



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**January 6, 2026**

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## 12TH NIGHT TO KICK OFF MARDI GRAS SEASON

*Six weeks of celebration begin Tonight with new additions and iconic events*

**ST. LOUIS, Mo.**— Let the good times roll! The 47th Mardi Gras season in Soulard officially kicks off tonight with the annual 12th Night celebration. Soulard's signature events generate more than \$20 million annually for the St. Louis regional economy and make the city home to one of the largest Mardi Gras outposts in the world. This year's theme, "Peace, Love, and Mardi Gras," celebrates the spirit of community and connection during a six-week season that features 12 signature events, culminating on Saturday, February 14 – Valentine's Day – with the Bud Light Grand Parade.

### **New in 2026:**

- **Mayor's Mardi Gras Ball Returns to City Hall, benefits tornado relief:** On Friday, February 13, the Mayor's Ball returns to the stunning rotunda of St. Louis City Hall to benefit the City of St. Louis Tornado Response Fund. Guests at this creative black-tie evening will enjoy a cabaret-style dinner, premium open bars, and entertainment by Dr. Zhivegas. Over the years, the event has raised more than \$600,000 for community improvements.
- **Cajun Cook-Off moves to Anheuser-Busch Brewery:** The region's premier amateur cooking competition moves to the Anheuser-Busch Brewery Visitor Center on Saturday, January 31. Admission includes a Cajun buffet, open bar, live music, and exclusive brewery-only experiences.
- **New VIP Party Zone with DJ Pauly D:** The "Party Zone" offers a new VIP street party on Grand Parade Day. Located at 1532 S. 8th Street, the experience features premium amenities and a headlining set by world-renowned DJ Pauly D.

### **The Season Begins with 12<sup>th</sup> Night on Tuesday, January 6**

It all begins with the 12th Night Celebration, where the Mardi Gras Inc. board of directors calls for a crucial vote on whether to produce another grand Soulard Mardi Gras. As part of their deliberations, the board receives petitions from the community, often in the form of a song, dance, poem, oratorical flourish, or a humble toast to the season, generally accompanied by appropriately preposterous Mardi Gras attire.

After receiving these petitions, the board members cast their votes in what organizers anticipate will be a landslide victory for Soulard Mardi Gras in 2026. The celebration continues with the coronation of the new monarch.



### **12th Night Schedule**

January 6, 2026

South Broadway Athletic Club, 2301 S 7<sup>th</sup> St.

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| 5:15 p.m. | Doors open at the South Broadway Athletic Club, 2301 S 7 <sup>th</sup> St. |
| 5:30 p.m. | Welcome from Hon. Cara Spencer, Mayor of St. Louis                         |
| 5:35 p.m. | Alderperson Jami Cox Antwi presents petition from Board of Aldermen        |
| 5:40 p.m. | Board receives petitions from krewes                                       |
| 6:45 p.m. | Board proclaims decision on 2026 Mardi Gras Season                         |
| 6:50 p.m. | Coronation of new monarch, Rex XIV, Bill Siedhoff                          |
| 7:00 p.m. | Grand Procession through Soulard, starting at South Broadway Athletic Club |

### **12th Night Tradition**

In the Christian calendar, the twelfth day after Christmas is variously known as "Epiphany," "Twelfth Night" or "Kings Day." It is the day the Magi arrived in Bethlehem and marks the end of the Christmas season. Until Fat Tuesday, the pre-Lenten Soulard Mardi Gras season will light up St. Louis with a full calendar of celebrations offering something for everyone.

### **2026 Mardi Gras Monarch – Rex XIV, Bill Siedhoff**

Succeeding the flavorful reign of Rex XIII, Chef Mike Johnson, this year's crown will be bestowed upon longtime Soulard resident Bill Siedhoff, acclaimed as Rex XIV. A tireless leader in social work for over 40 years, Siedhoff's career is highlighted by a 13-year tenure as the City of St. Louis Director of Human Services and his service as the statewide director for the Missouri Division of Family Services. Today, he continues his civic leadership as the founder of the William F. Siedhoff Foundation and through his work with the United Way and the St. Louis Crisis Nursery. His deep roots in the neighborhood and lifelong dedication to public service make him an ideal monarch to lead the 47th Mardi Gras season.

### **2026 Mardi Gras Calendar**

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|-------------------|------------------------|
| <b>January 6</b>  | Twelfth Night          |
| <b>January 17</b> | Family Winter Carnival |
| <b>January 24</b> | Scavenger Hunt         |
| <b>January 31</b> | Cajun Cook-Off         |

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| <b>February 7</b>   | 5K Run for your Beads                               |
| <b>February 7-8</b> | Taste of Soulard                                    |
| <b>February 8</b>   | Purina Pet Parade and Tito's Vodka Wiener Dog Derby |
| <b>February 13</b>  | Mayor's Mardi Gras Ball                             |
| <b>February 14</b>  | Bud Light Grand Parade                              |

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### **Contacts**

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