

Oktoberfest event set downtown

By Shaun Zinck szinck@beloitdailynews.com | Posted: Thursday, September 25, 2014 4:00 pm

It'll be like Street Dance, but in the fall and German themed.

The Downtown Beloit Association announced it is bringing Oktoberfest to the city this year. Shauna El-Amin, executive director for the DBA, said she spoke with local business owners and they were brainstorming what kind of events could be held in the downtown area.

“We’re just trying to bring more people downtown,” she said. “Along with Rivals (Sports Bar & Grill) and Suds (O’Hanahan’s Irish Pub) we thought that doing the Street Dance helps the businesses on State Street, how about we do an event on Grand Avenue to showcase those businesses?”

And so Beloit’s version of Oktoberfest was born. The night will start at 5:30 p.m. in the 400 block of Grand Avenue on Saturday, Oct. 4.

El-Amin said it will be similar to the Street Dance held every summer, but will feature German themed beer and Uncle Julius’ German Band taking the stage at 5:30 p.m. At 8 p.m. Jamie Campbell & the Redneck Romeos will perform until 11 p.m.

Tom Hankins, owner of Suds, said Rivals owner Brad McCaslin approached him six months ago about having the festival in the fall.

“I was in from the get go,” Hankins said. “I thought it was a great idea and it was a wonderful fall theme.”

Hankins said he plans to have a German-themed buffet and of course plenty of German beer. He said two bartenders will be dressed up for the occasion.

“I’m really looking forward to it,” he said. “Jamie Campbell is a really good band, and we’re looking forward to a good night.”

El-Amin said they are hoping for a bigger turnout than the Street Dance mainly because students from Beloit College are back in town for the fall session. She said the DBA will be promoting the event at the college as well.

“We’re hoping the food vendors that come out will embrace the German theme as well as the three restaurants on Grand Avenue — Cafe Fromage, Suds and Rivals,” she said.

The event will serve as the fall kickoff for the DBA which also will be holding its Halloween Costume Parade & Party on Oct. 25. In November the Grand Lighted Holiday Parade and then Holidayz in December will round out the year of events for the association.

El-Amin said the DBA is hoping to turn Oktoberfest into an annual event. El-Amin said they took a cue from the Street Dance this year and have planned for rain by putting up tents if inclement weather is on the way the day of the event.

“We’re hoping the community comes out and supports us and we’re hoping the event itself is a success,” she said. “We would like to continue this as a yearly thing, and our motive to get people to the downtown area.”