



# Historic Downtown La Crosse Update

August 06  
edited by Margaret Norden



**“Downtown La Crosse is experiencing a renaissance that’s a model for other cities.”  
--Governor James Doyle**

## Greetings from Bud...

Hard to believe that we are in August and the fall months will be approaching.

To begin with...another “thank-you” to Bill Pretasky, Community Service Coordinator, Justice Sanctions of the County of La Crosse for his continued efforts of maintenance of our key sidewalks and parking ramps on the weekends. His work continues to shine our downtown. Without him and his workers...our weekend downtown would look much different. Please pass along your appreciation to Bill at 785-5793 or send him a “thank-you” card at 400 4<sup>th</sup> St. North, Room 1060 Justice Sanctions, La Crosse, WI 54601.

Historic Downtown Days is fast approaching, highlighting our Sesquicentennial. Join in the celebration on Oct. 14<sup>th</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup>.

Great news that the MTU Board moved the Saferide bus location away from key retail and financial businesses on Main Street. Starting in fall, the UW-L/City Saferide bus location will be on West side (front of parking ramp) of 3<sup>rd</sup> St., between Main and State Streets. Thanks, MTU Board for listening to concerns of businesses.

I recently attended the opening of the Gateway Terrace Condominium project on the corner of 6<sup>th</sup> and Main Street. I have never seen anything as beautiful as these condos are. What a tremendous addition this residential community is to the economic vitality of our downtown. Paul and Peter Gerrard have done an outstanding job! Their project appeared in the Tribune’s Fall 2006 Home & Garden magazine. As Dr. Larry Severeid and his wife Gisela stated on living downtown: “It’s more European. In Europe, people live in the cities, keeping those cities alive”...wonderful comment!

Terrific news on the future of the River Center Plaza apartments located above the Market Square Ramp. New local owners have purchased the apartments and retail space in the ramp. These individuals are extremely successful local business people who promise to bring this residential and retail property up to the standard it deserves. What a tremendous, positive impact this will have on the downtown for the coming years. Congratulations to Bob Thorud, Rick Beyer, and Eugene Shumann. As River Mountain LLC, they will repair the roof, windows, and (finally) the brick façade, and remove the ugly scaffolding that has been marring our downtown appearance for months. Thanks to the three of them for the investment they have made to remove and correct an eyesore that has existed.

Do you want to see a great article on the Doerflinger Building that Mike Keil is rejuvenating? Go to [www.wibuilder.com](http://www.wibuilder.com) and you will find a tremendous story about the work and commitment to restoration that Mike and family are doing in this building. Wonderful statewide recognition for our downtown.

The Landings Condominium project received wonderful recognition for the work being done in the Three Rivers Plaza on Copeland Avenue in the Tribune’s Fall 2006 Home and Garden magazine. A \$7.6 million dollar, 44-unit condo complex is nearing completion and we look forward to viewing these units and seeing more residents in the area.

The Rowley Building is moving speedily forward in the total restoration and redevelopment of this historic building. Phil Addis and his wife Julie are going to be doing some really neat things for the residential uses in the upper floors. Carla Callies from Ambiance will be doing the interior design work...how wonderful to have other downtown businesses involved in this restoration project.

La Crosse Furniture (3<sup>rd</sup> Street) and Crossfire (Main Street) buildings are both going through the restoration process, adding to the historic beauty and significance of our Historic Commercial District... one of the largest in the state. Renovation brings new use opportunities not realized before.

And a big thank you to all of you business and building owners who continue to beautify our downtown with planters, hanging baskets, removing sidewalk weeds. It is neat to see owners stepping up to add to the character and beauty of our downtown without waiting for someone else to do it.

To all of the above...these are wonderful development and beautification projects that are adding so much to the future economic vitality of our downtown, city, and region. “Thank-you for your efforts and financial commitments to this Great American Main Street downtown.”

*Since our July newsletter, the following businesses have renewed their support, and DMI gratefully acknowledges:*

**Renewing Visionary Sponsor:**

US Bank

**Renewing General Members:**

Designing Jewelers

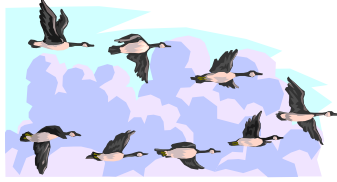
Hunan Restaurant

Smith’s Cycling

VC Salon & Day Spa

## Fall events are about to take off

Fall is just around the corner, and that means special events to go with the season:



### HISTORIC DOWNTOWN DAYS, OCTOBER 14 AND 15

This event is better than ever, with free trolley, carriage, and vintage vehicle rides, special riverboat excursions, dedication ceremonies, musicians, costumed historical interpreters, tours, and much more. **Watch for a complete list of times, places, and events to be posted on [www.historicdowntownlacrosse.com](http://www.historicdowntownlacrosse.com).** Flyers will also be available throughout the downtown. To have one sent to you directly, call 784-0440 or email [downtownmainstreet@centurytel.net](mailto:downtownmainstreet@centurytel.net)

Thank you to all the sponsors who make this a family-friendly and affordable event! There are numerous contributors to the trolley and carriage rides, and the street musicians. Major contributors in support of this annual downtown festival are:

*Coulee Bank  
North Central Trust  
Governmental Employees Credit Union  
City Brewery  
People's Food Co-op/Hackberry's Bistro  
Hale, Skemp, Hanson, Skemp & Sleik  
Community Credit Union  
Festival Foods  
Piggy's Restaurant  
Grounded Coffee  
Washburn Apartments  
La Crosse Loggers  
Digger's Sting  
State Bank Financial  
Citizens State Bank  
La Crosse City Vision Foundation  
La Crosse Sesquicentennial*

### HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE, NOVEMBER 10

The bi-annual open house events sponsored by the DMI Promotions Committee grew from 22 businesses participating in the 2005 Holiday Open House to 42 businesses in the 2006 Spring Fling. That not only demonstrates downtown unity and enthusiasm, but also generates excitement with potential customers. Put **November 10, from 5:00 to 9:00 p.m.**, on your calendar, and be sure to make plans now for notifying your customers via direct mail, and for offering some type of refreshment for those after-work shoppers.

## Promotions Committee meeting site moved – *August only!*

Don't forget – the August 17 promotions committee meeting will be held at WKBT at 141 S. 6<sup>th</sup> Street, at 8:00 a.m. We'll get an introduction to their television-internet marketing technology, followed by a regular meeting. We'll discuss ideas from the promotions handbook published by the National Main Street organization. To receive a copy of the handbook, please call 784-0440.

If you haven't been to a promotions meeting and are curious about their projects or have an idea you want to share, or you haven't attended in a while and want to get reacquainted, or you simply want to get energized about being part of the downtown, please come and network with your neighbors.

### Noteworthy Dates:

**August 11-13, Irish Fest** at the Oktoberfest grounds.

**August 17, 8:00 a.m., DMI Promotions Committee** at WKBT, 141 S. 6<sup>th</sup> St.

**September 5, 5:15 p.m., DMI Social at the Courtyard by Marriott.** If the weather allows, we'll gather on the terrace; in case of rain, we'll be inside. Each spot has a river view. **ALL** DMI members are invited.

**September 9-10, Elvis Explosion.** Put on your blue suede shoes and make those ardent Elvis fans welcome! Tickets available at VC Salon and Day Spa, 700 N. 3<sup>rd</sup> St., and the La Crosse Center.

## The Sesquicentennial Calendar

**August 14, 11:00 a.m.**—Presentation of a plaque to honor the S.S. Burton House, 929 King

Street, as an architecturally and historically significant building. For information on all Sesquicentennial events, go to [www.lax150.com](http://www.lax150.com).



## Business Over Breakfast to begin

The 2006-2007 Business Over Breakfast series, co-sponsored by DMI, will begin on September 27 at 7:30 a.m. at the Chamber of Commerce. The September topic is identity theft. Call 784-4880 to register. The \$5.00 fee covers the continental breakfast and any hand-out materials.