

STREET DANCE DRAWS COMMUNITY TO DOWNTOWN BELOIT

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Erica Pennington/Beloit Daily NewsHuge crowds turned out to enjoy a night of live music during the Street Dance in downtown Beloit on Friday.

BELOIT - Clear skies, warm temperatures and the promise of family-friendly fun made State Street the premier place to be in the City of Beloit on Friday night.

The Downtown Beloit Association's Street Dance drew a massive crowd, with community members of all ages on hand to enjoy live music, tasty food and a cold brew or two.

"It was such an awesome turnout this year and we had people coming out really early to enjoy the Street Dance," said Shauna El-Amin, Downtown Beloit Association executive director.

Held annually, the Street Dance is the Downtown Beloit Association's largest fundraiser. Proceeds from the event help the organization lend support to 170 businesses in the downtown area.

"Events like this allow us to help finance facade grants and promote economic development in Beloit," El-Amin said. "Downtown Beloit is such a great place with something for everybody."

The Street Dance kicked off at 5:30 p.m. with live music by Top Flight. A steady stream of eager dancers were already flowing in at that point, and the numbers only continued to grow.

By 8 p.m. the brick-lined street was full of families, friends and neighbors gathering showing off their best moves as headlining band, Mr. Big Stuff, took the stage for the rest of the night.

"It's our first time coming to the Street Dance and I'm really glad we did," said Beloit Philicia Jensen. "Downtown is really diverse and the kids are having such a great time."

Pete Fronk, a member of the Downtown Beloit Association promotions committee, was very pleased to see so many people dancing and also checking out businesses that stayed open late.

"Downtown is the heart of the community and we've really got to work to keep it vibrant," he said. "It's so nice to see everybody coming together and just having a great time."

The Street Dance was just one part of the Downtown Beloit Association's "Celebrate Weekend." Events officially kicked off on Friday morning with sidewalk sales.

Fridays in the Park, featuring a lunch by Zen Sushi and live music by Danielle, drew more than 200 hungry visitors to First National Bank Plaza.

More "Celebrate Weekend" fun is coming on Saturday as sidewalk sales return at downtown businesses and the farmers market takes place from 8 a.m.-1 p.m.