

New director for downtown group named

By Sherry Blakeley sblakeley@beloitdailynews.com | Posted: Friday, May 18, 2012 4:00 pm

Shauna El-Amin will head the Downtown Beloit Association as its new executive director.

The Downtown Beloit Association made the announcement this morning.

Selected by a search committee of city officials and community members, El-Amin will start her new duties June 4.

El-Amin has been serving as a business retention and expansion specialist with the Greater Beloit Economic Development Corporation.

As the new executive director, El-Amin will manage Beloit's downtown revitalization program. With major restructuring projects under way downtown, she will hit the ground running.

"The changes in the old Wagner's building on East Grand Avenue are going to be very exciting," she said. "We are getting rid of dead space and waking up the downtown."

That area is highly visible during downtown activities such as the Farmer's Market and Fridays in the Park, so visitors will enjoy the transformation, El-Amin said.

"We will have a new gorgeous version of the downtown," she said.

She plans to attend all upcoming events in the downtown such as Art Walk which starts tonight.

"The staff at the DBA and I are already talking about goals and dreams. I'm also talking to Larry Simpson about Streetscape ideas. I wanted those conversations to start ahead of time," she said.

El-Amin, 34, is a family woman who has lived in Beloit her entire life. In her rare spare time, she serves as president of the Angel Museum. She enjoys camping, reading and boating.

The search for the new executive director began after former director Kathleen Braatz resigned in mid-February. Braatz had served in the role for eight years.

Andrew Janke, the city's chief economic development official and a former DBA executive director, joined forces with other members of the search committee to find the right person for the job. Others who helped select El-Amin include Jason Braun, chairman of the DBA board of directors; Joe Simpson, a human resources analyst with the city; Tim McKearn, of Beloit College; Christine Schlichting, of Neighborhood Housing Services; and John Nicholas, of Beloit College.

The job description posted online stated a salary range of \$48,000 to \$56,000. Sought after

qualifications included a bachelor's degree and three to five years experience in a related field.

“Applicants must be energetic, outgoing and able to demonstrate initiative and self-motivation,” the advertisement said.

In the interim between directors, the DBA's Program Director Crystal Buhmeyer has worked alongside staff members and volunteers to coordinate events for downtown Beloit.

