



Historic Downtown La Crosse Update

January 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...

At a recent meeting, an Xcel Energy executive from Eau Claire stated to me that a city in North Dakota is using downtown La Crosse as a model for economic redevelopment and revitalization! Mayor Johnsrud has often stated that downtown La Crosse is being used as a model in various Wisconsin communities. In fact, downtown La Crosse is being used as a model of successful economic redevelopment and restoration in many communities in the Tri-State area and beyond.

Each of our downtown business members, our community corporate sponsors, our Mayor, City Council and City Hall, County, and our DMI Board of Directors are all jointly responsible for this recognition. Each of you has provided the *support* for DMI to do the private business sector work of assisting and leading the implementation of our City Vision Master Plan. Many of our members and corporate sponsors have made their own private monetary investments in the downtown that continue to stimulate current and future growth in our city—investments made that spread beyond downtown to many local and regional businesses, greatly contributing to building the greater regional economy.

As our downtown and riverfront are used as a model by other cities, know that this is *your* success story. Take pride in what your investments and support have created for future generations to enjoy.

What will 2006 bring? Completion of: The Logistic Health, Inc. first phase corporate headquarters; the Gateway Terrace residential project; the Three Rivers project; the expansion of the Civic Center; renovation of the Doerflinger, Rowley’s, and Batavian Bank buildings, and Lindy’s Subs (Main St.); removal of remaining blight on the riverfront for a future LHI project; new retail business expansions, restaurants; expansion of the riverwalk (due to LHI), and of course our city-wide celebration of our 150th birthday throughout the year.

I congratulate a longtime partner and tremendous supporter of DMI—Michelle Schry, general manager and chief executive of the People’s Food Co-op, which draws thousands of regional consumers to our downtown on a weekly basis. Michelle was selected as a recipient of the very prestigious UW-L “Rada Distinguished Alumnus Award” for her leadership, and development of one of the top food co-ops in the nation. This wonderful honor will be bestowed on Michelle at UW-L’s spring commencement and is the highest recognition given to university alumni. When you see Michelle, please congratulate her.

I encourage each of you to create your own business, company, or personal promotion plans to celebrate our 2006 Sesquicentennial...be creative, be unique, and join the events already planned. You provide the growth to the future as we celebrate the past. Let’s all enjoy a wonderful community party!

New and renewing members

Please join us in our sincere thanks to both **Don and Roxanne Weber**, individually, and **Logistics Health, Inc.**, for renewing their support of DMI as visionary sponsors. We applaud the generosity they’ve shown, not only to DMI, but also to the entire La Crosse community. We’re looking forward to having all the LHI family of employees as downtown neighbors.

Please also welcome these new general members:

- Craig Groskreutz, owner of **Dolly’s Crafts, Gifts & Memories**, 223 3rd St. N., offering a wide range of gifts, decoratives, and handmade items.
- Joe and Dawn Kay, owners of **Simply Living**, 410 Main St., specializing in organic, earth-friendly household products, gifts, and clothing.

Be sure to check out these outstanding contributors to our unique downtown mix of businesses.

Save the date! Don't miss these 2006 downtown special events



*The What's Up
Downtown promotions
group is looking ahead
to 2006. Mark your
calendar now.*

The **La Crosse Sesquicentennial** begins Tuesday, **March 14**, with opening ceremonies at the Hixon House. Other events are being planned for **August 3, 4, and 5** in conjunction with the Great River Jazz Fest and CenturyTel's Sand on the Riverfront, and during Historic Downtown Day on **October 13 and 14**.

NEW EVENT: A downtown **Spring Fling** will be held on Friday, **April 7**. Participating businesses will be open from 5:00 to 9:00 for shoppers looking for the ideal ensemble or gift for Mother's Day, Father's Day, graduations, proms and weddings.

Krazy Daze will again bring fabulous bargains to sidewalk shoppers. Bring your shopping list downtown on Thursday, **July 20**.

NEW EVENT: The **First Annual Downtown Tour of Homes** will be held this year, date to be determined. If you're curious about living in the heart of La Crosse, see how some members of the downtown residential community have designed their interiors. Watch this newsletter for details.

The 11th Annual **Historic Downtown La Crosse Day** will wrap up this year's Sesquicentennial events. A ball will begin the festivities on Friday evening, **October 13**. Historic costumes, tours, treats, rides, demonstrations, and more will be featured on Saturday, **October 14**.

The What's Up group meets in the main Chamber of Commerce conference room at 712 Main, on the third Thursday of the month. The door is open for social time and networking at 7:30 a.m. Meetings begin at 8:00 a.m., and conclude by 9:00. Anyone who wishes to stay informed about our downtown community, or bring their ideas about promoting the downtown, is encouraged to attend. Non-retail members and employees are welcome!

**Please patronize and support our
member businesses**

Report those parking violations!

Are people leaving cars parked in front of your business continually? The perceived parking problem in downtown La Crosse is exacerbated when known violations aren't reported. You can become part of the solution by placing a call to one of the contacts below. You may remain anonymous. Or call the DMI office with the information, and we will report it.

Sgt. Patrick Hogan @ 789-7230
email: hoganp@cityoflacrosse.org

OR

Tony Hutchens, Public Works @ 789-7572
email: hutchenst@cityoflacrosse.org

There are about 250 spaces currently available in the Market Square ramp. The Civic Center ramp will expand to 1,000 spots by June. There is no reason for anyone to take up vital, consumer, on-street parking space. **Each on-street space represents \$14,000 (estimated) in downtown shopping and dining revenue per year.**

Gift certificate sales at record high

It's always a pleasure to announce some really good news, and this surely is: Historic Downtown La Crosse Gift Certificates as holiday gifts were more popular than ever. Gift certificate sales, which have steadily grown over the years, reached a record \$15,000+ between Thanksgiving and Christmas. Record-setting sales *all year long* were due primarily to our corporate sponsors, as well as to *many* of our individual downtown businesspeople. We thank them all!

The downtown gift certificates are such a success, we believe, because of the variety of options they offer the recipient—jewelry, clothing, art, antiques, crafts, books, concert and theatre tickets, home décor, gift items of all kinds, electronics, casual to formal dining, and even fitness memberships to work off those holiday pounds. And since **gift certificates are available all year 'round**, the ideal gift for anyone, on any occasion, is just a phone call away (784-0440).

Noteworthy Dates:

January 19, 8:00 a.m., What's Up Downtown promotions group meeting, Chamber of Commerce main conference room, 712 Main.

January 25, 7:30 a.m., Business Over Breakfast, Chamber of Commerce, 712 Main. This month's topic is "The Rules of Employment Laws." Call 784-4807 to register. See attachment for details.