



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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**SOVEREIGN BANK FAMILY SKATING CENTER INVITES ALL
TO KICK-OFF THE SEASON WITH 29th ANNUAL TREE LIGHTING,
A VISIT FROM SANTA, CAROLING AND MORE**

NEWPORT, RI, November 24, 2009 – Downtown Newport will soon be the new home for a majestic 25-foot fir and then the anticipation for the unofficial kick-off of the holiday season - the tree lighting - will begin! Although the Sovereign Bank Family Skating Center, located at the Newport Yachting Center on America's Cup Avenue in Newport, is scheduled for a soft, seasonal opening Tuesday, December 8th at 5:00 p.m. weather depending (visit skatenewport.com or call 401-846-3018 for the most up to date news), **the official Opening Night for the outdoor rink is slated for Friday, December 11th at 5:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. with the 29th Annual Tree Lighting and other activities to get everyone in the holiday spirit.** Gates open at 5:00 p.m. and entry to the event is free. So, get those vocal chords in shape to help the Cheer-o-Meter light the tree!

The man in the red suit is sharpening his skates too! Children will have a chance to **share their wish lists with Santa and are also encouraged to bring a letter to mail at Santa's Magic Mailbox.** During the event, a chorus from the Underwood and Cranston-Calvert Elementary Schools in Newport will sing carols and Meghan Lamarre, the Center's lead Learn To Skate instructor, will perform various skating routines while everyone enjoys complimentary hot cocoa, cookies and Snow's chowder. Free samples of Sovereign Bank bags & totes, Amica lip balm and Fruit2DayJuices will also be

available. **A Public Skate will follow from 6:30 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.** and then the evening will conclude with a **9:30 p.m. – 11:00 p.m. Adult Skate (ages 18 and over).**

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Other key dates at the Family Skating Center include:

The Learn to Skate Program for Beginner, Novice and Intermediate levels will start in early January. Back by popular demand, and led by trained professionals, participants take part in a six-week session that runs for consecutive weeks on Tuesdays (Children: 6:30 – 7:15 p.m. and Adults/Teenagers: 7:30 – 8:15 p.m.) and Saturdays (Children: 8:30 – 9:15 a.m. or 9:30 – 10:30 a.m.). Children must be at least 4 years old to join in. To sign up for the session, simply go to skatenewport.com, download and complete the form and fax it to Erica Keating at (401) 619-4616. In the meantime, if you have any questions, feel free to call (401) 846-1600, ext. 227.

Looking for plans during the Winter Vacation? Enroll in **The Sovereign Bank Family Skating Center Skate Camp** for school vacation week, February 15th -19^h from 8:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. each day. To sign up for the camp, simply go to skatenewport.com, download and complete the form and fax it to Erica Keating at (401) 619-4616. If you have any questions, please call (401) 846-1600, ext. 227.

The Sovereign Bank Family Skating Center features a 9,000 square foot skating surface large enough to accommodate up to 150 skaters at a time. FREE parking, skate rentals, hot beverages and comfort foods, lighting for night skating, regular admission discounts, a warming room and viewing spaces for the public are also featured at the rink. Gift certificates are available for stocking stuffers. They can be purchased at the Family Skating Center. Skate sharpening is available for \$5.

The skating center's **Standard Winter Session Schedule, which includes all days EXCEPT school vacations and holidays**, is: Monday – Thursday, 5:00 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.; Friday, 3:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. – 9:30 p.m. with an Adult Skate session from 9:30 p.m. – 11:00 p.m.; and weekend hours on Saturday and Sunday, 11:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m., 3:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. – 9:30 p.m. with an Adult Skate from 9:30 p.m. – 11:00 p.m. on Saturday. **Extended Holiday and School Vacation Schedule** hours will run from December 24th to January 3rd, as well as between February 13th – 21st. For more details on either of these Winter Session schedules, please visit skateneport.com.

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Admission to the Sovereign Bank Family Skating Center is \$7 for adults and \$5 for seniors and children between 3-11 years of age. However, there are **nightly specials**, including *Free Skate Nights* on Mondays courtesy of Sovereign Bank and Wednesdays courtesy of Cox Communications and *Stop & Shop Night* sponsored by Stop & Shop Supermarkets on Tuesdays where admission is 2-for-1.

Sovereign Bank, which provides customized solutions to help its customers reach their financial goals, operates branches at 286 Thames Street in Newport and 42 Valley Road in Middletown, as well as more than 250 other locations in Rhode Island and nearby Massachusetts.

The Newport Yachting Center is a subsidiary of Newport Harbor Corporation, an ESOP (employee-owned) hospitality company located in Newport, Rhode Island. For more information about the Sovereign Bank Family Skating Center at the Newport Yachting Center and weather updates, call (401) 846-3018 or visit skateneport.com.

