

BE!

Rochester
Downtown
Alliance
Stakeholder
Newsletter:
The Place to Be
Informed!

RDA | Newsletter

September, 2015

From Executive Director Jenna **Bowman**

It is hard to believe that another summer has come and gone. Time does fly when downtown Rochester is having fun! This past summer brought another successful season of Thursdays on First & 3rd (TOF). Almost 260,000 people attended the 11 market dates. Planning for 2016 is already underway with the first TOF taking place on Thursday, June 2, 2016. In addition to a positive TOF season, the RDA held the first ever Dogs Downtown event. This event was a success, with over 3,300 humans and their four legged friends attending. We also experienced an unprecedented rain-free Movies on the Plaza season, with all six movies experiencing good weather evenings. We would like to thank all of our event partners. The success of the events would not be possible without your support!

As you will read later in the newsletter, the RDA was tasked with



Above: from left to right, RedBall Rochester, Thursdays on First & 3rd, Movies on the Plaza, Dogs Downtown

overcoming challenging weather for Styé on the Plaza. What occurred on the evening of Thursday, September 17th was extraordinary. The amount of teamwork and support was truly inspiring. It is that type of energy that makes me so proud to be leading the RDA and engaged with you - the stakeholders. A big thank you to everyone who went above and beyond. Your efforts were so very much appreciated.

Finally, I am excited to share that the RDA Board will be partaking in strategic planning in early October. This planning will allow for both short and long term forecasting and important discussion about the future vision of the RDA. There will be more to share about this process and the update from the session in our last newsletter of the year. As always, I encourage you to reach out and connect with me or any of the RDA staff.

— Jenna **Bowman**,
RDA Executive Director

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coming up...



Here Comes Santa Claus | Nov. 27



Small Business
Saturday | Nov. 28



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Community News: O&B Shoes Opens in New Location

"O&B Shoes has moved 3 times in the 82 years in Rochester. This will be our fourth move after being at 100 First Avenue location for 40 years. We had 20 friends and family help move nearly 3,500 pairs of shoes to our new location across the street, just north of the Peace Plaza (19 First Ave SW). The larger and more modern location will feature more styles and a better selection than ever before! We will have more staff to help provide the same "sit and fit" experience with comfort and style. We look forward to many more years of providing quality service, a large selection and a wide range of sizes."

-Anthony of O&B Shoes

RDA FEATURED STAKEHOLDER SERIES

with Shai Mauth
of Wabi Sabi

different items from our seafood variations. It's like a de-constructed sushi roll.

Do you have any special items that aren't on the menu?

S: The Ahi Tuna Poke. It's a popular Hawaiian dish and has become a favorite over the past year.

Any interesting, cool, or weird stories from being a business owner?

S: I offer some very unique items on the menu here.

And I try to keep it as authentic as possible - right down to the name. Sometimes, I'll have customers from all over, like Hawaii for example, that will order based on the name of the dish because they can recognize it from home. Like the Ahi Tuna Poke I mentioned. I've had Mayo Clinic employees who were originally from Hawaii get excited that I had it because they knew it would be authentic based on the name.

What is your favorite thing about Rochester?

S: Its people. I quickly learned of the term Minnesota nice when employees of Mayo Clinic would ask me if I needed directions as I was learning my ways through the Skyway and Subway levels of downtown.

What do you think the biggest change will be to downtown in the next 20 years?

S: Its growth. I look forward to its infrastructure and how technology will play a part in it.

What do you think is the best kept secret about downtown?

S: Wabi Sabi of course!

And finally, who is your favorite superhero?

S: It's probably Superman. Not because of his super powers but more so because of his disguise as Clark Kent.

Stakeholders are the personality of Downtown Rochester, and that got us thinking, "We bet there are some interesting stories out there." So the RDA sat down with Downtown Rochester stakeholder Shai Mauth, owner of Wabi Sabi restaurant, with one objective: "Tell us about yourself."

Where did the name Wabi Sabi originate?

S: Wabi Sabi is a Japanese term that represents this ideal way of looking at things and finding beauty in all its imperfections. It's simplicity and complexity at the same time. I chose the name for how I see things but also because I was looking for something catchy and easy to repeat.

How long has Wabi Sabi been around?

S: Wabi Sabi is approaching its two year anniversary. I've been in the food industry for more than half my life and have started and operated several different types of businesses. Some were good and some not so much, but what brings me joy is introducing things to people that they've never tried or didn't have access to like foods that people may have seen on the Travel Channel but wasn't available locally.

What is it like running a business?

S: It's definitely challenging. But I feel it's like any other challenges in life. I've run seven different restaurants from a coffee shop to Vietnamese cuisine. For me, it's all about growing and doing new things.

What is the most popular item on the menu?

S: The Combo Sushi Rice Bowl because you get to pick two

The RDA Featured Stakeholder Series takes a look into the life and business of a downtown Rochester stakeholder. A downtown stakeholder represents property owners, business leaders, city officials, and others with a direct stake in the enhanced business and economic development condition in the downtown special service district.



PEACE PLAZA



This year has seen an increase in the number of Peace Plaza rentals with a total of 31 rentals taking place! These rentals include some great returning events including: Pride Fest, Hiawatha Homes' Festive Mixology, The Boys & Girls Club's Chili Challenge, and Oktoberfest! Some new events included: Bastille Day by the Alliance Française, the Hatz Family's ALS Benefit, and Entrepreneurs on the Plaza.

It's always fun to see the unique creativity and energy that these events bring to the Peace Plaza space to make it their own. Many of these rental events also bring people to the downtown core district, which provide the shops and restaurants in the area additional traffic and energizes our local community.

The process for renting the Peace Plaza was updated and streamlined from previous years, and the intent is to look at best practices

from the past year and look for ways to always improve the experience. The goal is to have as much information accessible to renters as possible, so they can make the best decisions for their event and attendees can find information about events quickly. This year we have added a dedicated Peace Plaza tab on our website (www.downtownrochestermn.com/peace-plaza), which has rental information and a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) page.

We look forward to the 2016 rental year and expect to see an increase in the number of rentals taking place. If you have any questions regarding the Peace Plaza, or are interested in renting the space for your next event, please contact Karli McElroy, the Events & Volunteer Coordinator at kmcelroy@rdowntownalliance.com or at 507-216-9883.

Dogs Downtown

Dogs Downtown was designed to create an inviting and engaging downtown environment for pet owners and dog lovers alike. Its inaugural year was filled with excitement and over **3,300** attendees, and the RDA looks forward to making this an annual event.

Participating Businesses

Clements Subaru (Presenting Sponsor), BACB Unleashed, People's Food Co-op, Carroll's Corn and Carroll's Cup, Paws Abilities, Good Dog Camp, Minnesota Greyhound Rescue, Therapy Dogs of Mayo Clinic, Camp Companion, Doo Crew, The Wagazine
Murph's Hot dogs

Activities

Free Dog Caricature Portraits by Tastes Like Paint through the Rochester Art Center, Free Balloon Animals, Live Music by: Dirty Laundry Duo and Driven by Rhythm, Walk to Central Park, Photo Booth, Dog Pools, Agility Course, Dog Trick Demonstration

"We loved it but, more importantly, our dog loved it! Thank you all for putting this on!"

- Kaelyn Smith



End of Season

Recap



A boy climbs a portable rock climbing wall provided by Prairie Walls. The wall was located on Historic 3rd Street.

As Fall approaches, we look back on another great summer of Thursdays on First & 3rd. For eleven weeks, 1st Avenue in Downtown Rochester was transformed into an outdoor market providing people with art, food, music, and fun. A big thank you to all who came out and supported this great Rochester tradition; we hope to see you again next year!

Highlights

260,000 people attended Thursdays on First & 3rd this summer. Over **115** artisan, craft, and food vendors participated weekly. **72** bands performed on two stages. **\$900** in prizes were awarded including Downtown Gift Cards and travel vouchers the Rochester International Airport. Attendees enjoyed programming on Historic 3rd Street during our **5** Themed Thursdays: The Great Outdoors, Youth Day, Pay it Forward, Wellness, and Fourth of July. Pay it Forward raised **\$1000** in donations towards local non-profits.

“TOF is one of the things that makes Rochester wonderful and unique. Thank you!”

-TOF Attendee

Winning Photos

Four total winners were chosen for the #ThursdaysOnFirst photo contest and Fly RST photo contest. Check out the winners below.



From left to right, top to bottom: @andreabeatrix, @advanness14, @myjillosophy, and @chalat1

Volunteer Spotlight

It's been a great season at TOF for volunteers! The RDA was excited to once again partner with the Alternative Learning Center (ALC) for our morning set-up. This partnership allows the ALC to provide service learning experience to students which include: problem solving/goal completion and soft skills. They can also use their experience at the event to earn school credit and include on college applications.

We were also excited to work with a number of high school athletic groups in the evening at TOF. The participating teams included: the Century Football team, the Century Boys Soccer team, the John Marshall Girls Hockey team, and the John Marshall Rockettes. Each group signed up to clean trash from the event for three consecutive weeks earning them a \$500 donation towards their team. It was great to see the teams using the opportunity as a team building exercise and having some fun competition with each other while cleaning!



STYLE on the PLAZA

Rain or shine, the show must go on.

A little rain did not stop the Rochester community from coming out to see the latest fall trends from our downtown businesses during STYLE on the Plaza 2015. This year, the show's inspiration came from the glamour and fashion of the 1920's. Those who attended were able to shop directly following the fashion show during the first ever After Party sale. Select businesses were offering unbeatable one-night-only sales.

Fashion Show Hosts & Emcees: Laura Lee and James Wilcox from KAAL ABC 6
Fashion Coordinator: Lauren Smith
Outgoing Fashion Coordinator: Nood Reynolds
Performances by: Dahl Dance Studio and You Neek Media Krew
DJ: DJ Elsewhere
Volunteers: MedCity Foundation & NOVA

Participating businesses: 99 Giggles, Blu H2O Salon, Camy Couture, Collections Fashions, Ginny's Fine Fabrics, Hanny's, Hers, Knight's Chamber, LaRee Boutique, Lasker Jewelers, Nordic Shop, O & B Shoes, Optical Vision w/Flair, ReFashion, Tangerine, and Urban Sanctuary

Let's Talk MARKETING

new COLLATERAL



Custom branded gift card holder to accompany gift cards sold in person. Top left: back of holder, bottom left: front of holder, right: inside

Gift Card PROGRAM

The RDA is ready to tackle the fourth quarter with the Downtown Rochester Gift Card Program.

This year, we are investing \$2,000 in a Click to Purchase (CTP) digital ad campaign running October through December with the goal of the driving online sales. CTP makes it incredibly easy to get the “best gift in town” to the people that are always downtown.

In conjunction with the online sales push, we have purchased over **\$3,500** in gift cards to sell in person during the month of December. We'll also be offering FREE incentives to shoppers like

free coffee, donuts, and hot chocolate.

The dates for this year's in person sales are December 1, 8, 15, and 22. More days may be added, so visit our website or Facebook page for updates.

We encourage every downtown business to join the gift card program. We currently have over 70 businesses accepting the gift card, and with no fees, no obligations, and no commitments, getting set up to accept the card couldn't be easier. Contact Ender Göçmen to start accepting: egocmen@rdowntownalliance.com or 507.216.9886



FROM THE CHAIR

Board Chair
Dan C. Aguilar
Talks about
our “bustling”
downtown

Dear friends of the Rochester Downtown Alliance (RDA), I'm very proud and excited for all that we have accomplished this summer together. Jenna, her staff, our board members, and all of you continue to make downtown the Place to Be!

Here is a testimony to that. While riding the airport shuttle, I overheard a lady passenger energetically tell the driver, “Don't you just love downtown Rochester! It's always BUSTLING with activity. Do you ever go to Thursdays? I wonder what they will think of next,” she said.

Hearing this was music to my ears, and I especially liked the word, “bustling.” Because English is my second language, I sometimes look up words to be sure I know what they mean. So I asked SIRI, and she said, “‘Bustling,’ adjective - meaning full of energetic and noisy activity.” At first, I didn't like the word noisy, but

noisy isn't always negative. Noisy can be positive and fun. I think of get-togethers with family and friends with lots of laughing, or how kids rarely play quietly, or those super fun nights out on the town, at weddings, or at concerts. So yes, “bustling” is a great way to describe our vibrant downtown.

As far as what will downtown think of next, I wonder that too. There is a lot going on and in my opinion; no one really knows what to expect. However, what I do know is we will continue to put our mission first and listen to all who work, live, and play here. I can't stress enough how accessible our leadership is, and I encourage an email, a phone call, or a meeting request at anytime. Our contact information is on our website and this newsletter (pg. 1). So for now keep being noisy and energetic, and as a board, we promise to do the same.

- Dan C. Aguilar





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Clean Streets

Since June of 2013, the Ability Building Center (ABC) has been keeping our downtown streets clean.

With the large number of people attending Thursdays on first & 3rd, other events, and busy downtown establishments during the warmer months, there was a need for increased cleaning. The Ability Building Center team cleaned litter from the sidewalks of Broadway and First Avenue on Fridays and Mondays. You may have seen the crew out and about in their bright ABC t-shirts. It was the goal of the group to have the sidewalks on First Avenue cleaned prior to the local eateries opening for the lunch hour. It is because of organizations like Ability Building Center that the RDA can successfully program downtown during the summer months. Thank you ABC!

Photo: First Ave. facing south during Thursdays on First & 3rd

