

# The Light From the Window

Warsaw Community Development Corporation  
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November 2009

## Downtown Holiday Activities

The WCDC is in the process of contacting merchants about participating in a downtown “shop hop” that will take place between November 27th (Black Friday) and December 12th. The WCDC will offer “Downtown Dollars” as a prize. Please be prepared with feedback as to whether you think that participants should be required to make a requisite number of purchases in order to qualify.

Information is included with this newsletter on the 2nd annual Downtown Decorating Contest. This year’s contest is dubbed “The Festival of Trees and Lights.” Businesses may choose to decorate a tree, create a special window display, or do both. This year businesses must register in order to be judged. This will allow WCDC to recruit an adequate number of judges, and publish a listing of the businesses that are participating.. Registration materials are due by November 30th.

WCDC would like to offer a “People’s Choice” award in the decorating contest this year in an effort to get the public involved in the voting process. Hopefully some changes to the WCDC web-

site will allow the public to vote on-line.

Hometown Holiday weekend is December 4th & 5th. Central Park will be decked out for the holidays on December 4th, and carriage rides will be offered in the park from 6-8 p.m. Toys for Tots will take place in the Nat City Bank parking lot beginning at 7 a.m. on the 5th.. The Salvation Army’s canteen will also be set up during this time, and carolers from different school corporations are expected.

WCDC and the Warsaw Parks and Recreation Department will host Breakfast with Santa at the Center Lake Pavilion from 9—10:30 a.m. on December 5th. More activities are in the planning stages

The WCDC will be happy to post individual merchant open houses and special events on the WCDC website. Right now most of the information that gets posted about downtown merchant events is what gets culled from the newspaper. In order that no one gets overlooked, please call or e-mail WCDC with special event info that you would like to have posted on the WCDC website.

## Several Downtown Warsaw Businesses Chosen as “Best of Kosciusko”

Several downtown businesses took top honors in a recent poll conducted by the Times Union and the Convention and Visitor’s Bureau.

**Ruby** was selected as the best place to purchase clothing. **Ruby** was lauded as being a unique boutique with great customer service and excellent quality.

Downtown eateries **Brown Bag Deli** and **Mad Anthony’s** were also touted in the survey. Voters noted that **Mad Anthony’s** has good food and great window seats, and **Brown Bag Deli** was

commended for its variety and “perfect portions.”

In response to a question asking readers what they would do if they had time to do one thing in Warsaw, the number one choice was go to **Giverny Fitness Studio**.

Warsaw’s **Downtown Days** received the nod for best town festival, **Central Park** was noted for the best scenic view, and the **Center Lake Park/Beach** was chosen as best beach and best playground/park.

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### Special Dates

- November 27—Shop Hop Starts
- November 30—Deadline to Register for Decorating Contest
- December 4th, 5th—Hometown Holidays
- December 12th—Shop Hop Ends

## Joint Efforts to Promote Holiday Activities

As a direct result of the lagging economy WCDC is working with fewer dollars this holiday season. Money has always been tight, but it is especially so this year.

That said, the WCDC would still like to do everything possible to help promote downtown retailers.

Pierceton, Syracuse, Warsaw and Winona Lake all have events scheduled the weekend of December 4th & 5th. In conjunction with the Convention and Visitor's Bureau a Promotions Committee has been formed and this group is working on some ways to



cross-advertise each town's events.

With the assistance of the CVB plans are being made to do some out of county advertising in an effort to attract folks from other communities.

Flyers are being developed for the current holiday season, and they will be distributed throughout Kosciusko County. The flyers and newspaper ads will showcase activities in each town and encourage patrons to make a day out of attending activities throughout Kosciusko County.

While the committee was formed too late to accomplish everything that they would like to have done this year, plans are already underway to develop several joint activities throughout the year in 2010. The 2010 Christmas plans are awesome.

## Decorate Vacant Buildings

The WCDC is currently contacting owners of vacant downtown buildings to see if arrangements can be made to decorate those buildings for the holidays.

It appears that there are seven or eight buildings that need to be decorated. The good news is that most of the 2009 vacancies are not as obvious as some of the 2008 vacancies were.

If anyone belongs to a group or service club that would be willing to do a simple window decoration for one of the vacant buildings, please contact the WCDC office at 267-6419 or e-mail [wcdc@kconline](mailto:wcdc@kconline). Individuals and businesses are also welcome to participate.

Also, if any readers have extra wreaths, Christmas

trees, or other types of decorations that could be donated to the cause, please call or e-mail the WCDC office. Items will be returned after the Christmas holiday.

Many thanks to the Healthcare Foundation, IVY Tech, the Salvation Army and the Lady Tiger Basketball team for helping to decorate some of the empty windows last year.

Downtown Warsaw is on the receiving end of many compliments about how great it looks in comparison to lots of other downtowns. With a little bit of effort we can keep those compliments coming by making sure that all of downtown Warsaw is decked out for the holidays.



## Downtown Christmas Lighting



The WCDC has been in contact with the City about placing lights in the downtown trees for the holiday season. At this point in time the plans have not been finalized, but WCDC will try to keep merchants up-

dated as plans progress.

The downtown trees have grown large enough that it takes several strands of lights to make an impact. Since we are not blessed with an abundance of lights, we need to do the best we can with what is available.

One recommendation is to wrap the trunks of the trees as opposed to stringing lights through the branches. Several towns have

taken this approach, and it actually looks quite nice.

Another issue that we are working on is a contingency plan for replacing lights as they burn out. Last year there were several strands of lights that were not working properly, and they detracted from the overall effect.

Please feel free to call the WCDC office if you have ideas/suggestions about the lights.

## Downtown Update

There is nothing static about downtown Warsaw! Several changes have either taken place, or will be taking place prior to the end of the year.

Kelainey's Ice Cream Shop will be closing for the winter months. They will be working to reduce their inventory, and anticipate closing sometime in the next few weeks.

This closing is only seasonal, and Kelainey's will re-open in the Spring. In the meantime be sure to stop by for a \$.99 scoop of ice cream.

Renovations are scheduled to begin soon on the vacant building located on the south-

east corner of Lake and Center (old license bureau.) Lots of people have inquired about this property so hopefully the proposed facelift will encourage prospective occupants.

The Buffalo Street Emporium will open at 116 S. Buffalo Street (former location of ruby) around the end of November or first part of December. The business is owned by Cindy Dobbins & Jerry Opperud and will operate as a variety store.

Local entrepreneurs Jen Mink and Julie Hall are making plans to open a third retail business in downtown Warsaw. This business will be a resale boutique that features

a superior quality of clothing for women and children. The shop will be located in the Old Railroad Depot on W. Jefferson Street. More details will be available soon.

Reader's World is undergoing an interior makeover. Display racks and shelving have been rearranged to create a cleaner look, and new product lines have been added. Stop by soon and check it out.

A couple of businesses have left the downtown area. Renee's Hair and Nails (119 E. Center St.) moved to Biomet Drive. Chris Sanchez of Video and Sound Productions has vacated VSP's East Market Street location and is now working in Ft. Wayne

## Taste & Trade Expo Thank You's

Special thanks to Embarq for sponsoring the WCDC booth at the 2009 Taste & Trade Expo. This event serves as a great venue for the WCDC to promote downtown Warsaw.

Thanks also to Allegra Printing, Crownover's, Hardesty Printing and Mutual Bank for providing notepads and pens to distribute to the attendees that stopped by the WCDC booth. Those items were greatly appreciated.

The WCDC couldn't do Taste & Trade without the assistance of the downtown

businesses that provided merchandise and flyers to be showcased in the WCDC display. Those items helped to promote the overall theme that downtown Warsaw has a lot to offer.

Downtown restaurant menus were especially popular, and some restaurants have already served customers that were tempted by the menus that they picked up at the Taste & Trade.

Due to the fact that I live and work in downtown Warsaw, I take for granted that everyone knows about the great businesses

in our downtown. I am always amazed by the people that don't know there is a chocolate shop or a yarn shop, etc. Nothing pleases me more than to be able to enlighten them.

On the other hand, it was also nice to chat with people that do patronize restaurants and businesses in downtown Warsaw. It's always refreshing to hear that people still appreciate small, locally owned businesses.

Next year I'd love to have some merchants spend time in the booth with me.

*Cindy Dobbins*

## Spooktacular Wrap-Up

Despite the wind and rain, hundreds of children and their parents still showed up for Spooktacular on Friday, October 30th. The WCDC doesn't have exact numbers, but we do know that the Salvation Army passed out about 700 cups of hot chocolate.

Nat City Bank reported that they ran out of popcorn around 6:30, but they still had enough candy to get them through the evening. Another retailer thought they distributed about 1,000 pieces of candy.

The WCDC is very thankful for all of the downtown merchants, businesses and service groups that assisted with Spooktacular.

Primary sponsors for the event were Kohl's, Kosciusko Board of Realtors, Male Fashions, Miller's Merry Manor, Warsaw Breakfast Optimist Club and WCDC.

Thirty five children were awarded prizes in the costume contest. Mutual Bank and TOWERbank donated gift certificates for grand prizes. Other goodies were provided

by Dennie House, Jan Miller, Kosciusko Board of Realtors, Miller's Merry Manor, North Pointe Cinemas, Tim Lowman, Walmart, Warsaw Breakfast Optimist and WCDC.

Kudos to Kohl's A Team, local realtors Warsaw Breakfast Optimist, WCDC board members and other community members for coming out to volunteer. Thanks also to Celebrations and Creative Floral Designs for providing balloons.



## Warsaw Community

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**We're on the Web!**  
[warsawcdc.org](http://warsawcdc.org)

● ...working to have a light  
in every window

*It is with regret that the WCDC notes the death of Sylvan Schwegman. Sylvan was a long-time downtown Warsaw merchant who owned and operated NBS Office Supply at 208/210 S. Buffalo Street. In addition to the Warsaw store, Sylvan also owned NBS Office Supply outlets in Goshen and Wabash.*

*Sylvan sold the Warsaw NBS business a few years ago, and the new owners eventually decided to close the retail outlet. The business has been sorely missed by downtown merchants and businesses.*

*Sylvan prided himself on the fact that his stores offered good customer service, as well as quality office supplies and furniture at competitive prices.*

## Christmas Marketing Tips

The 2009 holiday shopping season is sure to be challenging, but here are a few tips that might provoke some marketing ideas:

1. Provide free shipping on purchases over certain dollar amounts. This promotion can be geared to specific shopping days and times. Many on-line retailers and mail order merchants are already offering free shipping within certain parameters.
2. Free and/or special gift wrapping is an incentive for shoppers to select gift items from "walk-in" retail outlets as opposed to shopping on-line or through catalogs. Restaurants can also come up with creative ways to wrap or package gift certificates/cards.
3. The inclusion of "bonus" items is always a drawing card. Customers love to get something free. Offering "bonus bucks" or a small give-away item can draw customers

to restaurants and retail outlets.

4. Shoppers will most likely be watching holiday budgets very closely this season. Make shopping easier for them by arranging a selection of items according to specific price parameters. For instance you might designate areas that feature gifts for \$20 or less, \$10 or less, etc.
5. Offer early bird discounts for purchases made before a specific date or time. An example might be to offer a 20% discount on all items purchased before December 1st. Discounts can also be tied to certain times of the day. The largest discounts are normally offered early in the morning and discounts decrease as the day progresses.
6. Host a party or open house with refreshments as a thank-you to your customers. People may be somewhat wary about accepting food items this year due to the flu

scare, so it is probably best to offer food items that are individually wrapped or packaged. An example would be to put cheese cubes, cheese spreads, dips, desserts, etc. into soufflé cups or baking papers so that people can easily pick them up.

7. Promote gift cards and/or gift certificates because they take the pressure off of finding that perfect gift for someone that is hard to buy for. Be sure to include some creative packaging for your gift cards and certificates.
8. If your business features gift certificates or merchandise that might be attractive to corporate gift givers, be sure to explore those opportunities. It's always a challenge for businesses to come up with gifts for employees or customers. Assist them with this process by providing details about what your business has to offer.