

ARTWALK DRAWS CROWDS DOWNTOWN

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Ryan Silvola/Beloit Daily News Beloit College student Zach Day admires artist Larry Schumacher's work at Bagels & More during the ArtWalk on Friday. Schumacher was selected as this year's featured artist.

BELOIT - Colder temperatures didn't seem to bother residents as they explored the Stateline Area's creative side at Downtown Beloit's 16th annual ArtWalk.

Downtown Beloit Association (DBA) Executive Director Shauna El-Amin said there were more than 30 artists at 25 venues across downtown Beloit on Friday. The handmade market brought together multiple vendors selling jewelry, artwork, photographs and other items as well as live music at five of the different venues.

"It's a way to welcome spring while getting out and enjoying the fresh air and Beloit's nightlife," El-Amin said.

The banner winners of last year's banner contest also were proudly displayed on downtown Beloit's banner poles.

This year's featured artist was Larry Schumacher. The Janesville artist has been throwing paint for over 60 years.

"His art work is very unique as well as this paint brushes," El-Amin said. "He uses everything from fly swatters to kitchen utensils, drinking straws and rubbers chickens."

Schumacher said he'll even use his fingers as his brush for the acrylic paint he throws.

"It's one of the things you enjoy as a child, and I've never outgrown it," Schumaker said.

Schumacher said his work often is inspired by nature, especially flowers. He's featured his works of art at the ArtWalk four times now.

"Beloit is a very resourceful and artistic community, and people are very appreciative of what (artists) do," Schumacher said.

Illinois residents even ventured over for the event. Stephanie, Megan and Alyssa Schmit came from Pecatonica to see what the ArtWalk had to offer.

Megan Schmit said it was the combination of visiting local shops they haven't visited before as well as seeing local artists that enticed them to drive up to the ArtWalk for the first time.

"You don't get the opportunity to see these local artists' showcases very often," Megan Schmit said.

Residents also could take advantage of the trolley running throughout Downtown Beloit as well as numerous dining options and sales.