

Beloit to host leaders from around state

By Hillary Gavan hgavan@beloitdailynews.com | Posted: Tuesday, April 1, 2014 4:00 pm

Beloit will be this year's host for the Wisconsin Downtown Action Council's (WDAC) Community Visit.

The one-day event on June 6 will showcase Beloit's success stories to visitors from all over the state, according to Downtown Beloit Association (DBA) Executive Director Shauna El-Amin.

After WDAC contacted Beloit about its interest in the city as a host, El-Amin said the DBA, Visit Beloit and Friends of RiverFront all worked together to make the event a reality.

"It's a great way to collaborate, and work with other communities," El-Amin said.

She said the event will highlight interesting stories, creative people and innovative programs in Beloit. Guests will have the opportunity to learn how Beloit transformed itself into a hub for creativity, cultural tourism, education and 21st century economic growth.

More than 60 people are expected to attend the event. Guests will be encouraged to take in a Snappers baseball game, stay overnight in Beloit and attend the Beloit Farmers Market the next morning in order to get the full Beloit experience. There is also some discussion about having a Beloit International Film Festival dinner and movie event that evening to help keep guests in the area longer.

"We are still working out the details," El-Amin said.

Although guests from far away will be in attendance, locals are also encouraged to register for the event. It will be held from 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. on June 6 at the Ironworks Hotel, 500 Pleasant St. There also will be walking tours and a Fridays in the Park lunch to enjoy downtown.

The registration fee is \$20 for WDAC members, and \$25 for other guests. The price includes materials and lunch. People can register at www.wisconsinowntown.org.

The first presentation will be at 9:40 a.m., in which Dave Schreiber from Schreiber/Anderson Associates will speak about development possibilities at the confluence of the Rock River at the Beloit and South Beloit border.

Plein Air artist Wendie Thompson, founder and director of Wisconsin Plein Air Painters Association, will be giving a presentation at 10:10 a.m. and Errin Welty of the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation will speak at 10:40 a.m. about strategic planning and strategic doing.

After lunch at Fridays in the Park, there will be a stop at the Beloit Fine Arts Incubator. El-Amin noted the day-long event also coincides with Edge of the Rock Plein Air Painting events in Beloit.

The event will include stories on businesses which started out in the Farmers Market and eventually became storefronts such as Bushel & Peck's Local Market, Northwoods Premium Confections and Cheese People of Beloit.

The walking tour and breakout sessions will be followed by a wine and cheese reception at the Rotary River Center.