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DBA eyes getting closer to normal with 2021 spring, summer events

By AUSTIN MONTGOMERY Staff Writer

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Shown above is the Beloit Farmers Market from State Street in downtown Beloit in June 2020. This year when the market kicks off on May 1, over 70 vendors will participate as pandemic conditions improve locally.

Photo provided



BELOIT — The Downtown Beloit Association helped serve as a vital resource to businesses in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, and Executive Director Shauna El-Amin says the organization is making preparations for scaled up events this year as conditions improve.

In 2020, the DBA had to make changes to multiple events, including the Beloit Farmers Market and Fridays In The Park, Holidayz and the Grand Lighted Holiday Parade to accommodate necessary safety guidelines.

“We’ve really been doing our best to adapt and we’re hopeful that all of our businesses will come into 2021 being able to succeed,” El-Amin said. “We want to make sure we could help them however we can.”

While no Easter Eggstravaganza is planned for this year, the DBA and City of Beloit are teaming up for an “Easter Egg Scramble” event that will see 28 downtown businesses place a special Easter egg with a color-coded letter in their windows for families to unscramble to win prizes. At stake are coveted gift cards to downtown businesses and an Easter basket full of goodies.

The DBA’s spring wine walk, now in its fifth year, is once again sold out and will take place on April 17 across downtown Beloit.

The Farmers Market will see its vendor base grow this year as the pandemic restricted a majority of vendors from participating last year, El-Amin said. The DBA will have over 70 vendors participating, up from 47 in 2020. Safety guidelines in place like metering to allow 400 visitors at a time and masking will remain in place until public health guidelines change.

“We’re able to welcome back more of our vendors to increase the number of different products being offered,” El-Amin said. “It’s a step in the right direction to normal.”

The market kicks off on Saturday, May 1 and runs through October.

The Fridays In The Park lunch and music series is poised to retake First National Bank Plaza for afternoons of live music and tasty bites from local restaurants. In 2020, the event shifted to a drive-through format to support area eateries. The first event is set for May 28, El-Amin said.

“We want to make sure we do everything safely,” El-Amin said.

In 2020, the DBA kicked off its indoor winter farmers market that saw sustained success even amidst COVID-19 restrictions as the weekly event drew an average of 150 visitors every Saturday to the new DBA headquarters at 557 E. Grand Ave. The winter market will continue through April.

“It’s something we’ve wanted to do for the last five years,” El-Amin said. “It’s been a great success and we’ve had visitors from as far as the Chicago area stop in to check out downtown.”

It’s too early to make any announcement on the popular Street Dance event held in late July, El-Amin said, but she stressed the DBA was “still planning” to evaluate the local COVID-19 situation before making a decision on the event.

El-Amin said she was optimistic about the year ahead, highlighting the lowered rates of cases locally and the increased number of vaccinations occurring across the Stateline Area.



“We’re being cautious about when and what we can do,” El-Amin said. “As the situation improves we can look forward to more things opening back up again. We’re looking forward to a great 2021 and supporting our businesses in every way possible. We will do whatever needs to be done to support them.”

For more information on DBA events, visit www.downtownbeloit.com.

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