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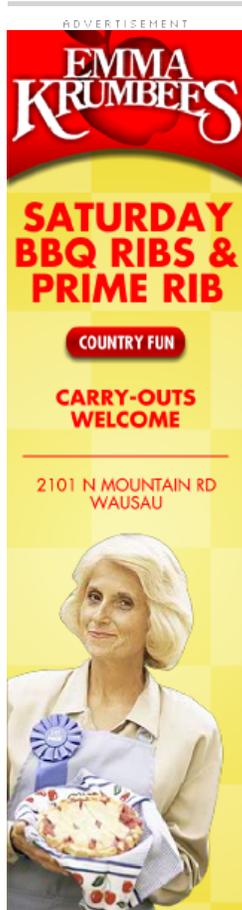
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Flights show Wonderland lights from above

BY LIZ WELTER • MARSHFIELD NEWS-HERALD • DECEMBER 4, 2009

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Riding in a little propeller plane can be loud and stomach-churning as they are prone to buck and bounce through the air on a sunny day.



But Thursday night, the ride was a smooth glide flying 1,000 feet above Marshfield.

"This is what I like about flying at night. It's calm and peaceful. Except for the noise, you'd never know we were in a plane," said pilot and flight instructor Dave Wells. [View gallery](#)

Besides the calm, the city glitters -- especially during the holiday season.

"What's really fun is when I take people flying for the first time," Wells said.

Through Dec. 31, the Marshfield Airport is offering 15-minute sight-seeing tours of the city every Thursday through Saturday. The flights start and end with large, slow circles around the Rotary Winter Wonderland at Wildwood Zoo.

The tour begins with the plane banking to the right, making three or four loops around the zoo while it's blazing in bright primary colors. Forest trees are wrapped in a blue glow and the synchronized light display creates colorful patterns from the bird's eye view.

North of the zoo is the decorated Central Avenue, which the pilot follows to circle around Walmart. Then, he heads back to the zoo to bank to the left, again slowly circling the Winter Wonderland.

The holiday tours aren't a money-making venture for the airport, said Jeff Gaier, one of the airport managers.

"It gives people a taste of what is out there in the community," said Gaier, adding that the tours also benefit food pantries and animal shelters since the cost of each ticket is reduced if a nonperishable food item for humans or pets is donated.

Those who participate in a tour also are given a certificate with their photo taken next to the plane.

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The Rotary Winter Wonderland display lights up the night during a sightseeing flight tour. The flights go around Winter Wonderland and loop across town so both sides of the plane can view the lights. (Laura Schmitt/Marshfield News-Herald)

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IF YOU GO

What: Airplane flights from Marshfield Airport to see the city's holiday lights

"It's a nice way for people to remember this," Gaier said.

Some customers have used the flight to create other memories, too.

"We had a marriage proposal in 2006, and there's a couple celebrating their anniversary on Friday," he said.

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When: 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. every Thursday through Saturday ending Dec. 31

Cost: \$20 per person or \$15 with a nonperishable food donation for humans or pets.

Appointments are necessary -- call 387-2211.

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