

Plaza to be renovated

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'Fridays in the Park' goers will be seeing a new and improved landscape for their enjoyment.

The First National Bank Plaza, which hosts the weekly event in downtown Beloit, has started renovating the plaza. The space is being opened up to allow for more seating for weekly events, and a new canvas canopy will provide shade during the warmer months. The park will feature a covered area for the bands, new benches and new flowers.

"The idea was to open it up for the musical acts that we get during Fridays in the Park," said Theresa Wendhausen, branding and communications officer with First National Bank and Trust.

Fridays in the Park features a local restaurant serving food and area musical acts providing music during the lunch hour in downtown Beloit.

Wendhausen said the plaza is on schedule to be completed by May 22 when Fridays in the Park begins. If it's not done by that time, Fridays in the Park will move kiddy corner to the Gantry area at the corner of State Street and Grand Avenue, next to Bushel and Pecks. The project is being completed by Janesville-based Angus Young and Associates.

The raised area in the middle has been flattened. The new area will allow residents to bring lawn chairs.

"It is definitely great that they're such a huge supporter of ours, so much so that they would take it upon themselves to make the park a more inviting place for participants," said Shauna El-Amin, executive director of Downtown Beloit Associations, which hosts Fridays in the Park.

This marks the fifth downtown renovation project for the bank in less than a decade. The corporate headquarters building received a major facade renovation last year. In 2004 the Grand Avenue facility interior was remodeled. In 2008, the corporate services building underwent an interior remodel and exterior facade renovation. In 2013, the bank expanded its corporate headquarters in downtown Beloit.



A facelift

This artist's rendering shows the First National Bank Plaza as it would look after renovations are complete. Construction is underway at the corner of State Street and Park Avenue on the plaza. New benches, flowers and more are planned for the plaza, which is expected to be complete by the Fridays in the Park events begin in May.

First National Bank and Trust Company is headquartered in Beloit. It serves more than 28,000 households in nine communities and 13 locations in southern Wisconsin and northern Illinois.