



Historic Downtown La Crosse Update

September 05
edited by Margaret Norden



**“Downtown La Crosse is experiencing a renaissance that’s a model for other cities.”
--Governor James Doyle**

Greetings from Bud...

As the 2005 summer comes to a close, we in our downtown and city should review and be thankful for the commitments, made by so many, towards the continued rejuvenation of historic downtown La Crosse and riverfront. The ‘building blocks’ to create a strong downtown economic foundation have been an on-going implementation process since 1993, under the strategies and goals of the then “City Vision 2000 Master Plan.”

NEW ‘building blocks’ to the future are:

- Small businesses, residential projects, building restoration projects, beautification projects, corporate building and expansion projects, hotels, restaurants, tax base, jobs, and investments...we continue to attract future investors who wish to be part of the economic growth we are enjoying.
- Positive city council decisions on community social issues that will greatly benefit the future of our downtown for business owners, companies, employees, visitors, and residents.

These ‘building blocks’ have taken our downtown to a high level of success compared to similar downtown redevelopment projects occurring around the country. Everyone should be proud of both individual and partnership efforts that have made us a “Great American Main Street” downtown. Everyone should be thankful for the support and work of our city, county, and state governments and departments that have been part of this important process. Now the *new* “City Vision 2020 Master Plan” will become the “road map” for continued downtown redevelopment.

150 years ago community and business leaders had a dream for a vibrant and exciting city. Working together, the public and private sectors planned and implemented the same types of projects that we have been doing in the redevelopment of our downtown today. They

accomplished development projects that left a legacy for future generations to enjoy. Since 1992, the public and private sectors have been going through the same processes that our city founders did and we are creating a ‘rejuvenated’ legacy for future generations to enjoy.

On March 14, 1856, our city charter was formed creating the City of La Crosse. On March 14, 2006, we will be celebrating our 150th birthday. Our Sesquicentennial celebration will begin on that date, at the historic Hixon House, with a reenactment of the presentation of the bill. The Sesquicentennial celebration will extend through October with various events taking place all summer. The Sesquicentennial Committee, appointed by our Mayor, and chaired by Todd Ondell (Grounded Specialty Coffee), hopes that everyone will become involved in and enjoy and participate in our 150th birthday celebration during 2006.

To all of you who have played vital and positive roles in creating our current legacy, “thank-you!” We have come such a long way since 1992 and the future for our downtown and city looks as bright as the future must have appeared to our government and business leaders 150 years ago.

Enjoy the fall season weather...hope it lasts about six months!

Attention: Any downtown businessperson wishing to install boulevard planters, please contact Larry Kirch at the City Planning Department, 789-7512. The City has a couple planters available.--Bud

Members acknowledged

We are pleased to acknowledge the following memberships, and to thank these corporate sponsors for their generous support:

Main Street Renaissance Inc., new member at the **associate** level;

WXOW-TV 19, new member at the **associate** level;

Xcel Energy, renewing member at the **visionary** level.

Historic Downtown La Crosse Day: “Thank you to our sponsors”

The Historic Downtown La Crosse Day committee wishes to thank the following sponsors for their support of this wonderful family event on **October 8:**

Carriage rides:

Fayze’s
La Crosse Loggers

High wheeler bike rider:

State Bank of La Crosse

Trolley rides:

Chateau La Crosse
Dolly’s Crafts
Gundersen Lutheran
Leithold Music
Metropolitan Salon
Park Bank
Piggy’s
The Wine Guyz
The Yoga Place

Poster:

La Crosse Clock

Brochure:

Feminine Fancies
Washburn on the Park

Advertising:

City Brewery
Governmental Employees Credit Union
People’s Food Co-op

Billboard:

Coulee Bank

Individual businesses are also coordinating special events: Musicians, art gallery tour, pumpkin give-away, craft demonstrations, and even live mannequins and a chance to “meet” Governor Cadwallader Washburn! *We could not present this community event that showcases La Crosse history and our historic downtown without this kind of involvement!*

Bed and breakfast tours, complete with costumed guides, are new this year, along with the YMCA’s log rolling demonstration (followed by instruction for the adventurous). An architectural walking tour, historical reenactors, and antique auto and fire equipment displays will recreate La Crosse’s past. Riverboats will ply the Mississippi on special cruises. At Cameron Park, you’ll find a Loggers baseball toss, old-fashioned children’s games, and a demonstration of disc golf. Cameron Park is also the jumping-off point for trolley, carriage, and firetruck rides. There will be an apple pie contest, farmers markets, and special menu items at restaurants around the downtown.

For details of all this *and much more*, look for brochures at downtown businesses, call the DMI office at 784-0440, or click on the link at www.historicdowntownlacrosse.com.

Please patronize and support our member businesses.

Plan now for Holiday Open House

Downtown businesses are invited to participate in a Holiday Open House the evening of Friday, November 11. Merchants are encouraged to



decorate for the season, and to announce their open house to their customers via mail and/or email. Suggested hours are 5:00-9:00 p.m.

Some DMI member stores that have already committed to participating include Touch of Class, La Crosse Clock, The Wedding Tree, Ambiance, and Scott Joseph Menswear.

Please call either Kim Pretasky at Touch of Class (784-2640) or the DMI office (784-0440) by October 31 if you wish to be on a master list of participating businesses. The list will then be made available to all listed businesses for their reference, or to copy and share with customers.

Noteworthy Dates:

September 15, What’s Up Downtown meeting, 8:00 a.m., at the DMI office, 712 Main St.

September 28, Business Over Breakfast, 7:30-8:45 a.m., Chamber of Commerce, 712 Main. Wellness in the Workplace. See attachment.

September 30-October 9, Oktoberfest.

October 1, Mississippi Queen at Riverside Park, 1:00-5:00 p.m.

October 5, Mississippi Queen at Riverside Park, 8:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

October 8, Historic Downtown La Crosse Day. For a schedule of events, check the link at www.historicdowntownlacrosse.com.

Historic characters to come to life

Someday in the near future you could walk into a downtown store and be greeted by Doc Powell, Gideon Hixon, Mark Twain, or another historic resident or visitor. The project, fostered by Sharon Nerison at the La Crosse Area Convention and Visitors Bureau, with support from the DMI What’s Up Downtown group and the La Crosse County Historical Society, will be presented to certain La Crosse Center conventions to encourage conventioners to explore the downtown. Actors will be costumed by the historical society, and will depict people from La Crosse’s colorful past. To learn about ways to be involved, call the LACVB at 782-2298.