

NEWS BULLETIN

AUGUST 2026



BUSINESS & PROPERTY UPDATES

- **Koko Cards LLC** opened at 74 S Main St. Kyra Erickson and Roberto Arellano are co-owners and are avid card show attendees. They have opened where VendiCards used to be and also buy, sell, and trade Pokémon and gaming cards. They have plans to put in vending machines and have built a quaint and bright space. They are applying for a New Business Grant and Experience Generator Grant after extending their lease and additional year with the support of the DFP.
- **Hopper's Screen Printing + Embroidery** completed their renovation and installed a clean, professional new sign after extending their lease for an additional year with support from the DFP and grant funding. They celebrated their refreshed space with a fun parking lot party!
- **Mix It Up Bakery** closed their doors after 11 years of business in Downtown Fond du Lac. The community showed up big for their last days and will be remembered for leaving a legacy of delicious treats.

IMPORTANT UPDATES

QUARTERLY SIGN-UP SHEETS ARE DUE!

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**, please email Brittany at hello@downtownfdl.com.

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!

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR HAS BEEN APPOINTED

Brittany Machleit has officially been named **Executive Director of the Downtown Fond du Lac Partnership**, continuing to lead the organization following Amy Krupp's retirement after more than 18 years of dedicated service. Brittany is excited to continue working alongside our Downtown businesses, community partners, and the community to keep Downtown Fond du Lac growing and thriving.

Brittany's email will soon be changing to director@downtownfdl.com. Please be sure to add her new email address to your contacts to help prevent future messages from going to your spam folder.

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. Applications are now closed, but if you would like to get your FREE downtown space, please email Brittany at hello@downtownfdl.com. Fondue Fest will feature
 - **Cheese and Chocolate Fondue** – Moraine Park Technical College's Culinary Arts program will be serving cheese and chocolate fondue starting at 10:00 a.m. at the corner of Main Street and Forest Avenue.
 - **Fondue Brew** – In partnership with Lakefront Brewery, this year's limited-edition brew is Cherry Chocolate Stout, tapped at noon at the Lakefront Brewery tent (Sheboygan & Main).

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- **Fondue Fleet Bike Races** – Hosted by Fond du Lac Cyclery, races are open to kids 9 and under, with divisions by bike type and age. Races begin at noon. Helmets, bikes and signed waivers required.
 - **50/50 Raffle**– For the first year ever, there will be a 50/50 Raffle at Fondue Fest. Costs for this event, were higher than budgeted so the 50/50 Raffle was created to help cover those costs. Tickets can be bought at the DFP Information Tent near the Kids Zone. Winner does not need to be present to win.
 - **Fondue Feast Eating Contest** – Presented by Fond du Lac Festivals, this high-energy contest features giant food courses like pretzels, poutine, pizza, and cinnamon rolls. Sign up at www.fdlfest.com or cheer on contestants at Main & Sheboygan starting at 11:00 a.m.
 - **Family Fun** – The Kids Zone, presented by Froedtert and Thedacare, has games, inflatables, a petting zoo and pony rides.
 - **Shopping & Vendors** – Explore more than 200 arts, craft, produce, and food vendors along Main Street.
 - **Car Show** - The Classics Plus Limited Car Show will return with vintage vehicles on Second Street.
 - **Live Music** – 3 stages and 3 beer gardens - all day and into the evening.
- **Witches Day Out** presented by Aurora's Apothecary will take place Saturday, October 24.
 - **Monster March** – Saturday, October 31
 - **Holiday Wine Walk** presented by Fox Valley Savings Bank will take place, Saturday, November 7.
 - **Merry on Main** – Saturday, December 5 will take place Downtown from 11am-4pm. Santa will be hosted at Hotel Retlaw for free pictures. We are asking downtown businesses to decorate their windows in a ***Twas The Night Before Christmas theme, or Merry on Main theme.*** Sponsorship options are now available for this event.

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.

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

BE OUR NEXT FEATURED BUSINESS ☀

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 Plan Basics

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

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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

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.

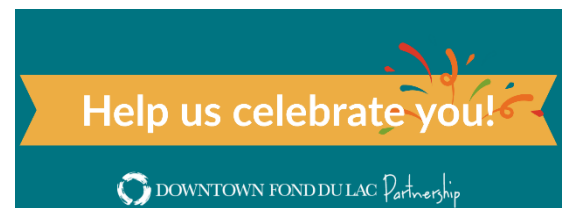
CELEBRATIONS

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.

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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

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](#)

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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.

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