



CONTACT: M. SILVER ASSOCIATES
Tel: 212-754-6500
Fax: 212-754-6711
Aik Wye Ng
aik@msilver-pr.com
Carmen L. Tong
carmen@msilver-pr.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**LIONS AND DRAGONS AND ROOSTERS – OH MY!: LUNAR NEW YEAR FESTIVITIES
RETURN TO CHINATOWN NEW YORK THIS FEBRUARY**

Two Enthralling Events Mark the Chinese Calendar's Most Significant Holiday

NEW YORK, NY – January 4, 2004 – Chinatown New York invites everyone to wake up with the Year of the Rooster and celebrate this year's Lunar New Year on February 9th. Attracting over 200,000 participants and spectators annually, the **6th Annual Chinatown Lunar New Year Parade & Festival**, to be held on Sunday, February 13th, is the largest public event in New York's Chinatown, as well as the largest pan-Asian event on the East Coast. Organized by the Better Chinatown Society, this colorful spectacle features traditional lion and dragon dances, ornately decorated floats, marching bands, cultural performances, crackling firecrackers, festive confetti and New Years' feasts. More information about the events will become available at www.ExploreChinatown.com. To participate in this year's festivities, contact Telly Wong, Explore Chinatown project manager, at (212) 484-1263.

Also known as Chinese New Year and the Spring Festival, Lunar New Year is a two-week celebration that begins on the first day of the first month of the lunar calendar -- a period that typically falls between late January and mid-February – and ends on the full moon 15 days later. It is considered a major holiday across the globe, and is celebrated in Asian countries worldwide. During Lunar New Year, revelers celebrate family and the rejuvenation of the earth and, with it, the start of a new beginning with endless possibilities.

The official date of the upcoming Lunar New Year is February 9, 2005, and Chinatown New York is celebrating with two **Chinatown Lunar New Year Firecracker Ceremonies**. One will take place at Mott St. and Bayard St. at 12:00 pm and the other will be at Market St. and East Broadway at 2:00 pm. The firecracker detonation, with expected attendance by local politicians and community leaders, is intended to ward off evil spirits. From 11:00 am to 5:00 pm, at both intersections, massive stages will feature all-day cultural performances by traditional and contemporary Asian-American singers and dancers. Plus, a dozen lion, dragon and unicorn dance troupes will march through Chinatown's main streets, including Mott Street, the Bowery, East Broadway, Bayard Street, Elizabeth Street and Pell Street.

- more -

Sunday, February 13, marks the **6th Annual Chinatown Lunar New Year Parade & Festival**. Taking place from 1:00 pm – 5:00 pm, the spectacle features elaborate floats, marching bands, lion and dragon dances galore, Asian musicians, magicians, acrobats and procession by local organizations. Over 5,000 people are expected to march in the parade, which will start at Mott Street and promenade through practically every street in of Chinatown, finally dispersing at Worth Street. The parade is expected to conclude at 3:00 pm, at which time an outdoor cultural festival will take place on Bayard Street featuring more performances by musicians, dancers and martial artists. This event, as well as the February 9th Firecracker Ceremony, is organized by the Better Chinatown Society and sponsored by the Lower Manhattan Development Corp, the September 11th Fund, the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development, WABC-TV, *The New York Post*, Bank of America, and Affinity Health Plan.

Preparations for Lunar New Year start during the last few days of the last moon. Houses are thoroughly cleaned, debts repaid, hair cut and new clothes purchased. Doors are decorated with vertical scrolls of characters on red papers whose texts seek good luck and praise nature. During the two-week Lunar New Year period itself, numerous ancient traditions are observed, ranging from the preparation of several special foods to the giving of “lucky money” in decorative red envelopes called *lai see*. But perhaps the most popular Lunar New year customs – at least in the West – revolve around lion dances and firecrackers, both of which are used to ward off evil spirits.

Each new lunar year has a corresponding animal representative on the Chinese Zodiac chart. This coming new year marks the Year of the Rooster. Individuals born under the sign of the rooster are quick-witted, practical and resourceful; yet prefer to stick with the ‘tried and true’ rather than taking unnecessary risks.

About Chinatown New York City

Chinatown New York City, combines Asian-American culture with the energy and influence of the most exciting city in the world. With over 200 restaurants, numerous Asian bakeries and tea houses, jewelry shops, arts and antique stores, an active nightlife and dozens of cultural attractions and landmarks, Chinatown stands as a world within a city. Whether dining, shopping, or strolling down the charming, narrow streets, visitors to Chinatown New York City, will find virtually limitless opportunities for new experiences and added insight.

Located on the east side of Lower Manhattan, Chinatown New York City is the largest in the United States. The neighborhood has been growing steadily since the mid-1800s, and today stands as a vibrant community offering the opportunity to enjoy and explore Asian-American culture. Chinatown New York City is easily accessible via many New York City MTA subways and buses, as well as several convenient area parking garages. For more information, visit www.ExploreChinatown.com.

Note to editors: NYC & Company, the city's official tourism marketing organization, is a private, membership-based non-profit dedicated to building New York City's economy and positive image through tourism and convention development, major events and the marketing of the city on a worldwide basis.