

DBA surveys local needs

By ERIN KELLY Staff writer | Posted: Friday, July 29, 2016 4:00 pm

BELOIT — The Downtown Beloit Association is conducting a survey to gauge what training businesses need, what challenges they face and how many people are employed at each organization.

“This year we are focusing on what specific trainings that we can assist with and any major challenges that the businesses are facing,” said DBA Executive Director Shauna El-Amin.

El-Amin said the survey will be finished by the end of August or early September and findings will be published on the DBA website and newsletter.

“We reach out to businesses that have specific challenges to offer assistance,” El-Amin said. “We also provide grants, so (if) that is something that we can assist with, we can offer those.”

She said DBA also likes to keep track of employee counts because it helps to attract new businesses downtown.

There were 2,430 full-time and 687 part-time employees downtown, according to the 2015 DBA Business Development Survey Report.

The 2015 DBA survey also asked questions about the challenges and needs employees and customers have in relation to parking in addition to other issues associated with transportation, according to the 2015 report. The 2015 DBA survey questions about parking were related to a Beloit, South Beloit and Rockton parking study.

The parking study was commissioned by the Stateline Area Transportation Study to assess current and future parking needs on a block-by-block basis in downtown Rockton and downtown Beloit into South Beloit. The study will assess areas such as parking policies, enforcement, signage, location and finances. The study has been in the works since last year and should finish within the next few months.

The DBA survey portion related to parking found that 51 percent of respondents do not believe there is enough parking, 42 percent indicate no problems with parking and 7 percent believe parking limits are too short. Of the 154 businesses downtown, 90 — about 58 percent — participated.

The DBA concluded from its findings that respondents believe there is a parking problem downtown. The DBA makes a few recommendations such as creating additional parking in a vacant space, building a parking garage or providing more reserved parking. Findings were sent to the parking study.

The DBA surveys have been conducted almost every year since the organization’s formation in 1988, El-Amin said.