

Let the summer fun begin!

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Spring is finally here and that means the downtown Beloit area will soon be the place to be.

With so many fun summer activities coming up, Downtown Beloit Association Executive Director Shauna El-Amin said she was excited for the peak time in Beloit.

“It’s really great that we do these events and great that we try to bring people to downtown Beloit and show off everything we have to offer and what all the businesses have to offer,” El-Amin said.

To kick off the summer of celebrations, the DBA will once again host the Annual ArtWalk 5 to 9 p.m. Friday, May 15 and 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, May 16.

In its 13th year, the event will host hundreds of works from nearly 50 artists at more than 25 different venues in Beloit.

“The overall variety is really unique,” El-Amin said. “This is definitely a time that they can showcase their art and showcase everything they’re doing and showcase what they have to offer.”

To help you see what each artist has to offer, there will again be a trolley shuttling people to the different sites. El-Amin said some of the venues will have giveaways or free hors’ d’oeuvres.

This year’s featured artist is Wauwatosa-based Eileen Early, an artist specializing in watercolor, ink and photography with a theme of Earth’s wild places.

“We find something that’s high quality and also unique,” El-Amin said.

Another sure sign of summer can be seen when folks fill the First National Bank and Trust plaza on Fridays for lunch starting May 22.

Not only will there be new entertainers this year, but there will also be new restaurants providing the \$7 lunch in the sun, including Grand Avenue Pub and Mama Lou’s Shrimp and Barbecue Smokehouse.



Coon Creek cranks the music

The Coon Creek String Band entertains crowds gathered at National Bank Plaza at Fridays in the Park last year. The weekly concert series with lunch is set to begin May 22.

“(We started this) initially to get people out of their offices and really enjoy the downtown,” El-Amin said. “You get outdoors and there’s live music to celebrate that it’s Friday and that the work week is almost over.”

The lunch will be held each Friday from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. with lunch being served until 1 p.m. Entertainers like the Beloit Memorial High School Jazz Band and Brothers Quinn will perform, increasing the variety of music offered. El-Amin said acts were added intentionally to diversify the genres of music after a survey was conducted last year.

“We’re adding a little more variety and trying to reach out to different bands,” she said.

And the fun doesn’t stop at lunch: Friends of Riverfront will again be hosting its weekly evening event Music at Harry’s Place.

“Our events are designed to bring life to the riverfront with programs that are unique to our place,” said Jennifer Kodl, executive director of Friends of Riverfront. “We want to help to create a strong sense of identity ... and create a good first impression of Beloit.”

Featuring a variety of local artists, the event begins Friday, June 19 and runs weekly through Friday, Sept. 11 with a week off Aug. 7 for the street dance. Each of the 11 concerts takes place from 7 to 9 p.m. at the Harry C. Moore Pavilion in Beloit’s Riverside Park. Kodl said she liked to see people come from outlying areas because the weekly, family-friendly event offers the chance for people to see all the wonderful, positive things that come out of Beloit.

“I’m just really excited and looking forward to summer and hoping for good weather,” Kodl said.