

NEWS BULLETIN

JULY 2026



IMPORTANT UPDATES

MERRY ON MAIN - WINDOW DECORATING AND NEW TRADITION

We're excited to introduce **Merry On Main**, a brand-new holiday tradition that will replace the Cookie Walk and transform Downtown Fond du Lac into a magical holiday destination!

How Your Business Can Participate

- Decorate your storefront window with festive lights, décor, and holiday cheer.
- The suggested theme is *T'was the Night Before Christmas*, with each business creating its own unique scene inspired by the classic story. We'll continue to use this theme so you can reuse your decorations year after year.
- Create a magical experience that encourages families to stroll through Downtown and visit local businesses.



Event Highlights

- 🎅 Santa will be available for photos.
- ☕ Hot cocoa and apple cider will be available for purchase.
- 🎁 Participating businesses will host holiday-themed children's activities throughout Downtown.
- ✨ Families will enjoy a festive, storybook-inspired holiday adventure while shopping and exploring downtown.

Need help decorating?

Below is a list of window painters who have reached out or have been recommended if you're interested in professional assistance with your holiday display.

Chloe Tschudy - oddballartslc@gmail.com, 920-204-3330

Raymond Mawst - raymondmurals@gmail.com, 608-698-2606

Jenny Wathan - jinkeewathan@gmail.com, 920-251-6372

Together, let's continue to transform Downtown Fond du Lac into a festive destination where holiday memories are made!

QUARTERLY SIGN-UP SHEETS ARE HERE!

Attached is our quarterly event sign-up sheet, where you can reserve your spot for upcoming downtown events. To sign up you can either fill out the [Google Form here](#), or print and fill out the form attached in the email and send it to Brittany at hello@downtownfdl.com.

If your business would like to participate as a vendor in **Fondue Fest**, now is the time to apply. Your spot will only be reserved after you fill out the application. Which can be done here: [Fondue Fest Booth Application](#). Applications are due by August 3rd.

Please note: Due to this year's updated event footprint, we have lost approximately **100 vendor spaces**. As a result, **Downtown businesses will be limited to one free booth space** to help accommodate as many participants as possible.

We appreciate your understanding and can't wait to celebrate another amazing Fondue Fest with our community!

BE OUR NEXT FEATURED BUSINESS 🌟

NEWS BULLETIN

JULY 2026



Want to shine in the spotlight? Each week we will be featuring a Downtown business on our Facebook page, giving the community a chance to learn more about your story, products, services, and the people behind your business!

If you'd like to be featured, simply fill out the interest form here: [Downtown Featured Business Form](#).

We'd love to help showcase what makes your business unique! If you need any help with this please reach out to Brooke at marketing@downtownfdl.com.

BUSINESS & PROPERTY UPDATES

The redevelopment of the **Reuping Lofts at 183 S. Main Street** is now complete, and the transformation is nothing short of breathtaking. Help celebrate this exciting new chapter by joining them for a **Ribbon Cutting Ceremony** on **Friday, July 17, at 11:00 a.m.**

The event will also feature:

- The ribbon cutting for **Bird's Eye View Optical**, celebrating its relocation and expansion into the Rueping Lofts building.
- The one-year anniversary of **Fond du Lac Beer Company**.
- The completion of the **Art Lot**, a vibrant collection of 13 murals connecting the Rueping Lofts and Fond du Lac Beer Company properties.

The beautifully restored historic building is now home to [Bird's Eye View Optical](#), bringing new life to one of Downtown Fond du Lac's treasured spaces. The thoughtfully renovated interior perfectly preserves the building's historic character while creating a warm and inviting atmosphere. As you step inside, you'll be welcomed not only by wonderful opticians, but also by a cozy coffee and wine bar, a charming vintage eyeglass display, and an impressive collection of historic Fond du Lac postcards to browse while you visit. The new location is a wonderful example of historic preservation meeting modern design, creating a truly unique destination in the heart of Downtown Fond du Lac.

Wrightway Candy, Snacks and More opened at 80 S Macy St. Sonja Wright is the owner and features snacks and candy right now with the hopes of being able to offer hot food such as hot dogs and nachos in the future.

Sequelae Psychotherapy moved to 20 Forest Ave and was awarded with a New Business Grant.

ROAD CONSTRUCTION

Road construction on Western Ave will be taking place until October. Macy St. will be closing intermittently during that same time period. To stay up to date on road closings/water shut off check out [City of Fond du Lac – Municipal Government](#).

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

BACK TO SCHOOL PASSPORT

Have you heard about the passport that is featuring Fond du Lac County businesses? They'd love to invite businesses to participate in the **Back-to-School Activity Passport**, a new county-wide initiative designed to encourage families to explore local businesses, discover new experiences, and support the wonderful organizations that make our community unique.

Families will access a digital Activity Passport featuring participating businesses. Each location will have a designated activity to complete. Once the activity is finished, participants will receive a passport stamp (or digital check-in) and continue their adventure throughout the community.

NEWS BULLETIN

JULY 2026



If you're interested in participating, please contact Amanda Bauer-Frisch amanda@quiltinglegacies.com or Shane Hernandez info@ilovefdl.com. They'd love to have your business be part of this exciting community initiative!

MAIN STREET SMALL BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

We're excited to share a free opportunity for you all in partnership with Main Street America!

Join in for a 3-part webinar series this summer designed to help you access capital, strengthen your business, and plan for growth. Bonus: Attendees can apply for an exclusive Accelerator Program with expert coaching + pitch competition opportunities!

What Are Lenders Looking For When You Apply for a Business Loan?

Wednesday, July 15, 2026 | 3 - 4 p.m. ET

Register here: https://savingplaces-org.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_BQ1RY9VNQAuweXdHRb3Eow#/registration

Business Plan Basics

Wednesday, August 19, 2026 | 3 - 4 p.m. ET

Register here: https://savingplaces-org.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_Kq3aVYfGQIGNtAAvQT72Qg#/registration

You can register through those links, or if you'd like more information do not hesitate to reach out to me at hello@downtownfdl.com

SPECIAL EVENT NEWS

UPCOMING SPECIAL EVENTS

- The 2026 **Farmers Market**, presented by SSM Health, will run until October 31, 2026 from 8am-12pm. The [Farmers Market Vendor Application](#) is now available online, but spaces are very limited and we may close applications very soon. Please make sure to apply today if you are interested.
- **Fondue Fest**, presented by Fox Valley Savings Bank, is being planned for Saturday, September 12, 2026, 9am-5pm. The [Fondue Fest Vendor Application](#) is now available online. All downtown businesses are eligible for one free 10x10 space.

SPECIAL EVENT RECAPS

- **Farmers Market** – An amazing start to the Farmers Market season, with over 90 vendors each week, strong attendance that appears higher than previous years, increased participation from downtown businesses, and ongoing efforts to encourage visitors to explore and support Downtown Fond du Lac after the market.
- **Savant Stroll** – The Savant Stroll was a remarkable event! Over 200 people came downtown to meet Savants from around the world. We heard remarkable stories, seen amazing art, and experienced mathematical geniuses. The fun continued with Archipelago 2026 where SSM Health Treffert Center hosted their evening event where people could dive even further into the world of Savant Syndrome and the amazing savants from around the world.

ANNUAL SPECIAL EVENT REVIEW

The DFP Marketing Committee conducted a comprehensive evaluation of all annual special events to assess how well they align with organizational goals and support a broad range of downtown businesses.

NEWS BULLETIN

JULY 2026



The objective is to create a strategic event calendar that delivers the greatest overall impact for the downtown district.

As part of this process, a survey was distributed to downtown businesses that have participated in events. The feedback received has been extremely valuable in guiding planning and decision-making.

Final decisions regarding the 2026 Special Events Calendar have been made.

1. **Cookie Walk & Sweet Stroll** – Eliminating due to the grab and go style of the event.
2. **Downtown Derby Day** – This event will be removed and Beer & Bourbon Crawl will be Derby Day themed.
3. **Beer & Bourbon Crawl** – Ticket sales doubled this year. We noticed a different demographic at this event and would like to keep it in the future. We will see how interest is in 2027.
4. **Bags & Bucks** – This event has not gained strong traction and falls during a particularly busy time for businesses, making execution more challenging. This is being sent back to the Downtown Events Collaboration Group to see if they would like to run it.
5. **Shop Small and Win \$500 Raffle** – With participation declining in recent years, this promotion has been eliminated.
6. **New Events** – Moving forward, all proposed new special events will require approval from the DFP Board of Directors to ensure alignment with organizational priorities.

The DFP remains committed to creating events that are vibrant, well-supported, and beneficial to the entire downtown business community.

BUSINESS RESOURCES

2026 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.
- **Building Security Grant Program** – Assists property/business owners with purchasing an exterior surveillance camera system (in partnership with the FDL PD), exterior security lighting and/or a rapid entry system lock box (in partnership with the FDL FD)

For full details and contact information on the DFP grant programs listed above, visit: [Grant Programs](#)
Please email info@downtownfdl.com for more information.

NEWS BULLETIN

JULY 2026



CELEBRATIONS

We would love to stay more up to date on your projects, business announcements, special events, milestones, and more so we can help spread awareness and celebrate your successes on our social media pages!

To make that easier, we created a Google Form that you can return to anytime throughout the year. Whether you're celebrating:

-  A business anniversary
-  A new employee
-  A new product launch
-  A special event or more!

...simply choose the topic that fits and answer a few quick questions!



Check out the [form here](#). If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to Brooke at marketing@downtownfdl.com.

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. 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 info@downtownfdl.com.

DOWNTOWN FOND DU LAC MAPS

The DFP has 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.

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!

Downtown Fond du Lac Gift Checks are sold at the DFP office or online in any requested denomination and can be mailed directly to the recipient's address.

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

OPEN FLAGS

The DFP has "OPEN" flags available for downtown businesses at no cost. The goal is to create a unified look throughout downtown and to highlight businesses that are open. If your business would like a flag, please email info@downtownfdl.com

FOND DU LAC POLICE DEPARTMENT RESOURCES

NEWS BULLETIN

JULY 2026



City of Fond du Lac Chief of Police, Aaron Goldstein offers the following insight and resources to the downtown business community:

- 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.

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](#).
- DFP Facebook Page – [DFP Facebook](#)
- DFP Instagram Page [DFP Instagram](#)
- DFP 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 info@downtownfdl.com.

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.

Brittany Machleit, Interim Executive Director/Special Events Director, hello@downtownfdl.com

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

Kristin Santini, Special Events Coordinator, events@downtownfdl.com

Brooke Vandergalien, Business Marketing, marketing@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

