

Celebrate the season: Many fun activities planned in Stateline Area

By ERICA PENNINGTON Staff writer | Posted: Thursday, June 2, 2016 4:00 pm

BELOIT — It seemed like the dull, gray skies and cold would never end.

But now all of us can rejoice! The sun is shining and the warm weather has arrived.

Tons of events and activities around the Stateline Area are coming up soon. It should come as no surprise that the City of Beloit itself will be full of family fun — The Downtown Beloit Association and Friends of RiverFront crews have great lineups planned for the season.

Friends of RiverFront, a local organization founded in 1995, works to enhance and celebrate Beloit's award-winning riverfront. Each year people in Beloit can look forward to enjoying beautiful Riverside Park.

"It's really important to provide free, fun and family-friendly activities," said Jennifer Kodl, Friends of RiverFront executive director. "We really like to bring people down to Riverside Park to appreciate it."

Friends of RiverFront will kick off its Dancing at Harry's Place on June 13. This year the free dance lessons will be from 7-9 p.m. every-other week at the Harry Moore Pavilion. Each session will focus on a different style of dance. All are encouraged to join the fun.

"We used to do dancing every Monday, but we thought we'd try really focusing in on drawing larger crowds on the select dates," Kodl said.

This year's Dancing at Harry's Place Lineup will be as follows:

- June 13: Learn how to waltz
- June 27: Learn how to two-step
- July 11: Learn how to tango



Enjoy the beautiful weather

The Downtown Beloit Association and Friends of RiverFront have many fun activities planned this summer. Each week will bring something new, whether it be free dance lessons in the park, giving opportunities to take in live music or helping visitors try out local restaurants.

- July 25: Learn how to salsa
- Aug. 8: Learn how to square dance
- Aug. 22: Learn how to rumba

“It’s all really fun and our instructors are great,” Kodl said. “You can come watch, or come with or without a partner...it’s just meant to be a fun activity to get us out and about and get moving.”

Also taking place at Riverside Park will be the much-loved Music at Harry’s Place concerts on Friday nights. Nine concerts will be held throughout the summer season and admission is free.

“It (Music at Harry’s Place) reminds those of us who live here that the best time to be in Beloit is summer,” Kodl said. “There’s so much to be proud of and the park is a great place to be on a Friday night.”

This year’s Music at Harry’s Place Lineup is as follows:

- June 17: Harlan Jefferson
- June 24: Little Vito & The Torpedoes
- July 1: The Bel-Airs
- July 8: The Dave Potter Trio
- July 15: Mr. Big Stuff
- July 22: Cash Box Kings
- July 29: The Gary McAdams Band
- Aug. 12: The Jimmys
- Aug. 26: Copper Box

Families should mark their calendar for Friday, Aug. 19, too. This year’s Movie on the Big Lawn, shown on a giant inflatable screen, will be the animated film “Rio.”

“We thought it was a fun tie-in with the Rio Olympics... we’re looking to bring the music and the fun of Rio and the rain forest to Beloit,” Kodl said.

The Downtown Beloit Association works to promote downtown Beloit by planning special events and showcasing the area’s many restaurants and businesses.

Each Friday during the summer has come to mean one thing: Great music and an affordable meal during Friday’s in the Park in the First National Bank Plaza.

All are invited to stop by the plaza, located at the corner of Grand Avenue and State Street. Meals

will be served from 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. each Friday. The event has been taking place for 27 years.

“We have a new lineup,” said Promotions Coordinator Crystal Cribbs. “It’s always nice to have some new faces and some new musicians join us.”

This year’s Fridays in the Park lineup is as follows:

- June 3: Late Harvest will perform. Food will be served by Bagels & More Local Cafe.
- June 10: The Stateline Playboys will perform. Food will be served by the Grand Avenue Pub.
- June 17: Gary The Band will perform. Food will be served by Merrill & Houston’s Steak Joint.
- June 24: The Steve Doiel Trio will perform. Food will be served by La Casa Grande.
- July 1: The Harlan Jefferson Trio will perform. Food will be served by Brass Rail.
- July 8: The Bluegrass Reunion Band will perform. Food will be served by Suds O’Hanahan’s.
- July 15: Brothers Quinn will perform. Food will be served by Bagels & More Local Cafe.
- July 22: Blue Lightning will perform. Food will be served by Domenico’s Italian Restaurant.
- July 29: Stateline Playboys will perform. Food will be served by the Grand Avenue Pub.
- Aug. 5: The Lone Canary will perform. Food will be served by Merrill & Houston’s Steak Joint.
- Aug. 12: The Harlan Jefferson Trio will perform. Food will be served by La Casa Grande.
- Aug. 19: Gary The Band will perform. Food will be served by Domenico’s Italian Restaurant.
- Aug. 26: Jazz Tet will perform. Food will be served by Suds O’Hanahan’s.
- Sept. 2: Sweetland will perform. Food will be served by Brass Rail.

The restaurants choose what they’re going to serve each week. Curious about what is on the menu? Check out the Downtown Beloit Association Facebook page on Wednesdays, or sign up for the organization’s newsletter.

“It’s a time to enjoy the summer weather and make friends and have a great time,” Cribbs said.

Also taking place in downtown Beloit each Saturday is the Downtown Beloit Farmers Market, which is celebrating 51 years. The market takes place from 8 a.m.-1 p.m. along State Street and Grand Avenue. This year over 100 vendors will be selling their goods.

“Our farmer’s market is the perfect size to visit,” Cribbs said. “It’s a community tradition.”

Mark your calendar: The Street Dance will be Friday, Aug. 5!