

OKTOBERFEST DRAWS LARGE CROWD TO DOWNTOWN BELOIT

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Austin Montgomery/Beloit Daily News (From left): Mary and Larry Mortimer play hammerschlagen, a traditional German game using the narrow end of a hammer to hit a nail into a log, at Friday's Downtown Beloit Association Oktoberfest event.

BELOIT - As the leaves begin to change and the air gets brisk, Stateline Area residents and visitors flocked to downtown Beloit for the annual Oktoberfest celebration hosted by the Downtown Beloit Association. ☐

On Friday, around 1,500 came out to support downtown businesses and to have a few cold ones for the fifth annual event.

Those young and old made it out to the dance floor, with the Zweifel Brothers and headliners Cold Sweat & the Brew City Horns playing a range of genres for all to enjoy.

This year featured a costume contest showing off traditional German-themed outfits for the first time, along with the traditional German game of Hammerschlagen making waves for a second year running.

The lighthearted game has 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.

This year's event had weather more accustomed to fall temps, with last year's feeling like summer with sweltering heat.

"It's a lot of fun to be out here and having everyone come out just having a good time," said Downtown Beloit Executive Director Shauna El-Amin. "It's a little chilly, but we will take that over 90 degrees. We find a way to celebrate with the community and just have fun."

El-Amin said the DBA's second largest fundraiser helps promote downtown businesses and the organization's efforts to support those establishments, while playing into the state's German heritage.

"The entire state really gets into the Oktoberfest tradition and it's just a great way to get everyone out," El-Amin said.

Proceeds from the event go towards revitalization efforts in the downtown corridor and to support grant funding for DBA-affiliated businesses.