



For Immediate Release: November 15, 2012  
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## **MEDIA ADVISORY**

### **SANTA HAT CHALLENGE AN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIR THIS YEAR - BROCKTON & MULLINGAR JOIN FORCES NOV. 18<sup>th</sup>**

It's an international effort this year as Brockton, MA joins Mullingar, Ireland in trying to set the World Record for the Most Santa Hats Worn in One Place – and they'll do it via satellite. Thousands of residents of the two cities will join forces at the same time on two continents to set the record Sunday, November 18<sup>th</sup>. In downtown Brockton, citizens will gather at 11 a.m. for a slate of holiday-themed activities leading up to an official photo at 1 p.m.

The Santa Hat Challenge started as a lark to draw attention to Brockton's designation as the home of James Edgar, the world's First Department Store Santa, but soon turned into a heated competition between the two communities. Now, they've joined forces to kick off a truly festive season. The challenge occurs just six days before Brockton's beloved Downtown Holiday Parade, which is held each year the Saturday after Thanksgiving.

“We started doing this as a way to pump people up for the parade and also to pay tribute to James Edgar, a Brockton businessman and philanthropist who in 1890 became the first department store Santa,” said Parade Chairman John Merian said.

This week, more than 16,000 Santa hats were distributed to Brockton school children and Merian and Marty Mulliga (his Mullingar counterpart) hope to kick-start the holiday season with celebrations shared via satellite. In Brockton, there will be a slate of musical and dance performances, crafts and cocoa for children and a great sense of community pride.

“The holidays are wonderful time for friends and neighbors to come together and celebrate, and we think this year is very special because our friends in Mullingar are celebrating with us,” Merian said. “We hope this is an event that will continue to grow.”

**WHERE:**       **Main & Crescent Streets (formerly Edgar's Department Store)**

**WHEN:**       **Sunday, November 18, 2012**  
11 a.m. – sign-in  
1 p.m. – official count

For more information about the Santa Hat Challenge and the November 24<sup>th</sup> Holiday Parade, please visit [www.1stdepartmentstoresanta.com](http://www.1stdepartmentstoresanta.com)