

Street dance sizzles before storm

By Shaun Zinck szinck@beloitdailynews.com | Posted: Saturday, August 2, 2014 10:00 am

Before rain soaked the Stateline Area Friday night, State Street was jumping as thousands turned out to the 21st annual Celebrate Downtown Street Dance.

Music and great food were the highlights as people started gathering on State Street between Broad Street and Grand Avenue around 5 p.m.

Reverend Raven & The Chain Smokin' Altar Boys have become a staple for the early crowd. The blues band rocked the crowd starting around 6 p.m., and got some in the crowd moving and dancing early on before dark clouds rolled in later in the evening.

The event serves as the largest fundraiser for the Downtown Beloit Association for the year. Shauna El-Amin, executive director for the DBA, said the association brings in about \$30,000 each year from the Street Dance.

"Our goal is to always do better every year," she said. "This is our 21st year, and we had about 3,000 people come last year. So we hope it continues to expand."

The funk and R&B band, the Eddie Butts Band was scheduled to start around 7:30 p.m. But, a storm rolled through the area, with some reports of quarter-size hail in parts of Beloit.

Two Beloit Memorial High School class reunions planned to meet up Friday night in downtown Beloit. The Class of 1974 hoped to have at least 200 people show up to the Street Dance, said classmate Betty Pulliam.

Pulliam said the class usually reunites at the Street Dance every year, and at least 130 people will be at Beloit College today to continue the celebration. Pulliam said she moved back to Beloit in 2006 after living in Denver, Colo.

"Wherever I'm at I always come back here," she said. "I love the music and meeting people I haven't seen in a long time."



Shake your groove thing

Rhonda Heumiller dances with her grandson, Brandon, while the Reverend Raven & the Chain Smokin' Altar Boys open the 21st Annual Street Dance sponsored by the Downtown Beloit Association. The dance serves as the largest fundraiser for the association all year.

Pulliam said The Eddie Butts Band is one of her favorite groups to see live, and everyone gets up to see them perform.

“Nobody wants to leave,” she said.

Vickie Souther flew in from Georgia for her 30th class reunion with the graduates of the 1984 class from Beloit Memorial. Souther said this was her first time at the Street Dance, and added about 40 classmates were planning on attending the Street Dance.

“I’m looking forward to re-connecting with classmates I haven’t seen since 2005,” she said.

Avalon, Wis. residents Heidi and Beau Sanden brought their three daughters, Brooklynn, Ozlynn and Kaydence, to the Street Dance for the first time this year.

“My barber told me to come check out the band,” Beau said. “We like the old style rock and roll sound.”

Beloit resident Carolyn Myers brought her four children, Kaylee, Brandon, Aidan and Connor, for the first time.

“My parents came last year and suggested it to us,” she said, adding she was looking forward to seeing her kids have fun. “Brandon loves music. Anytime he hears it he’ll hum or dance.”

The fun will continue today with the Farmer’s Market and Street Sale as well as the new Kubb tournament on the Big Lawn at Riverside Park.