

1/12/2021



Letter of Recommendation for Emerald Owl Productions, Inc. (EOP)

Emerald Owl Products has worked with Wilson Downtown Development on downtown events for about five years. The first few years included lights and sound for our annual holiday Light-Up Wilson celebration at the courthouse and a glow party shortly after the opening of the Vollis Simpson Whirligig Park. Through many uncontrollable weather challenges, we still had successful events and formed a trusting partnership.

This year, it was apparent early on that we were not going to be able to host traditional fourth-quarter large-scale events designed to drive traffic downtown to our shops and restaurants during prime shopping season. We reached out to Emerald Owl to discuss how we could use their services to build a Covid-safe event that would still, not only bring traffic downtown, but would expand our reach to both local AND regional audiences. It was imperative that this event have a wow factor that would 1) entice people to drive to it and 2) encourage coverage from news media.

The result was Electric Light Fantasy or ELF for short! ELF provided families a safe and exciting new holiday tradition...a drive-in event of colorful laser beams dancing across the sky to a backdrop of gigantic spinning whirligigs at the Vollis Simpson Whirligig Park, located two blocks from Wilson's downtown. Holiday music, piped in via a dedicated FM station through the car radio and synchronized with the lasers, created a first-of-its-kind holiday feast for the eyes and ears in eastern North Carolina.

Co-hosted by Wilson Downtown Development and the Vollis Simpson Whirligig Park & Museum and held the first two weekends in December, the five night event not only accomplished its mission of drawing shopper and diners to downtown, but over 50% of attendees were from outside the county and ticket sales raised almost \$30,000 for Whirligig Park maintenance.

Throughout the six-month planning phase, EOP owner/operator Mike Myers brainstormed with us to create an event that would meet our objectives, made suggestions to enhance the show and highlight the whirligigs, assembled a custom team to accomplish those objectives, and addressed any and all of our concerns with timely and complete communication. The customer service was unsurpassed.

We would highly recommend Emerald Owl Productions for any of your standard, or non-standard, event needs.

Susan Kellum, Downtown Marketing and Communications Coordinator, Historic Downtown Wilson

Jeff Bell, Executive Director, Vollis Simpson Whirligig Park