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**Outdoor ice rink to open in Norfolk**



Water is frozen in layers and the chiller can keep the ice frozen as long as the temperature stays below 65 degrees, said Karen Winters, MacArthur Center spokeswoman. Up to 200 skaters will be able to occupy the rink. JOHN S. SHEALLY II/THE VIRGINIAN-PILOT

By **DEBBIE MESSINA**, The Virginian-Pilot  
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**NORFOLK** — How do you create a wintry ice skating rink when it's nearly 70 degrees outside?

With a chiller. A huge one with 200 tons of cooling power, enough to keep a 20-story office building air-conditioned.

That's how MacArthur Center mall plans to keep a 2½-inch layer of water frozen solid to create a wintry wonderland for ice skaters. It will be the area's only public outdoor ice rink.

The chiller can keep the ice frozen as long as the temperature stays below 65 degrees, said Karen Winters, mall spokeswoman. By the time rink opens Nov. 22, the balmy weather should be taking a chilly turn.

The cool new amenity, on the north side of the mall at Monticello Avenue and Freemason Street, will operate through Jan. 8. It's one of the more extravagant devices for luring holiday shoppers this year.

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"This is Rockefeller Center comes to MacArthur Center," Winters said, referring to the famous outdoor ice rink in New York City.

Smaller than traditional indoor rinks, the 6,000-square-foot oval rink can handle 200 skaters at a time.

The area will be decorated with white lights, holiday garlands, twinkling snowflakes and a 30-foot decorated tree.

The ice rink, located on the north side of the mall at Monticello Avenue and Freemason Street, will operate from Nov. 22 through Jan. 8. Opening day, Nov. 22, will be free. After that, skating costs \$5 per person for 90 minutes. Skate rentals will be available at no additional charge.

Ice making began Thursday with workers applying a thin layer of water using garden sprinklers. The water covers a base of plastic tubes filled with an antifreeze that's cooled to 5 degrees using the chiller. The tubing freezes the water.

Once a base of ice was established, workers started using a fire hose Friday to pump large volumes of water onto the 60 foot by 100 foot surface. With each pumping, workers spread about an eighth of an inch of water to freeze.

It will take about five days to build up to 2½ inches of ice, Winters said.

Opening day, Nov. 22, will be free. After that, skating costs \$5 per person for a 90-minute session. Skate rentals will be available at no additional charge. Military members and their families are admitted for half price.

A concession stand will sell hot chocolate, hot cider and other snacks.

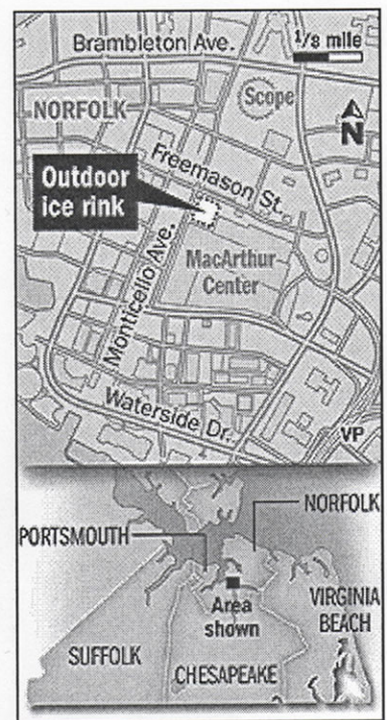
A lunchtime skating package is available for downtown office workers. For \$10, workers receive a \$10 food court voucher and a skate pass valid from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Other special events are planned, including lessons, figure skating demonstrations, skating sessions with the Admirals hockey team and musical performances.

Rink hours will vary. A full schedule is available online at [www.shopmacarthur.com](http://www.shopmacarthur.com).

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