

# NEWS BULLETIN

## NOVEMBER 2025



### BUSINESS & PROPERTY UPDATES

[Rooted in Love & Fur Photography](#) is now open at 17 Forest Avenue. Owned by Jodi Cahak, Rooted in Love & Fur Photography offers lifestyle photography for every chapter — families, couples, motherhood, children, solo portraits, and pets.

[La Patrona Mini Mart](#) is now open at 79 S. Main Street. Owned by Lisandra Mora, La Patrona Mini Mart offers groceries, digital services, notary services, translations, and money wiring.

[Dreamcatchers Corner](#) at 167 S. Main Street will host a soft opening on November 29 from 10am–4pm. Owner Chelsey Jenkins plans to open with regular hours soon. Shoppers will find vintage, reworked fashion, unique secondhand clothing, home décor, locally made goods, and more.

[Wellness 360 Spa at Hotel Retlaw](#) will be opening December 1 at 1 N. Main Street (Hotel Retlaw Lower Level) This will be the second location for owner Sydney Hummell, whose first spa is in Kaukauna. Services include facials, massage, lashes, brows, and aesthetic treatments — where relaxation meets results.

[Rogue Dog & Cat Grooming](#) is preparing to open on December 16 at 231 S. Main Street. Locally owned and managed, their experienced groomers look forward to working 1:1 with your pet. With limited to no kennel time, your pet will be treated with the care it needs. Taking online reservations now. Previous tenant **Pup Lux Pet Boutique** has closed. Property owner Greg Barber has recently completed extensive façade renovations, supported by a Building Improvement Grant.

**Fondy Axe Company** at 25 N. Main Street is in the process of rebranding to **Ohana Axe Company**, under the new management of Nevin Gordon-Keolanui.

**Arbor Acres** at 45 N. Main Street has closed its downtown retail space to focus on their tree-cutting business.

### PROMOTIONS & SPECIAL EVENT NOTES

#### UPCOMING SPECIAL EVENTS

[Bags & Bucks](#) – Saturday, November 22 from 9am to 3pm. A new shopping event themed around the opening day of deer hunting season. 21 businesses participating 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. We can accept additional businesses in the Cookie Walk until December 1.

**KFIZ Holiday Parade** – Saturday, December 6 at 4:15pm on Main Street from Rees to Western. This year's theme is "A Minecraft Christmas". Float applications are available on the KFIZ website.

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### 2026 SPECIAL EVENTS

There is still time to sign up to participate in the following events:

Soup Walk – Saturday, January 17

Galantine's Day – Saturday, January 31, presented by Sunny 97.7

Chili Crawl – Saturday, February 14

Sweet Stroll – Saturday, February 14

Please email Brittany at [hello@downtownfdl.com](mailto:hello@downtownfdl.com) to sign up or for more information.

Holiday radio ads are currently running on the hour through Christmas on Sunny 97.7 featuring 12 retail businesses owners.

### EVENT RECAPS

**Farmers Market** – The 23-week season concluded on October 25 with record vendor participation: 81 full-season vendors and 216 total vendors, averaging 95 vendors each week. Vendor surveys indicate a strong sales season over previous years. Beginning in 2026, the Farmers Market's permanent footprint will run on Main Street from Western to Division every week. Vendor applications for 2026 will be available online in February.

**Witches Day Out** – October 18 - A fantastic turnout! 31 businesses participated, and survey feedback reflects excellent sales and strong customer engagement throughout the day.

**Monster March** – October 25- A record-breaking turnout with an estimated 1,400 children trick-or-treating throughout downtown. Between 40–50 downtown businesses and Farmers Market vendors handed out candy. A wonderful community event enjoyed by all.

**Harvest to Holiday Weekend** – November 6–8 - A new shopping weekend hosted by Destination Lake Winnebago Region, offering three days of festive promotions and early holiday shopping opportunities. 27 downtown businesses participated, with 43 businesses overall in the Fond du Lac area.

**Holiday Wine Walk** – November 8 - A highly successful event with 29 participating businesses and 600 tickets sold out five days in advance. Feedback indicates strong sales and excellent engagement. Many thanks to Fox Valley Savings Bank for their sponsorship.

**Night Market** - After careful consideration, the Downtown Fond du Lac Partnership has made the decision not to move forward with the Downtown Fond du Lac Thursday Night Market in 2026. This decision was based on several factors, including:

- Limited participation from downtown businesses
- Reports from surrounding downtown businesses indicating negative impacts on sales
- Increasing feedback from art and craft vendors regarding low sales performance

We will be exploring options for new event formats, which may include a mid-week market. Any new event direction will depend on vendor interest, sponsor support, and our ability to staff and manage the event effectively. We understand you rely on early communication when planning your summer schedules, and we will keep you informed of any new developments by spring of 2026.

We will continue to host our Saturday morning Farmers Market and Fondue Fest as usual, and we hope these events will be of interest to you. Applications for these events will be available online in February.

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### 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, December 4. 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](mailto: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](mailto:cmolitor@fdl.com) to apply.

### HOLIDAY DÉCOR

Thanks to our friends at Fond du Lac Festivals for their help assembling the holiday garlands, and to the City of Fond du Lac Electrical Department for handling installation. Weather permitting, the lighted garlands will remain up along Main Street and Sheboygan Street through Sturgeon Spectacular Weekend.

### 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.

If your business would like to be included in the Downtown Fond du Lac Gift Certificate/Check program, please email [info@downtownfdl.com](mailto:info@downtownfdl.com). 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.



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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.

All grant programs are expected to continue in 2026. For full details and contact information on the DFP grant programs listed above, visit: [Grant Programs](#) Please contact [Amy Krupp](#) for more information.

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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](mailto: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](mailto: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](#).

### 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:

FDLPD 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 – [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](#).

### STAFF UPDATE

The Downtown Fond du Lac Partnership welcomes **Brittany Machleit** (MACK-LIGHT) as our new Special Events Director. Brittany will be working primarily on all aspects of special events including planning, implementation, management, communications, marketing, strategizing and analysis.

Brittany brings a diverse background to the role—beginning her career in retail and restaurant customer service, earning her degree from UW–Oshkosh, and spending several years as an elementary school teacher. Most recently, Brittany has worked as a direct sales consultant and marketing & event advisor, giving her a strong mix of creativity, organization, and community-focused experience.

We're excited for the fresh ideas and positive energy she'll bring to our events and downtown initiatives.

### CONTACT US

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

**Amy Krupp**, Executive Director, [amy@downtownfdl.com](mailto:amy@downtownfdl.com)

**Brittany Machleit**, Special Events Director, [hello@downtownfdl.com](mailto:hello@downtownfdl.com)

**Cindy Laubenstein**, Bookkeeper and Research Assistant, [bookkeeper@downtownfdl.com](mailto:bookkeeper@downtownfdl.com)

**Kristin Santini**, Special Events Coordinator, [events@downtownfdl.com](mailto:events@downtownfdl.com)

**Julia Pearson**, Special Events and Marketing Intern

#### Downtown Fond du Lac Partnership, Inc.

131 S. Main Street, Suite 101  
Fond du Lac, WI 54935

