

NEWS BULLETIN

OCTOBER 2025



BUSINESS & PROPERTY NOTES

1836 Renegade Taproom will be opening in the coming weeks at 103 S. Main Street. Owned by Tiffany Wiese, 1836 Renegade Taproom will feature craft beers exclusively on tap, with to-go inventory also available for purchase. The taproom will showcase beers from local and regional breweries, giving guests the opportunity to sample a wide variety of Wisconsin's best brews—all within the comfort of downtown Fond du Lac. The DFP has awarded a Building Improvement Grant to assist with the expense of their new sign.

The [Skin and Laser Clinic of Fond du Lac](#) is now open at 21 N. Portland Street. Owned by Kristina Sullivan, this new clinic offers exceptional skin and laser care provided by skilled technicians who specialize in hair removal, skin rejuvenation, and hyperpigmentation treatments. With advanced services such as chemical peels and microdermabrasion, the Skin and Laser Clinic helps clients achieve smoother, more radiant skin.

PROMOTIONS & SPECIAL EVENT NOTES

The 2025 [Farmers Market](#) season continues through October 25 on Main Street from Western to Division from 8am to noon. As the season winds down, we are still seeing 100 vendors and 2,000 attendees weekly.

[Witches Day Out](#) – Saturday, October 18 from 9am to 3pm. Attendees can shop at 31 participating businesses throughout the day for SCARY good in-store specials, activities, sweet treats and much more!

[Monster March](#) ** – Saturday, October 25 from 10am to noon. Trick or Treat in downtown Fond du Lac during the last Farmers Market! Main Street will be closed to vehicle traffic from Merrill Avenue on the north to 4th/Western Avenue on the south. Participating businesses can expect to see 1,000 trick or treaters. Currently, 30 business are signed up to participate.

[Halloweenie Street Party](#) - an event organized by Big Brothers/Big Sisters – Friday, October 31 from 5:30 to 8pm Main Street will be closed to vehicle traffic from Sheboygan to Second from 4-8:30pm. You won't want to miss food and beverages from local vendors, awesome music, a costume contest, various activities, lots of fun, and a good cause—the perfect pre-party for the rest of your wicked holiday festivities.

[Harvest to Holiday - Fond du Lac Edition](#) - an event organized by Destination Lake Winnebago Region – Thursday through Saturday, November 6-8 you are invited to Shop, Dine & Discover in Fond du Lac! If you're a fan of quirky shops and classic hometown dining, then all roads lead straight to Fond du Lac! Kick off your Fondy journey in our vibrant Downtown District—where boutiques, gift shops, jewelry artisans, and cozy eateries set the stage for a perfect day out. Stamp your journey on the Harvest to Holiday Passport for your chance to win a \$50 gift card to a participating business of your choice. Five winners will be chosen.

[Holiday Wine Walk](#) ** – Saturday, November 8 from noon-5pm. Downtown businesses will become 'tasting rooms' offering one-ounce samples of wine or mocktails while 600 ticket holders start their holiday shopping season. Currently, 26 business are signed up. Contact the DFP office prior to October 19 to participate. The cost for non-alcohol licensed businesses is \$175.

[Bags & Bucks](#) ** – Saturday, November 22 from 9am to 3pm. A new shopping event themed around the opening day of deer hunting season. Currently, 21 business are signed up to participate with various specials, contests and/or entertainment.

[Small Business Saturday](#) ** – Saturday, November, 29 A nationally advertising day of supporting small, locally owned businesses.

[Holiday Cookie Walk](#) ** – Saturday, December 6 from 11am to 2pm Participating businesses provide 200 homemade or purchased cookies for ticket holders. Currently, 13 business are signed up to participate. Contact the DFP office prior to November 30 to participate.

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PROMOTIONS & SPECIAL EVENT NOTES CONTINUED

KFIZ Holiday Parade – Saturday, December 6 at 4:15pm. This year's theme is "A Minecraft Christmas". Float applications typically go live on the KFIZ website after Halloween.

** There is still time to sign up to participate in these events, please email info@downtownfdl.com ASAP.

FONDUE FEST RECAP

The 18th Annual **Fondue Fest**, presented by Fox Valley Savings Bank, was held on Saturday, September 6, 2025, from 9am to 5pm. The event once again brought energy and excitement to downtown Fond du Lac, drawing thousands of attendees for a day filled with food, music, and family fun.

This year's event featured:

- Cheese & Chocolate Fondue served by Moraine Park Technical College's Culinary Arts Program
- Fondue Brew – a limited-edition Caramel Coffee Stout created in partnership with Lakefront Brewery
- Fondue Fleet Bike Races – hosted by Fond du Lac Cyclery, with young riders competing for prizes and podium spots
- Fondue Feast Eating Contest – presented by Fond du Lac Festivals, featuring giant courses of pretzels, poutine, pizza, and cinnamon rolls
- Kids Zone – presented by SSM Health, offering games, inflatables, a petting zoo, and pony rides
- 247 vendors offering art, crafts, produce, and food along Main Street
- The Classics Plus Limited Car Show on Second Street, featuring a beautiful lineup of vintage vehicles
- Live music all day and night across three stages and three beer gardens

Thank you to our participating businesses, event partners, sponsors, the City of Fond du Lac, event volunteers and attendees for making this a hugely successful day!

Early feedback from both vendors and attendees indicates a strong sales day and a successful event overall. A full economic impact report from the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation will be shared when available.

DOWNTOWN HOLIDAY WINDOW DECORATING CONTEST

Get ready to deck the downtown! Businesses are invited to participate in this year's Downtown Fond du Lac Holiday Window Decorating Contest, presented by Envision Greater Fond du Lac in partnership with the Downtown Fond du Lac Partnership and Destination Lake Winnebago Region. Judging will take place on Thursday, November 20. Windows will be judged for creativity and holiday spirit, with prizes for 1st (\$100), 2nd (\$50), 3rd (\$50), and a People's Choice Award (\$75) determined by social media likes. To participate - complete the short form [here!](#) Questions? Email info@envisiongreaterfdl.com.

Need a little help with your decorating? Destination Lake Winnebago Region is offering \$25 seasonal décor grants to businesses. Email Craig Molitor at cmolitor@fdl.com to apply.

HOLIDAY DÉCOR SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITY

We are currently seeking sponsor for the holiday lights and garlands on Main Street. For information on sponsorship levels available and benefits associated, please contact [Amy Krupp](mailto:Amy.Krupp).

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BUSINESS RESOURCES

2025 GRANT PROGRAMS

- **Building Improvement Grant (BIG)** – Designed to incentivize property owners to undertake exterior property improvements, BIG is a matching grant to fund the expense of exterior renovations only. Exterior Renovations must be approved by the Downtown Architectural Review Board (DARB). Property owners may apply for up to 50% of total exterior renovation project costs with no maximum.
- **Creative Sign Grant** – Designed to incentivize property owners to add to the unique character of Downtown Fond du Lac through creative projecting sign projects, this grant reimburses up to 75% of the cost (up to \$3,000) of unique, handcrafted projecting signs, including expenses related to design, manufacturing and installation.
- **Experience Generator Grant** – Designed to attract experience-based businesses that contribute significantly to visitor and tourism spending, and the overall vibrancy and vitality of downtown Fond du Lac. This \$5,000 grant may be used for a variety of business startup expenses.
- **New Business Grant** – An incentive to assist entrepreneurs with expenses associated with starting a new or expanding business in downtown Fond du Lac. New businesses are eligible for a \$2,500 grant to be used towards business startup expenses
- **Security Grant Program** – Assists property/business owners with purchasing an exterior surveillance camera system (in partnership with the FDL PD) and/or a rapid entry system lock box (in partnership with the FDL FD).
- **NEW! The Security Lighting Grant** – Financial assistance for downtown business and property owners for the purchase of exterior security lighting, with the goal of enhancing safety and visibility throughout the downtown district.
- **Downtown Fond du Lac Façade Design Assistance Grant** – This reimbursement grant funds the services of an architect to design the exterior of a downtown property. Maximum grant amount is \$4,000. 25% of design costs are reimbursed when the design is approved by the Downtown Architectural Review Board. The remaining 75% is reimbursed upon completion of the project.
- For full details and contact information on the DFP grant programs listed above, visit: [Grant Programs](#). Please contact [Amy Krupp](#) for more information.

DOWNTOWN FOND DU LAC GIFT CHECKS

A great way to support our downtown district is to encourage your customers to purchase Downtown Fond du Lac Gift Checks to share the love with over 70 downtown businesses!

In an effort to make processes more efficient for downtown businesses, the DFP has transitioned from Downtown Fond du Lac Gift Certificates to Gift Checks. Transitioning to gift checks will allow businesses to deposit funds directly into their accounts upon receipt vs. needing to submit a request for reimbursement to the DFP. Downtown Fond du Lac Gift Checks are sold at the DFP office or online in denominations of \$10, \$25 or \$50.

An emailed memo explaining the new process was sent to downtown businesses on Friday, March 7th with details and answers to FAQs about this transition. Businesses previously enrolled in our gift certificate program have been automatically enrolled in the gift check program, while others will need to opt in. All Existing gift certificates will be honored until the printed expiration date.

If your business would like to be included in the Downtown Fond du Lac Gift Certificate/Check program, please email infor@downtownfdl.com.

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BUSINESS RESOURCES - CONTINUED

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 would like a flag, please email info@downtownfdl.com

DOWNTOWN FOND DU LAC MAPS

The DFP has finalized a downtown map showing downtown retail, bar and restaurant businesses. Pads of 25 are available at the DFP office, or email info@downtownfdl.com if you would like one dropped off.

SOCIAL MEDIA AUDITS

As members of 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 include a desire to revamp and/or gain an outside perspective on your website or social media accounts, to obtain assistance with social media content ideas and frequency, and/or assistance with taking over and improving a pre-existing website/social media account.

If you would like to request a website and/or social media audit, please reach out to [Amy Krupp](mailto:Amy.Krupp@fdl.com).

FOND DU LAC POLICE DEPARTMENT RESOURCES

In response to downtown business concerns in regard to Fond du Lac’s unhoused community, City of Fond du Lac Chief of Police, Aaron Goldstein offers the following insight and resources to the downtown business community.:

1. Partner with organizations that specialize in providing resources to the unhoused community:
Kindness and empathy within our community is paramount. Those wishing to help Fond du Lac’s homeless community members are encouraged to do so by partnering with local warming shelters, outreach programs, food pantries, etc., rather than pursuing individual efforts. When not done in collaboration with larger community efforts, even the most well-intentioned acts can be disadvantageous to the city’s coordinated outreach to connect individuals to long-term resources.
2. See Something, Say Something:
FDL PD plays a key role in maintaining a safe and welcoming environment for both businesses and individuals. Property and/or business owners and staff who encounter unlawful behavior or safety concerns within a public space, and/or unwanted behaviors in a private space, are encouraged to call the police in a timely manner.
3. FDL Community Resources:
 - 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.

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STAY CONNECTED

- DFP Business and Property Owners Facebook Group – This private group welcomes downtown business and property owners to discuss general downtown issues, public notices and services. [Business and Property Owners Group](#)
- Downtown Events Collaboration Team Facebook Group – This private group is a place for downtown business owners to discuss ideas to make the most out of capturing the audience of attendees at downtown special events [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 [DFP Instagram](#)
- Downtown Fond du Lac Partnership Farmers Market Facebook Page [Farmers Market Facebook](#)

BOARD MEETINGS

The DFP Board of Directors typically meets the second Wednesday of the month 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](#).

TEAM TRANSITIONS AND UPCOMING OPPORTUNITIES

The Downtown Fond du Lac Partnership extends our gratitude to Darcie Holte and Shelby Haanstad for their contributions to our organization. Darcie has left her role as Office Coordinator to pursue new opportunities, and Shelby will conclude her employment at the end of the Farmers Market season. While we'll miss working with them, it's not truly goodbye – both plan to stay involved as volunteers because of their ongoing passion for downtown and our events.

We are currently hiring a Special Events Director. This flexible position can be structured as one full-time role or divided into two part-time positions, depending on the candidate(s). [Now Hiring – Special Events Director](#)

Looking ahead to spring 2026, we'll be seeking a part-time Special Events Maintenance team member to assist primarily with Downtown Farmers Market operations. We'll also be adding another Special Events Intern to support our summer lineup of community events.

If you – or someone you know – enjoy working with people, being part of a dynamic events team, and supporting downtown Fond du Lac, we'd love to hear from you!

CONTACT US

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

Amy Krupp, Executive Director, amy@downtownfdl.com

Cindy Laubenstein, Bookkeeper and Research Assistant, bookkeeper@downtownfdl.com

Kristin Santini, Special Events Coordinator

Julia Pearson, Special Events and Social Media Intern

Downtown Fond du Lac Partnership, Inc.

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