



City of Arts & Innovation

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Aug. 18, 2016

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Thousands of Augmented-Reality Game Players to Take Over Downtown Riverside for the Pokémon GO Third Saturday

RIVERSIDE, Calif. – On August 20th thousands of players organized into three teams from across Southern California will converge in downtown Riverside in an attempt to catch virtual monsters and “own” points of interest in the city. This event is called Pokémon GO Third Saturday and is one of six being piloted worldwide.

Last month Niantic Labs, a virtual game developer, released ARMMOG (augmented-reality massively multiplayer online game) bombshell: Pokémon GO. The craze to “catch them all” has inspired people from all over the world to get out, get moving, and discover the world around you.

In the midst of stories from across the nation about cities and parks banning Pokémon Trainers (this is what the players of the game are called), the City of Riverside is taking an innovative stance by embracing Pokémon GO by encouraging Trainers to come play in their historic Downtown Mission Inn area.

The Riverside Downtown Partnership (RDP) manages Downtown Riverside’s Business Improvement District. “We recognized the potential economic impact of Pokémon Go Trainers downtown,” said Janice Penner, Executive Director of RDP. “Many of our downtown businesses reported increased sales from informal meet-ups. Being one of two pilot cities in the US for the inaugural Pokémon Go Third Saturday event is an incredible opportunity to

showcase our unique downtown and its shops and restaurants. We immediately offered to host the event and are pleased to be working with the City of Riverside and SMaRT Education / Fev Games on welcoming Trainers to our city”.

Society celebrates achievement in sports and entertainment, yet we do not celebrate achievement in science and technology. And Pokémon GO should be celebrated as a modern technological marvel; using augmented reality in a way that has transcended race, religion, economic status, age, and even, yes, political affiliation.

“Both of Niantic’s Games, Ingress and Pokémon GO, have transformed the community. Players don’t see religion or color of skin. They don’t bicker about political candidates or gun reform. All of that melts into the background, observes Liberty Naud, one of the organizers of the event, has been playing both for several years and is amazed at the diversity of the players. “More than a virtual battle, this is about bringing together a diverse community of people that, under most other circumstances, wouldn’t typically run in the same circles.”

“As the city of Arts and Innovation, Riverside is proud to have been selected as one of the first cities for a Pokémon GOTS event, and looks forward to hosting the Pokémon players,” said Ward One Councilmember Mike Gardner. “This is truly an opportunity for Riverside to showcase what our downtown has to offer visitors. From a variety of restaurants and shops to monuments, art and the historic Mission Inn, we have so much to offer.”

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<https://www.facebook.com/events/1571943306443670>

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