



THE
DOWNTOWN
GROUP

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DOTHAN, AL



DOWNTOWN
OLD & NEWS

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DOWNTOWN CHRISTMAS 2008

It will soon be "beginning to look a lot like Christmas" here in Dothan with the arrival of the 4th annual Downtown Christmas Festival. The event officially kicks off with the lighting of the City Christmas tree, Tuesday, December 2nd at 6:00 PM. The two-story fir, magnificently decorated by City personnel, will be located on the balcony of the Civic Center. The Montana Magnet School choir will sing carols to get people in the holiday mood before the giant tree is illuminated.

Of course, it wouldn't be the kick-off of the Christmas season without a visit from Santa Claus. He will arrive in grand splendor on the back of a Dothan Fire Department truck, and visit with children of all ages after the tree lighting on December 2nd..

THE DOWNTOWN GROUP MEMBERSHIP FORM

Post Office Box 1005 • Dothan, AL 36302
(334) 793-3097

Enclosed are my annual dues and application for membership in The Downtown Group, Inc.

CHECK ONE:	Individual \$ 40.00	Family \$ 60.00
	Corporate ... \$150.00	Business \$100.00
	Patron \$300.00	Corporate Patron ... \$500.00
	Sponsor.....\$1,000 - \$5,000	

Name _____ Business _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone (_____) _____ Business Phone (_____) _____

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: THE DOWNTOWN GROUP
All contributions are tax deductible



Having fun in the "Snow Zone"



Children enjoying holiday fun

Friday, December 5th is a festive night full of song and dance that you won't want to miss. The 4th annual Opera House Holiday Spectacular is slated to start at 7:30 pm and promises to be full of talented performers. Scheduled to appear in the production are The Dothan Dance Club, Patti Rutland Jazz, The Understudy Dinner Theater, local choral groups, hand bells and a variety of local entertainers.

The past three years, the Opera House Holiday Spectacular has been a popular performance, and has delighted capacity crowds. To ensure a seat, get your tickets early by calling the Civic Center Box office at (334) 615-3170.

See Christmas 2008, Page 7

DON'T MISS THE FUN ON SATURDAY, DECEMBER 6 IN DOWNTOWN DOTHAN



Presented by
The
Downtown
Group
and the
City of Dothan

**FREE
SNOW
ZONE**

Sponsored by Larry Blumberg & Associates Properties and Miracle Finance



SANTA in the park
Sponsored by Knology

LIVE MUSIC all day
Sponsored by Century Tel

Free **TRAIN RIDES**
Sponsored by Five Star Credit Union

Downtown Christmas also sponsored by:

- American Classifieds
- The Downtown Group
- The City of Dothan
- Edward Jones Investments
- WTVY Channel 4
- Dothan Eagle
- Southern Bone & Joint Specialists

**FREE
CRAFTS
FOR KIDS**

by Troy University



**SHOP
TILL YOU DROP
IN THE HUGE
VENDOR
AREA**

THE DOWNTOWN GROUP'S FOURTH ANNUAL
**OPERA HOUSE
HOLIDAY
SPECTACULAR**
Friday, December 5th • 7:30pm

*A night of
Song, Dance
and Holiday Joy*

Tickets now on sale at the Civic Center Box Office and
by phone at 334-615-3175 • Adults \$11 / Students: \$8

**WIREGRASS
CHRISTMAS**
Saturday, December 6th
7:00pm

Featuring the EEOC Concert Choir and the
Tri State Community Orchestra together
on the Dothan Opera House stage.

Tickets now on sale at the Civic Center Box Office and by
phone at 334-615-3175 • Adults \$10 / Seniors & Students: \$8



www.TheMainEventWeb.com/Downtown

Christmas 2008, From Page 1

The highlight of the Downtown Christmas Festival has to be the one-day street fair, which will take place Saturday, December 6th from 9:00 AM- 5:00 PM. Loads of artisans line Foster Street with their beautiful and hand-made wares, providing unique shopping ideas for Christmas. Shoppers strolling the street will find numerous candle makers, jewelry designers, wood workers and artists booths, as well as plenty of fine festival food to enjoy. (An updated list of vendors participating can be seen at the bottom of the web page, www.TheMainEventWeb.com/downtown).

Children have been waiting a full year to experience the main attraction of the festival— SNOW! Once again, the wildly popular Snow Zone is sure to please children of all ages. The area, enlarged and with better entrances and exits in 2008, is created through the use of machinery and several tons of block ice.

Adel Ice Company president, Buddy Duke, explains the process. "Three-hundred pound blocks of ice are trucked in by semi. They're then run through a machine that's essentially a modified wood-chipper. The result is pulverized ice that's (basically) snow."

Entertainment will abound throughout the day with a variety of acts on the main stage. Here is the line-up of acts: 10:00 AM- Heaven's Island Steel Drum Band, 11:00 AM- Country Christian Music Duo of the year



Robert and James, Noon- southern gospel from the Southern Tradition Quartet, 1:00 PM- an interactive karate demonstration by the ATA Karate School, 1:30 PM- the Wiregrass Strings Youth Symphony performs favorite Christmas Music, 2:00 PM- Florida's Favorite Rock Band, Skyview, comes to town. Then, at 3:00 PM the Pet fashion show takes over the main stage as Fido and Spot walk the red carpet for prizes.

Free train rides will again be offered from several locations including the Five Star Credit Union parking lot and the Civic Center. Also, Blue Bell Ice Cream will return with their "half-gallon bounce house" and free samples of ice cream.

Admission to the street festival on Saturday, December 6th is free, as are all concerts and play in the Snow Zone. There is a small charge for some activities, such as children's games and horse and buggy rides.

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D'MONICO'S ITALIAN GARDENS & SINATRA'S BAR

When you come downtown you expect to find the out of the ordinary experience. Small cozy upscale shops and galleries and independently run eating establishments. The Penney Building has a new tenant that will soon be the talk of the town. D'Monico's Italian Gardens just opened its doors at 111 West Troy Street. Owner Nick Nitkowski is not only the owner of D'Monico's he is a champion of downtown revitalization "I really wanted to create a signature restaurant downtown. I think I realized Dothan wanted something like this downtown." The restaurant has three levels of dining. As you enter the restaurant you experience an outdoor setting. You are surrounded by tables with umbrellas and blue sky above you. Wonderful smells drift from a kitchen you can peek into. Nick's mother known as Moma is sautéing and adding spices to her dishes. "This is rustic Northern Italian food, Grandma's recipes," says Moma. "This Italian food is seasonal. We use what is fresh at the market." Continuing the tour of the restaurant you can walk downstairs to the cozy wine cellar. Small tables are available for sipping wine and dining. Nick says "When I thought about the wine cellar I really wanted customers to enjoy quality wines. Our wine list compliments the rustic Italian cuisine." Heading back upstairs to the street level and up to the third level of dining you are struck by presence of Sinatra's Bar. According to owner Nick "Everybody knows the famous Italian American Legend. I thought with the bar upstairs the dining environment would be an inviting place taking it one step beyond the fine dining

experience. The room is warm and friendly, a place to come alone or with friends." Of course the music features the famous crooner himself "old blue eyes." Sample items from the menu are mouth watering. Starting with the Antipasti you can sample Calamari, Bruschetta, a platter of imported meats, cheeses, olives and artichoke hearts. Soups include Mama's Famous Pasta Fagioli, Escarol and Minestrone. There are a variety of salads topped with shrimp or chicken. Entrees reveal a wide variety of homemade pastas topped with sauce, meatballs, pork ribs and Italian sausage. The lasagna and ravioli are handmade and filled with imported cheeses. They serve Shrimp Scampi and Seafood Diablo in the evening and have an expanded dinner menu. Yes, they have homemade Tiramisu and Connolli. D'Monico's is open for lunch 11:00 - 3:30 and dinner Monday through Thursday from 4:00 - 10:00. On Friday and Saturdays they are open until 11:00. For information call 334-702-DINE.



D'MONICO'S OWNER, NICK NITKOWSKI

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT Robin Rainer, Downtown Group



As we enter this Holiday Season, those of us that have never given up hope that our downtown would one day be revitalized, can truly be thankful and celebrate the progress that is being made. We are even beginning to see some of the non-believers in downtown revitalization admitting that it looks like it may finally be happening.

Not only is there the wonderful sights and sounds of construction going on up and down Foster Street, but it is equally exciting to know of all the plans that are being made for additional work that will soon be underway. The next wave of building rehabilitation will mean more shops, offices, restaurants and loft apartments that will soon join our emerging downtown community.

Because we have had the leadership that saw the importance of revitalizing our downtown, it has given the confidence that was needed to our private investors to make the commitment to buy and rehab the buildings. To make this work, we need to support our downtown businesses every chance we get and be sure to thank those leaders and investors for making it happen.

If you want to see downtown really come alive, make your plans to attend this year's Downtown Christmas on Saturday, December 6th. With the coming of the new year, you can expect to see even more activities going on downtown throughout the year. Join The Downtown Group and be a part of the great things that are happening in our downtown.

2008 - THE YEAR OF REVITALIZATION

Back in the seventies the circle swallowed up our Historic Downtown. Doors were closed and For Lease and For Sale signs went up in the windows of once prosperous places of business. The once beautifully maintained District began to lose its charm. Buildings aged and not gracefully, some used only for storage. Neglected properties were everywhere amidst pockets of revitalized buildings. But this tale of gloom for downtown has a happy ending. The price of real estate continues to rise on the circle while downtown property has an inviting price tag. Some people see the beauty in saving an old building. Some people see the beauty of preserving the past. Some people just want to come downtown and join the community. In the past 8 months 23 new businesses have joined the downtown community. This type of progress is unprecedented for a four block area. Here are some of the new businesses and buildings on contract:

Blue Moon Café
Tags Unlimited
Wiregrass Construction (Ellison Building)
A Place To Renew
La Le Building (under contract)
Metro Music
2 Lofts above Snobs Salon
District
Bis-tro
Vintage Chic
Nature's Gallery

Blues Kitchen
Watford Realty
The Parlor
D'Monico's Italian Garden
RIA
The Bank Building on Main and Foster (under contract)
WIND open air market
3 properties on Foster (acquired by the DDRA)
The Parlor (banquet hall)
The Penney Building (preparing for phase 2 Loft project)

Executive Director's Letter

The year 2008 will go down in history as The Year of Downtown Revitalization. For all who couldn't see the vision of a revitalized downtown there were many who saw beyond the blight. No grass roots effort is ever accomplished by one individual. It takes partnerships to promote progress. There are many partners downtown. The City of Dothan, The Dothan Downtown Redevelopment Authority, The Historic Preservation Commission, Houston County, Private Investors and of course The Downtown Group. Beyond the parameters of these partnerships there are all the sponsors who step up to the plate to allow us to have events downtown. Sponsors help us put some heart and soul downtown. The Downtown Christmas, Mural City ArtFest and the soon to come Poplar Head Farmer's Market are all possible with the help of local business people. We should also be grateful to the many volunteers who contribute time and energy to supporting the downtown effort. We could not do the good work without this volunteer force. To all who believe in this revitalization movement we thank you. We have a saying downtown, "We are Bringing Tradition Back."



A DOWNTOWN CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL SPONSORS

Edward Jones Investments
Miracle Finance
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CenturyTel
Knology
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WTVY4
American Classifieds
Southern Bone and Joint
The Dothan Eagle
Dothan Magazine



Visits with Santa



Troy University Arts & Crafts at the Christmas Festival

WIREFRASS MUSEUM OF ART



Seminar at the Museum



First Saturday Activities



The Grape Escape



Silent Auction at the Grape Escape

FREE ADULT ART CLASSES

Always wanted to learn to "do art"? The Wiregrass Museum of Art is offering free, leisure-learning classes to get you started. Line, composition, color values and more are covered. All supplies included. Space is limited; please RSVP. Next session: Tuesday evenings, 5:30 pm, beginning January 6. For more information, visit wiregrassmuseum.org or call (334) 794-3871.

CREATIVE WRITING WORKSHOP

Writers and artists have long inspired each other. During the Wiregrass Museum of Art's Creative Writing Workshop, participants will explore Dale Kennington's work to inspire the writing of free verse. An excellent workshop for high school students as well as adults. Space is limited. Student scholarships available; call for details, 794-3871.

Thursday, Jan 22; 4 pm or 6:30 pm

WMA Art Classroom

Fee: \$12/person; \$15/WMA member

MUST SEE!

Artist Lindy Bruggink will have an exhibition of large portraits, for which she is known, as well as a selection of smaller landscapes in the Lecture Hall Gallery, Dec 16 - Feb 28. For a complete listing of exhibitions, visit wiregrassmuseum.org.