

NEWS BULLETIN

December 2024



IMPORTANT DFP DATES & DEADLINES

2024 Downtown Fond du Lac Shop Small Sweepstakes – November 1– December 31, 2024

2025 Downtown Fond du Lac Soup Walk – Saturday, January 18, 11:00am – 3:00pm

2025 Downtown Fond du Lac Galentine's Day – Saturday, January 25, 2024

2025 Downtown Fond du Lac Galentine's Day VIP Experience – Saturday, January 25, 10:00am – 3:00pm

10th Annual Sturgeon Spectacular Weekend – Friday, February 7 – Sunday, February 9, 2025

2025 Downtown Fond du Lac Sweet Stroll – Saturday, February 8, 2025, 10:00am – 2:00pm

2025 Downtown Fond du Lac Chili Crawl – Saturday, February 8, 2025, 11:00am – 3:00pm

BUSINESS & PROPERTY NOTES

2024 GRANT PROGRAMS

- **Experience Generator Grant** – Designed to attract businesses who contribute to the overall downtown experience by increasing the vibrancy and vitality of the downtown district, the 2023 Experience Generator Grant Program provides new downtown businesses with funding associated with business startup costs. Eligible business types include restaurants, retail shops, or experience-based businesses such as indoor archery, museums, ceramic art studios, golf simulators, etc. This program provides a \$5,000 grant to assist with business startup expenses.
- **New Business Grant** – Designed to incentivize and assist entrepreneurs with expenses associated with starting a new or expanding business, this program provides a \$2,500 grant to eligible businesses to be used towards startup expenses.
- **Creative Sign Grant** – Designed to incentivize property owners to add to the uniqueness and character of Downtown Fond du Lac by undertaking creative projecting sign projects. This program grants up to 75% reimbursement of the cost to design, manufacture, and install a unique, handcrafted projecting sign.
- **Building Improvement Grant (BIG)** – Designed to increase property values and support better utilization of properties within downtown Fond du Lac, this grant program incentivizes and assists property owners in making exterior property improvements. The grant reimburses up to 50% of the cost of exterior remodeling expenses.
- **Security Grant Program** – Developed to assist property/business owners with purchasing an exterior surveillance camera system (in partnership with the Fond du Lac Police Department) and/or a rapid entry system lock box (in partnership with the Fond du Lac Fire Department). The program reimburses up to \$250 per exterior camera, and 50% of the cost of each lockbox.
- Complete information on all grant programs can be found on the [DFP website](#). Please contact Amy Krupp at Amy@downtownfdl.com to apply.
- All grant programs are expected to continue through 2025.

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PROMOTIONS & SPECIAL EVENT NOTES

SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

- DFP special events and promotions draw over 100,000 attendees annually. Sponsoring a DFP event or promotion will provide your company with the unique opportunity to engage your employees and target audience where they live, work, and play while simultaneously strengthening your company's image within the Fond du Lac community.
- 2025 sponsorship opportunities are forthcoming and will be sent to potential sponsors in the coming weeks. **Businesses interested in sponsoring a 2025 event should contact Megan Sigrist at Megan@downtownfdl.com.**

UPCOMING SPECIAL EVENTS AND PROMOTIONS

- **2025 Events Calendar** – Our 2025 Special Event Calendar has been confirmed. [Check it out here](#) and mark your calendars for your favorite events and promotions!
- **2025 Winter Event Sign Up Sheet**
The November 25, 2024 due date for [Winter Events Sign Up Sheet](#) submission has passed. If your business would like to participate in any DFP winter events (Soup Walk, Galentine's Day/VIP Experience, Chili Crawl, Sweet Stroll), please complete and return your sign-up sheet to Megan Sigrist at Megan@downtownfdl.com **ASAP**.
- **Downtown Fond du Lac Shop Small Sweepstakes – November 1 – December 31, 2024**
Presented by Fox Valley Savings Bank. To emphasize the importance of shopping small and local this holiday season, and all year round, the DFP is once again hosting the Shop Small Sweepstakes – a contest in which every \$10 spent at a downtown business will earn shoppers an entry to win \$500 in downtown gift certificates. Shoppers may enter by submitting copies of their receipts (dated Nov 1 – Dec 31, 2024) along with a sweepstakes entry form to the DFP at 131 S. Main Street, Suite 101 by end of day, January 7, 2025.

All downtown businesses are included in this promotional contest and are encouraged to share this opportunity with all customers through the end of the year. Posters and pads of entry forms slips have been distributed and are available at the DFP office. If your business needs any of these materials, please contact Darcie Holte at hello@downtownfdl.com or 920-322-2006, ext. 4.
- **2025 Downtown Fond du Lac Soup Walk – Saturday, January 18, 11:00am – 3:00pm**
Back by popular demand, the 3rd Annual Soup Walk will give ticketholders the opportunity to sample various kinds of homemade soup prepared and served by downtown businesses. 300 tickets will be sold – a 100 ticket increase from previous years.

Businesses currently signed up to participate in the Soup Walk were sent a request for business event details last week. If your business is participating, please be sure to [submit this information](#) by end of day **today, Monday, December 16th**.

Businesses interested in participating in the 2025 Soup Walk who are not currently signed up, should complete the [Winter Events Sign Up Sheet](#) and submit it to Megan Sigrist at Megan@downtownfdl.com **ASAP**.

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PROMOTIONS & SPECIAL EVENT NOTES, CONTINUED

UPCOMING SPECIAL EVENTS AND PROMOTIONS, CONTINUED

- **2025 Downtown Fond du Lac Galentine's Day – Saturday, January 25, 2024**

NEW in 2025! During this new promotional event, attendees are invited to enjoy a day out in downtown Fond du Lac with their “besties” to enjoy all-day sales, specials, pampering, and contests centered around self-care and wellness. DFP will work with participating businesses to promote and highlight specials and activities.

****Galentine's Day VIP Experience Add-On** - For \$20 each, ticketholders can turn up the Galentine's Day fun by becoming Galentine's Day VIP shoppers! Ticketholders will receive a complimentary gift at each participating location, as well as a commemorative tote bag, courtesy of Sunny 97.7. 250 tickets will be sold.

A request for business details will go out later today to all businesses currently signed up to participate, with a due date of **Monday, December 23, 2024**.

Businesses interested in participating in the 2025 Galentine's Day promotional event who are not currently signed up should complete the [Winter Events Sign Up Sheet](#) and submit it to Megan Sigrist at Megan@downtownfdl.com ASAP.

- **10th Annual Sturgeon Spectacular – Friday, February 7 – Sunday, February 9, 2025**

Celebrating 10 years of winter and really big fish! Fond du Lac Festivals is bringing Sturgeon Spectacular back to downtown Fond du Lac for a 10th anniversary celebration of the one-of-a-kind winter festival, complete with the WI Snow Sculpting Championships. *Now exclusively in downtown* for the second year running, this community favorite is bound to be a source of great winter fun.

DFP is working with Fond du Lac Festivals and downtown businesses to engage attendees and embrace this new downtown tradition through storefront decoration, promotion of Sturgeon Specials, a downtown Sturgeon Scavenger Hunt, and more! If your business would like to participate, please [submit this interest form](#) ASAP.

- **2025 Downtown Fond du Lac Sweet Stroll – Saturday, February 8, 2025, 10:00am – 2:00pm**

Attendees will have the opportunity to stroll through downtown, enjoying the Sturgeon Spectacular festivities, while visiting various downtown businesses and sampling homemade sweet treats along the way. 200 tickets will go on sale starting New Years Day 2025. Currently 17 businesses are signed up to participate.

Businesses interested in participating in the 2025 Sweet Stroll who are not currently signed up should complete the [Winter Events Sign Up Sheet](#) and submit it to Megan Sigrist at Megan@downtownfdl.com ASAP.

- **16th Annual Downtown Fond du Lac Chili Crawl - Saturday, February 8, 2025, 11:00am – 3:00pm**

Attendees will have the opportunity to visit various downtown businesses to sample chili recipes along the way, then cast their vote for their favorite homemade and restaurant-made recipe! 300 tickets will go on sale starting New Years Day 2025. Currently 13 businesses are signed up to participate.

Businesses interested in participating in the 2025 Sweet Stroll who are not currently signed up should complete the [Winter Events Sign Up Sheet](#) and submit it to Megan Sigrist at Megan@downtownfdl.com ASAP.

- **If your business is interested in taking part in any of the above winter events, please complete a [Winter Events Sign Up Sheet](#) and return ASAP to Megan Sigrist at Megan@downtownfdl.com or mail/drop off at the DFP Office (131 S. Main Street, Ste. 101, Fond du Lac, WI 54935).**

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PROMOTIONS & SPECIAL EVENT NOTES, CONTINUED

EVENT RECAPS

- **Downtown Fond du Lac Holiday Wine Walk – Saturday, November 16, 2024, 1:00pm – 5:00pm**

The 2024 Holiday Wine Walk was presented by Fox Valley Savings Bank and included 23 participating downtown businesses who became “tasting rooms” where attendees were able to sample different types of sweet or dry wines, or mocktails. 600 tickets sold out for this event.

Feedback was solicited from attendees and businesses. Overall, attendees appreciated the earlier start time and extended participation window. Businesses were mostly in favor, with a few saying the extended time contribute to more intoxication. One downtown business cited that the earlier time led to higher lunch sales – 2-3 times more than dinner crowds in the past. Feedback also indicated attendees would rather have an all-encompassing Wine ticket, allowing them to choose the type of wine to sample per stop.
- **Small Business Saturday – Saturday, November 30, 2024**

Small Business Saturday highlights the importance of shopping local to invest in your community. The DFP worked with 26 participating businesses to promote and highlight specials and promotions within downtown Fond du Lac. Feedback from businesses indicates that the day has lost some appeal over the years. Therefore, the DFP Marketing Committee intends to take a closer look and brainstorm new ways to better elevate this event in future years.
- **2024 Holiday Cookie Walk**

Back after a one-year hiatus, the Downtown Fond du Lac Cookie Walk was a success! Attendees were given the chance to explore downtown while collecting delicious holiday themed cookies while doing some holiday shopping. 15 downtown businesses participated and all 200 tickets were sold. Feedback surveys have been sent to attendees and businesses. Results are forthcoming.

STREETSCAPE DESIGN NOTES

- **KFIZ Window Decorating Contest**

Congratulations to Bekki Fishelson-Kuber with Blue Marble Botanicals for winning a marketing campaign worth \$500 with KFIZ & 107.1 The Bull for their Charlie Brown themed window!

A special shout out goes to the other downtown businesses who joined the “Christmas at the Movies”, festivities, including Gallery & Frame Shop who came in 2nd, followed by Main Street Fashion in 3rd.
- **Winter Parking Restrictions**

Effective November 15th – March 15th, the City of Fond du Lac’s winter parking restrictions will be in effect. During these dates, all vehicles parked on city streets between the hours of 8 p.m. to 8 a.m. are required to park on the street that corresponds with the date at 8 p.m. On even numbered days, parking is restricted to the even side of the street only, and vice versa. Additionally, any metered area is restricted to 60 minutes between the hours of 2 a.m. and 6 a.m. For complete Fond du Lac winter parking restrictions can be found on the [City of Fond du Lac website](#).
- **Snow Removal**

The owner, occupant or person in charge of each lot or partial lot fronting or abutting on a sidewalk is required to remove all ice and snow within 24 hours after the cessation of each snowfall. This includes crosswalks and handicapped accessibility ramps if said property is a corner lot. View the complete city ordinance here: [Snow Removal Ordinance](#)

When shoveling, please note any storm water grates that are adjacent to your property and keep these areas clear of snow and ice for proper drainage, and do your best to create customer pass-throughs on snowbanks.

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OTHER BUSINESS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **ADVOCAP Training Series**

In partnership with ADVOCAP, the DFP is hosting a Small Business Financial Series of workshops over the next several months

All courses will be led by Ryan Thorpe of Thrivent - Lakefront Group Fond du Lac, and will take place the third Wednesday of the month, through February 2025, from 8:00am – 9:00am at the DFP Office (131 S. Main St.).

Upcoming topics include:

- Dec. 18, 2024 - Small Business Succession Planning: Navigating Life's Uncertainties
- Jan. 15, 2025 - Transformative Changes for Financial Security: Making Strategic Adjustments
- Feb. 19, 2025 - Strategies for Retirement Investment: Foundational Retirement Tactics

For more information on the education sessions listed above, [click here](#).

- **Main Street Wisconsin Resources**

- **WEDC Website/Social Media Audit Opportunity**

As businesses located within a Wisconsin Main Street Community, Downtown Fond du Lac businesses are eligible to receive free website and social media audits from Wisconsin Main Street's downtown promotions manager. This assistance focuses on reviewing, evaluating, and assessing the business' website and/or social media pages.

Potential reasons for a website or social media audit:

- Looking to revamp your website.
- Looking for an outside perspective on website updates.
- Looking to revamp your social media accounts.
- Need help with social media content ideas.
- Need help with social media post frequency.
- Need an outside perspective on how your employee is doing with social media content.
- Taking over a pre-existing website/social media account and wanting help on how to revamp and/or how to make it better.

If you would like to request a website and/or social media audit, please reach out to Amy Krupp at Amy@downtownfdl.com or Megan Sigrist at Megan@downtownfdl.com.

- **Webinar: Upper Floor Housing**

Wednesday, February 12, 2025, 12:00pm – 1:00pm

Hear from WHEDA staff and property owners/communities that have successfully accessed the Main Street Vitality and Vacant to Vitality financing tool. Learn about case studies and how-tos for using these funds for projects in your district.

Register: <https://events.teams.microsoft.com/event/32402610-3673-46ae-a4ff-957903b02fc9@a4d0c603-9c7f-4293-b89c-a08c1a8eb571>

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OTHER BUSINESS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS, CONTINUED

- **Fond du Lac Police Department Resources for Downtown Businesses**

City of Fond du Lac Chief of Police, Aaron Goldstein, attended the October DFP Board of Directors meeting last week for a Q&A session regarding the ongoing efforts of the FDL PD to keep our community safe for one and all.

During the session, board members inquired on downtown business concerns in regard to Fond du Lac's unhoused community, and were able to gain much guidance from Chief Goldstein, who offered the following insight and resources to the downtown business community.:

The value of partnering with organizations that specialize in providing resources to the unhoused community

Chief Goldstein recognized the importance of kindness and empathy within our community, and encouraged those who have shown desire to help Fond du Lac's homeless community members, to do so by partnering with local warming shelters, outreach programs, food pantries, etc., rather than pursuing individual efforts. He cited that even the most well-intentioned acts, when not done in collaboration with larger community efforts, can be disadvantageous to the city's coordinated outreach to connect individuals to long-term resources.

See Something, Say Something

FDLPD plays a key role in maintaining a safe and welcoming environment for both businesses and individuals. Chief Goldstein encourages business and property owners and staff who encounter unlawful behavior or safety concerns within a public space, and/or unwanted behaviors in a private space, to call the police in a timely manner.

FDL Community Resources

Chief Goldstein also supplied the following documents to businesses with information on resources available to Fond du Lac community members. Click the links below to access.

- **Fond du Lac Community Resource Guide, FDL PD - [English](#) and [Spanish](#)**
A comprehensive guide on available Fond du Lac emergency services, mental health, abuse and juvenile and family services, and transportation resources.
- **Pathways to Care - [English](#) and [Spanish](#)**
A guide for navigating Fond du Lac County's mental health services in crisis and non-crisis situations.

- **OPEN Flags**

The DFP has purchased "OPEN" flags for downtown businesses. The goal is to create a unified look throughout downtown and to highlight businesses that are open. The flags are available to businesses at no cost. If your business is interested in receiving a flag, please contact Amy Krupp at Amy@downtownfdl.com.

- **Downtown Fond du Lac Gift Certificates**

A great way to support our downtown district is to encourage your customers to purchase Downtown Fond du Lac Gift Certificates to share the love with over 70 downtown businesses! Downtown Fond du Lac Gift Certificates are sold at the DFP office or online in denominations of \$10, \$25 or \$50.

If your business would like to be included in the Downtown Fond du Lac Gift Certificate program, please contact us at info@downtownfdl.com.

- **Downtown Fond du Lac Maps**

The DFP has finalized a downtown map showing and listing downtown retail, bar and restaurant businesses. Pads of 25 are being distributed and are available at the DFP office.

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ORGANIZATION NOTES

- The next DFP Board of Directors meeting will be held on Wednesday, January 8, 2025 at 8:30 a.m. at Fox Valley Savings Bank. This meeting is open to the public. If you would like to be added to our meeting notification list, please email Amy Krupp at Amy@downtownfdl.com.

STAY CONNECTED

- **DFP Business and Property Owners Facebook Group** – This private group welcomes downtown business and property owners to discuss general downtown issues, promotions, events, and services. [Biz Owners Group](#)
- **Downtown Events Collaboration Team Facebook Group** – This private group is a place for downtown business owners to discuss marketing ideas in conjunction with DFP events or as a separate collaborative. [Downtown Events Collaboration Team](#).
- **Downtown Fond du Lac Partnership Facebook Page** – Our public page showcases great things happening downtown! [DFP Facebook](#)
- **Downtown Fond du Lac Partnership Instagram Page** - www.instagram.com/downtownfdl/
- **Farmers Market Facebook Page** - [Farmers Market Facebook Page](#)

CONTACT US

General inquiries or responses to items from this news bulletin can be sent to info@downtownfdl.com or reach us via phone at (920) 322-2006.

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