



Historic Downtown La Crosse Update

June 06
edited by Margaret Norden



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

Greetings from Bud...

What a tremendous Downtown Mainstreet, Inc. 14th Annual Meeting was held this week.

Highlights from that event:

- Election of new Board members: Kenna Christians, UW-L Foundation; Dan Braund, CenturyTel; Cary Heyer, UW-L; Jim Hill, LADCO; Dan Brady, US Bank; Mike Keil, Doerflinger’s 2nd Century, Inc.; Dan Wettstein, Wettsteins; Ed Przytarski, Xcel Energy.
- Positive, uplifting speeches by Mayor Mark Johnsrud, Rep. Jennifer Shilling and WHEDA Ex. Dir. Antonio Riley, all speaking of the tremendous successes achieved in redevelopment and revitalization of our historic downtown and riverfront since 1993. Our downtown is the model for other communities in similar programs around the state and nation.
- 2005 “DMI Making A Difference Award” given to: Piggy’s On Front for their renovation; Bill Pretasky, Community Service Coordinator of Justice Sanctions, for his leadership in the downtown cleaning project; Doerflinger’s 2nd Century, Inc. for the work restoring a signature building.
- A big, new announcement that after private discussions with our corporate sponsor lending institutions, a new “Downtown Mainstreet, Inc. Lender Commitment Program” was created by 12 financial institutions: **Wells Fargo, State Bank of La Crosse, Coulee Bank, US Bank, M & I Bank (Marshall & Iisley) Bank, Associated Bank, Community Credit Union, Altra Federal Credit Union, Fortress Bank, Merchants Bank, River Bank, and Citizen’s State Bank.**

These 12 institutions have created a new **\$5 million loan pool** to be used to improve property in our historic downtown, the largest loan pool ever created by financial institutions for a downtown redevelopment program of a city of our size or larger. The purpose of the program is to continue the

outstanding economic redevelopment of the downtown. This program will foster a more attractive climate for investment in the downtown, and invite new merchants, services, residents, and professionals into the area. Eligible projects include interior and exterior remodeling, creation of upper floor housing projects, parking lots, signage, lighting, and landscaping improvements.

The maximum loan is \$250,000; the minimum is \$10,000. Borrower/s must be paid members/sponsors of Downtown Mainstreet, Inc. at the time of processing of the application. If not a DMI member, a \$500 non-refundable payment must be made to DMI *prior to* processing of loan and design documents. The DMI Ex. Director and DMI Design Committee Chair ***must approve*** documents before approval from any of the participating institutions. For information on this new program, contact any of the above institutions and/or DMI.

These 12 institutions provided a wonderful vote of confidence for what has and will take place in our downtown. When possible, please provide each of these institutions and their representatives with a big **“THANK-YOU”** for their commitment and support.

Since our April newsletter, the following members and sponsors have generously supported downtown redevelopment, and DMI gratefully acknowledges:

Renewing Visionary Sponsors:

- Franciscan Skemp Mayo Health System

New & Renewing Corporate Sponsors:

- Altra Federal Credit Union
- Fortress Bank (NEW)
- La Crosse Sign Company, Inc. (NEW)
- La Crosse Tribune

Renewing Associate Sponsors:

- Franke, Weisbrod & Turnbull, CPA’s
- Johns, Flaherty & Collins, SC

Renewing General Members:

- Ambiance
- Briar Patch

Historic Downtown Day committee: *Thank you, sponsors!*

Historic Downtown Day on the second weekend in October will be another outstanding family event again this year thanks to the following sponsors that have already shown their support of this celebration of La Crosse's history:



*A Celtic Inn
Brandau & Waltz Law Offices
Community Credit Union
Coulee Bank
Crescent Jeweler's
Digger's Sting
Dolly's Crafts
Ebenezer's
Festival Foods
Finnotte's Nut & Candy Shop
Fitting Knit Shop
Government Employee's Credit Union
Grounded Coffee
Hale, Skemp, Hanson, Skemp & Sleik Law Firm
Hawkins, Ashe & Baptie
Julia Belle Swain
La Crosse Clock
La Crosse Radio Group
Leithold Music
Lindner's At The Brewery
North Central Trust Co,
People's Food Co-op/Hackberry's Bistro
Pickerman's
Piggy's Restaurant
Premier Fitness/Thin & Healthy Total Solution
Scott Joseph Menswear
Simply Living
Special Export Barbershop Quartet
Stamp 'n Hand
State Bank of La Crosse
State Street Gallery
The Antique Center
The Yoga Place*

Sponsorship opportunities are still available, and are an excellent way to make sure your business is involved and acknowledged. Free trolley and carriage rides, as well as flyers and advertising that reach people across the Coulee Region and beyond, are possible with *your* assistance. Please call 784-1234 to have sponsorship materials provided to you, or to discuss ways to become involved.

Activities are still being confirmed and coordinated. Watch for details at www.historicdowntownlacrosse.com.

Have brochures, will deliver

The 2006/2007 edition of the "Experience Historic Downtown La Crosse" brochure has been delivered to the DMI office. The success of the brochure in creating awareness of our historic downtown depends upon shops, restaurants, offices, residences, campuses, conventions, and corporations making them available. Please call the DMI office at 784-0440, and we will arrange a delivery to your site.

This year's cover features a horse-drawn carriage with the Riverside Park levee, Julia Belle Swain, and twin bridges in the background. Information about downtown events and public art is included. The self-guided architectural walking tour has been expanded to 26 downtown buildings. The A-Z directory provides a ready reference to business phone numbers and locations. And, as always, business descriptions of historic downtown's finest shops and restaurants are featured. Every home, business, and office should have them on hand!

The Sesquicentennial Calendar



May 15, 11:00 a.m.—Presentation of a plaque to honor the Laverly Martindale House, 237 10th St. South, as an architecturally and

historically significant building.

June 14, 11:00 a.m.—Presentation of a plaque to honor the Cyphus Martindale House, 714 Cass St., as an architecturally and historically significant building.

For information on all Sesquicentennial events, go to www.lax150.com. Be sure to get those summer events—Great River Jazz Fest, CenturyTel's Sand on the Riverfront, and the La Crosse Loggers All Star Game and Home Run Derby—on your calendar now.

Noteworthy Dates:

May 18, 8:00 a.m., What's Up Downtown promotions group meeting, Chamber of Commerce main conference room, 712 Main.
May 24, 7:30 a.m., Business Over Breakfast, Chamber of Commerce, 712 Main. This month's topic is "Creating a Culture of Sales." Please pre-register at 784-4807. See attachment for details. There will be no more B.O.B. presentations until September.