NEWS BULLETIN
SEPTEMBER 2026

STAFF UPDATES

OFFICE COORDINATOR & MARKETING ASSISTANT

We have officially filled all of our staff positions at the DFP! 🎉

You may have already seen our new **Office Coordinator & Marketing Assistant, Jaelle Tennies**, out and about Downtown handing out posters, taking photos, and getting to know our businesses.

Jaelle will be taking on the majority of the DFP's marketing efforts, along with coordinating office data and assisting with day-to-day operations. Moving forward, you can reach Jaelle at marketing@downtownfdl.com.

EVENTS & PROGRAM MANAGER

Our **Events & Program Manager, Stephanie Margelowsky**, will officially be joining the team in the next couple of weeks!

Stephanie will serve as the main point of contact for DFP events and sponsorships and will help coordinate and grow our programming throughout the year. She can be reached at events@downtownfdl.com.

We are incredibly excited to welcome both Jaelle and Stephanie to the team and can't wait to see what they bring to Downtown Fond du Lac!

With our full staff coming together, the DFP will be moving and grooving as we head into a busy event season. We're excited for what's ahead and even more excited to have a great team in place to make it happen! ❤️

IMPORTANT UPDATES

MERRY ON MAIN MAGIC

We are excited to share that **National Exchange Bank & Trust** has joined Merry on Main as an **Activity Sponsor!** Their support will help us bring even more family-friendly fun to Downtown this holiday season. So far, we have **11 Downtown businesses participating** and providing space to host children's activities throughout the event!

🎅 **Santa at Hotel Retlaw**

We are planning to have Santa at Hotel Retlaw from **10 AM–1 PM**, along with a **hot chocolate and hot cider bar** available for purchase. We are looking for a sponsor for this, and if we can get it sponsored, it will be available for free. If you're interested in sponsoring, reach out to info@downtownfdl.com.

💙 **Sensory-Friendly Activities**

We are also partnering with **SSM Health Treffert Center** to provide sensory-friendly activities at different locations throughout Downtown for stops, helping make the event welcoming and enjoyable for even more families.

🎄 **Help Us Make Downtown Magical!**

To add to the magical holiday feeling throughout Downtown, we would love for businesses to **decorate their storefront windows with a "'Twas the Night Before Christmas" or "Merry on Main" theme!**

Our hope is to create festive displays throughout the district that give families another reason to stroll Downtown, explore our businesses, and experience the magic of the holiday season. The more businesses that participate, the more we can transform Downtown into a festive holiday destination for our community and visitors! ✨

If you have any questions about this event or sponsorship opportunities, please reach out to Brittany at director@downtownfdl.com.

Things are really starting to come together, and we are excited to continue building a magical day for our Downtown businesses, families, and community!

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SPECIAL EVENT NEWS
UPCOMING SPECIAL EVENTS

There's still plenty of fun to come Downtown in 2026! Registration is still open for our remaining events. We'd love to have you join in and help us continue bringing visitors into Downtown through the rest of the year. If interested, please fill out the attached sign-up sheet or Google Form if you have not already.

- **Farmers Market,** presented by SSM Health until October 31st from 8am-12pm. The Farmers Market Vendor Application is still open if you'd like to get a spot. We are also looking for **nonprofits and organizations to host activities** at the Farmers Market! If you would like a **FREE space** to provide an activity for market visitors, please email **info@downtownfdl.com** to secure your space.

- **Witches Day Out** presented by Aurora's Apothecary, **Saturday, October 24**. We're planning a *brewtastic* day filled with shopping, specials, activities, and a little Downtown magic! Already know what your business will be hosting? We'd love to start highlighting it! Please fill out the **Witches Day Out Google Form** or email **info@downtownfdl.com** with your information A **Business Toolkit** will be coming your way shortly with additional ideas and resources to help you plan for our upcoming events! We will also be sharing a list of **Pop-Up Vendors** looking for businesses to host them during events. If you'd like to add something extra to your business but aren't sure where to start, this can be a great and easy way to get involved. As always, we're here to help! If you need ideas, have questions, or would like help planning your participation, please don't hesitate to reach out to us at **info@downtownfdl.com**. We want to help make participating as easy and successful as possible!

- **Monster March** – Saturday, October 31 The streets will come alive from 10am-Noon with little monsters that are excited to visit Downtown Businesses and Farmers Market Vendors during the last Farmers Market of the season.

- **Holiday Wine Walk** presented by Fox Valley Savings Bank will take place, Saturday, November 7. We are very excited and have sold over 120 tickets to the event already.

- **Merry on Main** – Saturday, December 5. 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.*** Besides Santa and drinks, businesses will host children's activities for children to aid in families staying in the businesses longer. We are hopeful in also providing horse drawn carriage rides along Main Street as well. Sponsorships are now available for this event.

SPECIAL EVENT RECAPS

- **Farmers Market** – The season is winding down and fall produce is here! We're still running strong with at least 80 vendors every market. We are having more openings so if you'd like to put a booth up at the Market, apply at the above link.

- **Fondue Fest** – What a day! It started with a rainbow and ended with lots of smiles, plenty of steps, and so many wonderful community memories made along the way! 🌈 A **huge thank you** to everyone who helped make the day possible. They say it takes a village to raise a family, but man, does it take a village to run a festival! From sharing our posts and spreading the word, to volunteering your time, offering feedback, supporting the event, and everything in between, we truly appreciate it. **Please feel free to share your feedback** to help us continue improving and planning for the future. And next year is an extra special one, **the 20th year of Fondue Fest!** 🧀 🎉 We want to celebrate BIG, and we're already excited about what's ahead!
  Business Feedback
  Attendee Feedback Form
  Vendor Feedback Form

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BUSINESS OPPORTUNTIES

BE OUR NEXT FEATURED BUSINESS 🌟

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 Jaelle at marketing@downtownfdl.com.

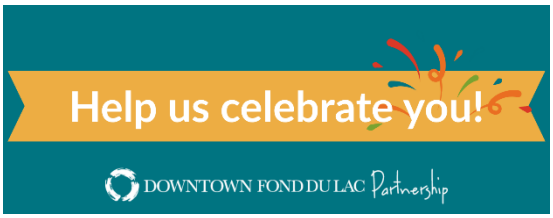
CELEBRATIONS

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 Jaelle at marketing@downtownfdl.com.

FESTIVAL OF TREES

Festival of Trees will be taking place November 20th with a Gala at Hotel Retlaw from 4-9pm. There will also be a community event Saturday the 28th. If you are interested in participating in anyway or learning more, click the link for more information.

BUSINESS & PROPERTY UPDATES

- **Ohana Axe** has closed their doors to focus on their mobile axe throwing trailer.
- **New Directions Chiropractic** will be moving to 207 N. Main St., Fond du Lac.
- **Allegory Studios** is now offering different workshops and classes at 21 N. Portland. Classes/events offered so far include candle making, community mural, and a book swap.

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.

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

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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