

BIG CROWDS AT FOURTH ANNUAL OKTOBERFEST

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Austin Montgomery/Beloit Daily News Oktoberfest volunteer Kelly Clobes hugs 6-year-old Morgan Clobes during the Downtown Beloit Association's Fourth Annual Oktoberfest celebration.

BELOIT - Unseasonably warm weather didn't stop Beloit residents and visitors from coming out to celebrate the Downtown Beloit Association's (DBA) fourth annual Oktoberfest Friday evening along State Street.

The high temps, which hovered around 85 when the block party opened, forced partygoers to leave the lederhosen and dirndls at home and come out in full-out summer attire on the first day of autumn.

Even with the heat, DBA organizers estimated around 1,000 people filed through the fest, enjoying live music, good food and hearty brews.

Festivities kicked off early Friday, with a sidewalk sale starting at 8 a.m. near Gantry Park. At lunchtime Friday, those downtown were treated to a traditional German lunch of bratwurst, authentic German potato salad and German chocolate cake.

As the sun set, the toe-tapping and dancing started, with The Killer Cars, Cold Sweat and The Brew City Horns entertaining the crowd.

The Oktoberfest is DBA's second largest fundraiser, but this year it had to compete with multiple events, including the Beloit Memorial High School homecoming parade and football game; and the Stateline Foundation's 31st annual awards banquet.

The clashing events aren't common, according to DBA promotions coordinator Crystal Cribbs. Even with Beloit residents and visitors having to choose where to go, Cribbs said she was confident Oktoberfest would remain well-supported.

The fest morphed out of the annual Street Dance festival, which was moved to earlier in the DBA schedule, taking place in August.

John Hadley and wife Jane Langenfeld, first time attendees to Beloit's Oktoberfest, were enjoying themselves playing the German game of Hammerschlagen. The lighthearted game see competitors attempt to use the narrow side of a hammer to send a nail flush into a log, with the winner being determined by who can strike true the quickest.

Cribbs said they got the idea to bring the game to the fest after seeing it at the LaCrosse Oktoberfest.

"It's a lot of fun," Cribbs said. "This fest is a good way to get people familiar with what Beloit has to offer."