

THE OLD IS BECOMING NEW AGAIN

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Hillary Gavan/Beloit Daily News The Villager Gallery & Frame Shop owner Betsy Schmiechen stands by some former Beloit Corporation industrial pattern pieces for sale to benefit the Downtown Beloit Association's Mel Donny Flower Fund. The patterns will be in the store as well as out front during the Beloit Farmers Market each Saturday.

BELOIT - People are invited to purchase some unique art pieces for a good cause.

Industrial pattern pieces used in the former Beloit Corporation are being sold with proceeds to benefit the Downtown Beloit Association's (DBA) hanging basket program, the Mel Donny Flower Fund. The pieces are on sale at The Villager Gallery & Frame Shop, 429 E. Grand Ave.

Owner Betsy Schmiechen, the daughter of the late Mel Donny, said the unique pieces will also be set out in front of the store during the Beloit Farmers Market. She invites the public to take a look and consider purchasing work in line with the trend of industrial decor.

"You could put them in your garden or hang on your house. They would also make a great Father's Day gift," Schmiechen said.

Schmiechen said ABC Supply Co. founder Diane Hendricks mentioned to her there is still a large quantity of industrial patterns from the former Beloit Corporation. Hendricks and Schmiechen decided to have the pattern pieces power washed and brought downtown for sale. With proceeds going to the flower fund, they are hoped to help continue to beautify Beloit.

Schmiechen said the patterns made by local craftsmen who worked for the corporation and were used to create castings for paper machinery. However, she still wonders why they have a reddish hue.

There are half a million pattern pieces left from the former Beloit Corporation. They can be hand-sized up to as big as a wall. Most are either red or silver and occasionally there is a black one, according to Rob Gerbitz, president and CEO of Hendricks Commercial Properties.

Schmiechen said some look like letters while others mimic shelves and other unique designs.

"They would be good for someone with a home with an industrial vibe, or an artist who wanted to paint them. I think you could also put plants in them," Schmiechen said.

Some of the circular pieces have been sealed with a mirror inside. The patterns are being sold for \$45, while the mirrors are a variety of prices.

For more information people can visit the Facebook page, "Beloit Corporation Industrial Patterns."

"It's fun. I've gotten a lot of likes and a couple of responses from those who worked at the Beloit Corporation or who had family who worked there," Schmiechen said.

Schmiechen said her father spent most of his career at the Beloit Corporation before volunteering to water the hanging baskets downtown. She still fondly remembers him coming in front of her shop to water the plants.

"I heard the cart coming and got to see him a couple times a week," she said.

Her father could get the watering of downtown plants done in about four hours. Although he volunteered his time, today the Downtown Beloit Association (DBA) hires people to do the physically-demanding job.

Schmiechen, who serves on the design committee of the DBA, said this year some of the ground beds will be redone at Broad and State streets and there is discussion about commissioning art or structural pieces to add to the beds.