p.m. to midnight Friday and Saturday. Visitors from Dec. 10-19 are asked to bring an unwrapped toy for the XL106.7 Baby DJ program, collecting donated toys for families in need.

Visit [jayslights.com](http://jayslights.com) for more information.

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