

200 Nights Of Lights Toolkit: Community Premiere Night

200 Years. One Story. Every Community.

A Light On The Lakes is a powerful documentary commemorating the 200th anniversary of Michigan Freemasonry, demonstrating the instrumental impact the fraternity has had in the development of the state.

Drawing on interviews with Masons and historians from across Michigan and hundreds of rare archival photographs, the film traces Masonry's journey from 1764 with the first lodge formed in the Michigan Territory to the construction of the world's largest Masonic Temple in Detroit.

It chronicles the extraordinary influence of Michigan Masons—among them hundreds of legislators, over twenty State governors, and one President of the United States, as well as countless titans of industry including Henry Ford, William Kellogg, and Herbert H. Dow—whose Masonic endeavors helped shape Michigan's economic and civic identity.

More than a historical retrospective, *A Light On The Lakes* illuminates two centuries of Masonic leadership, service, and vision, helping to build a better Michigan through its enduring legacy.

A Celebration for ALL!

In this toolkit you will find the framework for producing a local public event to premier "A Light On The Lakes" in your community. It's important to understand the context of this event, as the film isn't the feature, the Lodge is. This is an opportunity to celebrate our history with the entire community and do so in a way that is not just free to the public, but fun for everyone.

To help encourage attendance, make it a Community Leaders night and personally invite County Commissioners, Judges, School board members, Local historians, and Business owners to attend by offering reserved seating. Because where leaders attend, families follow....

Motivate families to attend by promoting the educational aspect of the film, and highlighting the historical significance of both the 200-year celebration, and an evening that the entire community will be there to share in. Offer popcorn vouchers for kids (Sponsored by the Lodge) and if possible, provide a photo backdrop for them to share pictures of the night of the event.

1. Approach Local Theaters

Small events often stay small when they are held in basements of libraries or rural Lodges. While these locations are easy to organize, they are far less likely to be seen as a true community event. Start by contacting independent cinemas, regional chains, or community art theaters. The venue where the film is shown can be one of the most valuable marketing opportunities for your Lodge when sharing your message with the community.

Below is an email template to help with your outreach:

Subject: Premiere Opportunity: Bring “A Light On The Lakes” to Your Theater

Dear [Theater Manager/Owner Name],

I’m reaching out to introduce an exciting premiere opportunity for your theater: **“A Light On The Lakes,”** a 1 hour and 22-minute documentary celebrating Michigan’s history and the impact of the Michigan Masons on our state’s development since its days as the Michigan Territory.

The film tells a sweeping story of leadership, community building, and civic contribution, featuring historic imagery, personal interviews, and the legacy of Michigan Masons who helped shape institutions, industry, and public life across the state.

From a business standpoint, this premiere offers several advantages for your venue:

- **A guaranteed audience** driven by strong interest from Masonic lodges and community members across the region.
- **Midweek traffic** you may not normally see, helping fill seats on slower nights.
- **Full concession revenue** retained by your theater, ensuring added value beyond ticket sales.

Beyond the box office, this event also offers a civic partnership opportunity to position your theater as a supporter of the arts and local organizations. Hosting a premiere like this strengthens community ties while broadening your visibility as a venue invested in Michigan’s cultural and historical storytelling.

We will cross-promote premiere events throughout the year across our statewide social media and communication networks. With the size and reach of our membership, attendance is expected to extend beyond the immediate community, bringing new patrons into your theater. We would love to explore possible dates and logistics and discuss how we can make this a mutually beneficial event.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to the opportunity to partner together in bringing this Michigan story to the big screen.

Warm regards,
[Your Name]
[Title / Organization]
[Phone Number]
[Email Address]

2. Lodge Marketing Kit

Here's a great checklist of marketing materials to use when you have your venue, date, and time selected for the premiere. Be sure to tailor each message to your local community and focus on the areas that best meet the criteria for your lodge.

1. THEATER PARTNERSHIP – Included is a pitch letter to send to the venue outlining the opportunities provided in sharing this film with the local community.
2. SOCIAL MEDIA - Provided is a link (michiganmasons200.org) to our branding images for the film, including our 200th Anniversary logo, our Michigan Masons logo, and a full-size movie poster to share with the venue. Use these graphics in your social media campaigns and print off the movie poster for your premiere night!

[200th Anniversary Graphics](#)

Target specific messages to specific community leaders, include a special message to Mayors, School superintendents, Police & Fire Chiefs, the Chamber of Commers, and Veterans groups. Masons have held these leaderships throughout every community in our state, and these leadership groups are outlined in the film itself, giving even greater impact for those in attendance.

A complete social media marketing campaign template is included on pages 4-9 to help guide you.

3. FILM TRAILER - Also provided is a link to the movie trailer to share with the venue and give them a sense of what the film is about: [A Light On The Lakes Trailer](#)
4. PRESS RELEASE - On page 9 find a press release template to fill out and share with your local news outlets. Be sure to include all outlets, including tv stations, radio stations, and newspapers.
5. EVENT NIGHT - On the night of the event, we've included an outline presentation on page 10 for you to welcome the crowd along with some talking points that highlight the tremendous history of Masonry throughout Michigan.

SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN

200 Nights of Lights

The goal of your social media campaign should be to encourage community attendance, not just your brothers. This can be achieved through targeted campaigns that seek out civic leaders, families, and positive public awareness.

The voice for your message should be welcoming and inclusive, with an historic tone that reflects the message in the film. The copy should NOT be recruitment driven, rather it should have a community-centered feel that encourages everyone to attend.

FOUR WEEK ROLLOUT CALENDAR

WEEK 4 (Announcement Week)

POST 1 – Save the Date

Graphic: Film logo + theater name + date

Trailer: [A Light On The Lakes Trailer](#)

Caption Template:

🌟 Something special is coming to [City].

Join us for a FREE community screening of *A Light On The Lakes*, a documentary celebrating 200 years of Michigan leadership and service.

📍 [Theater Name]

📅 [Date]

🎟 Free Admission

Because Michigan's story belongs to all of us.

#200NightsOfLight #MichiganHistory #CommunityPremiere

WEEK 3 (Community Angle)

POST 2 – Civic Pride

Graphic: Historic Michigan photo or local Lodge building

Trailer: [A Light On The Lakes Trailer](#)


For 200 years, leaders from communities like [City] helped shape Michigan’s future.

From pioneers like Douglas Houghton to innovators like Henry Ford, the story of Michigan is a story of service.

Come experience it on the big screen.

 Free Screening

 [Date]

 [Theater Name]

Bring your family. Invite a friend.

Tag:

- City government page
- Chamber of Commerce
- Local school district
- Veterans groups
- Historical societies

WEEK 2 (Family & Community Push)

POST 3 – Family Invite

Trailer: [A Light On The Lakes Trailer](#)

Looking for a meaningful night out in [City]?

Join us for a free, family-friendly documentary celebrating 200 years of Michigan history.

Popcorn. Community. Pride.

 [Theater Name]

 [Date]

 Free Admission

See Michigan in a new light.

#FamilyNight #MichiganPride #200NightsOfLight

WEEK 1 (Final Countdown)

POST 4 – 7 Days Out


Trailer: [A Light On The Lakes Trailer](#)

 One Week Away.


[City], are you ready?

A Light On The Lakes is coming to [Theater Name] on [Date].

This isn't just a film.
It's Michigan's story.

Seats are first come, first served.
Tag someone you're bringing 

POST 5 – 48 Hours Before

 This Week!

Trailer: [A Light On The Lakes Trailer](#)

We can't wait to welcome our community to [Theater Name] for this special premiere.

Free admission.
Brief welcome.
200 years of Michigan history.

Doors open at [Time].
See you there.

POST 6 – Day Of Event (Morning)


Tonight's the night.

Join us for **200 Nights of Light** at [Theater Name].

Let's fill the theater with community pride.

 Free

 [Location]

 [Time]

DURING EVENT CONTENT

Have 1–2 members assigned to capture:

- Lobby photos
- Families arriving
- Packed theater shot
- Short 10-second crowd video
- Photo at step-and-repeat

LIVE POST (Before Film Starts)

[City] showed up tonight. ❤️

Thank you to everyone joining us for this special community premiere of *A Light On The Lakes*.

Michigan's story is alive and well.

#200NightsOfLight

POST-EVENT RECAP

POST 7 – Thank You Post

What a night.

Thank you to the families, veterans, educators, civic leaders, and neighbors who joined us at [Theater Name].

For 200 years, Michigan has been built by people who care about their communities.

Tonight was proof that spirit is still strong.

#CommunityStrong #MichiganHistory #200NightsOfLight

OPTIONAL VIDEO CONTENT (High Engagement)

Encourage Lodges to record short 15–20 second clips:

- “Why I’m excited about tonight”
- “What Michigan means to me”
- “Why community matters”

These humanize the event.

TARGETED BOOST STRATEGY (\$50–\$100 Suggested)

If Lodges boost one post, boost:

The Week 2 Family Invite Post

Target:

- 15–25 mile radius
 - Age 30–65
 - Interests: Michigan history, local events, community groups
-

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Headline: Michigan History Documentary Illuminates “A Light On The Lakes”
Free Community Screening of “A Light On The Lakes” to Celebrate 200 Years of
Michigan Masonic Leadership**

Sub-headline (optional):

Local Masonic Lodge Partners with [Theater Name] for Special Bicentennial Premiere Event

City, State – [Date] — The members of [Local Lodge Name] are proud to announce a free community screening of *A Light On The Lakes*, a feature-length documentary commemorating the 200th Anniversary of the Grand Lodge of Michigan.

The premiere will take place at [Theater Name] on [Date] at [Time]. The screening is open to the public, and families, educators, veterans, and community leaders are encouraged to attend.

Produced as part of Michigan Masonry’s bicentennial celebration, *A Light On The Lakes* explores the impact Freemasons have had on Michigan since 1826, when the state was still a territory. The film highlights leaders such as Augustus Woodward, Douglas Houghton, Woodbridge N. Ferris, Henry Ford, and Herbert H. Dow, along with many local citizens whose leadership helped shape Michigan’s communities.

“This event is our way of saying thank you to the community,” said [Name, Title]. “For 200 years, Michigan Masons have lived and served in towns just like ours. This film tells a story that belongs to the entire state.”


The evening will begin with a brief welcome followed by the documentary screening. Admission is free and seating is available on a first-come, first-served basis. Concessions will be available for purchase through the theater.


The screening is part of the statewide **200 Nights of Light** initiative, a community film series bringing free showings of *A Light On The Lakes* to theaters across Michigan during the bicentennial year.

Event Details:

 Location: [Theater Name & Address]

 Date: [Event Date]

 Time: [Start Time]

 Admission: Free and open to the public

For additional information, please contact:

[Contact Name and Title]

[Phone Number]

[Email Address and Website or Social Media Link]

Program Outline for Night of Event

Ideal Format (90–120 minutes total)

1. Doors open (30 min early)
 - Lobby tables with:
 - Michigan Masonic Museum info
 - 200th Anniversary materials
 - Historic photos from local Lodge
2. Welcome (5–7 minutes max)
 - Focus on service to community
 - Thank civic leaders in attendance
3. Film screening
4. Optional 10-minute closing:
 - “What Masonry has meant to this community”
 - Invite public to open house night (not a membership pitch)

EVENT NIGHT PRESENTATION EXAMPLE

“200 Nights of Lights” – A Michigan Community Premiere Series

Good evening, everyone!

First, thank you for being here. On a night when you could be streaming something at home in sweatpants, you chose to come out and celebrate 200 years of Michigan history. That already says something great about this community.

Two hundred years ago — back in 1826, when Michigan wasn’t even a state yet — a group of men got together with a simple idea: strong communities don’t just happen. They’re built. Built on character. Built on service. Built on leadership.

From that beginning came the Grand Lodge of Michigan.

And over the next two centuries, Michigan Masons had a hand in shaping this state in ways big and small.

Leaders like Augustus Woodward, who helped design Detroit — and let’s be honest, anyone who tried to redesign Detroit’s street grid deserves a little extra credit.

Douglas Houghton, Michigan’s first State Geologist — basically the guy who said, “Trust me, there’s good stuff under this ground.”

Woodbridge N. Ferris, who founded what would become Ferris State University.

And industrial giants like Henry Ford and Herbert H. Dow — who didn’t just build companies, they helped build modern Michigan.

Oh — and 21 Michigan Governors along the way. No pressure, right?

But here’s the thing.

This story isn't really about famous names.

It's about everyday people.

Teachers.

Veterans.

Small business owners.

Volunteers.

Neighbors who shovel each other's driveways without posting about it.

It's about the quiet kind of leadership — the kind that doesn't always make headlines but always makes a difference.

That's why tonight we're launching **200 Nights of Lights** — a statewide series of free community screenings of *A Light On The Lakes*.

And let me be clear: this isn't a fundraiser.

It's not a members-only event.

No secret handshakes required.

It's a thank-you.

A gift to the communities that have allowed us to serve for 200 years.

This film tells a Michigan story — one of grit, innovation, generosity, and people who believed that showing up matters. It reminds us that progress isn't accidental. It happens because someone decided to care.

And maybe the biggest question it asks is this:

If the last 200 years were built by ordinary people stepping up...

What could the next 200 look like?

So bring your families.

Invite your friends.

Stay for the popcorn.

Celebrate the history.

Because this story belongs to all of us.

For two centuries, Michigan has been illuminated by people committed to something bigger than themselves.

Tonight, we're just moving that light to the big screen.

Thanks for being here — And please enjoy **A LIGHT ON THE LAKES**.