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DOWNTOWN
DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

2023 HIGHLIGHT REEL

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YOUTH

explore downtown!

Creating a connection to your community isn't just for the adults! Integrating youth into the community through experiential learning helps create a sense of belonging and culture, no matter how young a person is. The DDA warmly welcomed our future generation downtown by hosting a variety of young groups this past year!

Starting with a middle school field trip, we welcomed South Middle Schoolers for their Discovery Day! Students were able to see how to make a coffee like a true barista at Urban Stampede, learned all the recent tech trends from Twin Tandem Studios, had some pizza at Rhombus, baked cookies at Real Good Cookies, and even took in an exhilarating game of broomball in Town Square! Smiles were abundant throughout the entire day!





The DDA continued our hospitality to a few local homeschooling groups by hosting a captivating Historic Downtown Walking Tour, with exciting stories of years past! The tour included learning about the Flood of 97, past businesses that have been downtown, and stories of the river! (Many of the parents in the groups even learned a thing or two!) We intertwined updates on recent downtown events, the DDA, and all the new developments coming to downtown. This tour created a unique educational experience for these kids while also connecting them and their parents to our community!

By offering engaging activities, educational experiences, and bringing new exposure to our local businesses, we can instill a sense of pride and connection among the next generations. By showcasing our community's unique offerings and history, the DDA plays a crucial role in helping young people and families love and stay in the area! As these individuals develop a strong love for their community, they are more likely to stay to contribute to its growth. No one is ever too young to start getting involved and learning about the community they live in!

TOWN SQUARE

Public wifi + new mural



A new partnership between the DDA and Midco has added another vibrant touch to Town Square, enhancing both its aesthetics and connectivity! Through this collaboration, Town Square, the heart of downtown Grand Forks, now boasts a new striking mural, a masterpiece crafted by the talented Three Brushketeers. This artistic creation not only breathes life into its surroundings but also weaves in the essence of music, seamlessly blending vibrant-colored elements into its design.

Murals contribute significantly to the vibrancy of downtown, fostering a sense of connection and pride among residents and visitors alike. These strategic investments in public art not only enhance the aesthetics of downtown but also cultivate a sense of community, making downtown Grand Forks a destination that celebrates both its past and future. The DDA recognizes this transformative power of public art and will continue to actively invest in its creation.





In tandem with this visual transformation, the DDA and Midco have worked together to provide free public Wi-Fi in Town Square, ensuring that residents and visitors can stay connected while enjoying this beautiful outdoor space. This collaborative effort not only enriches downtown's largest urban park and event space but also underscores the importance of technology and art coming together to create a more engaging and connected public space for our community.

This partnership between the DDA and Midco has helped beautify the community and demonstrates the power of collaboration in fostering creativity, connectivity, and a sense of shared identity within the heart of downtown.



GRAND RIDES

Powered by:



The Milestone Year

In 2023, Grand Rides Bike Share experienced a landmark year, as we saw unprecedented successes in the program. Grand Rides soared to new highs as more individuals than ever embraced the convenience and accessibility of Grand Rides in areas all across the community.

Ridership grew by over 17% since last year with over 1,100 riders! Along with this increase in riders, there was also an increase in the number of rides as Grand Rides reached the milestone of over 10,000 rides! This increase highlights the community's growing desire and need for convenient and easy-to-use transportation options. It also demonstrates Grand Rides' integral role in the community's transportation system.



College students from UND and Northland Community and Technical College are some of the most active users of Grand Rides. Students use bike share to get to class, get groceries, go to work, and for fun and leisure! Usage among international students is especially high as Grand Rides provides a reliable mode of transportation without a financial barrier. Students from both colleges are important members of our community and this program enables them all to thrive!



Grand Rides provides a practical and unique solution for commuters and is a symbol of a healthier, more active community. As Grand Riders pedal into the future, the milestone year of 2023 showcased how Grand Rides Bike Share became an integral and thriving component of making Grand Forks a healthier community.

Coming
Soon



Thanks to a generous grant from AARP, the DDA is thrilled to pilot adaptive and e-bikes. These bikes will help make Grand Rides more accessible to a larger population of people who could benefit from having access to a bicycle for fitness, leisure, or transportation! Be on the lookout in 2024 for these new bikes!



Blues ON THE Red



IS BACK!



The DDA's beloved Blues on the Red concert made a successful return this year thanks to our wonderful partner The Olive Ann Hotel! Held in vibrant Town Square, the evening captivated and entertained audience members with its rich blend of blues genres and catchy rhythms.

To kick off the night, the DDA brought in local dance instructors who taught attendees how to get in the groove and learn how to west coast swing dance! Attendees of all ages were tappin' their toes and getting into the blues mood!





Blues on the Red continued to be an electrifying evening as opener Vivian Hayes and the Hi-Praise set the tone for the evening. Vivian Hayes and its ensemble played soulful rhythms and blues beats, infusing downtown with an energy that filled the streets with every note. As the evening progressed, the Lamont Cranston Band took the stage with their signature blend of Chicago-style blues, weaving intricate guitar riffs and harmonica solos into a soulful melody. Together, Vivian Hayes, the Hi-Praise, and the Lamont Cranston Band delivered an unforgettable night of blues, leaving the community with a new appreciation for the genre's timelessness.

Live music, like Blues on the Red, plays a crucial role in activating downtown. Music is a magnetic force that lures people in to explore the unique offerings of downtown, thereby promoting a thriving local economy. Blues alone had over \$50,000 in economic impact on the community! In essence, the importance of music for downtown lies not only in its economic effect but also in its ability to create a dynamic, lively atmosphere that makes downtown a desirable place to live, work, and play.



Downtown Frosty Forks

Embracing the Winter Season

The DDA has taken innovative strides to help our community enjoy the winter season and strengthen community bonds through the creation of Downtown Frosty Forks! Through generous funding from the Knight Foundation, Community Foundation of Grand Forks, East Grand Forks & Region, Myra Foundation, First Community Credit Union, the North Dakota Dept. of Commerce, and our community driver partners the DDA was able to build upon the success of the FCCU Downtown Ice Rink and expand our winter offerings with an array of new activities.

The streets came alive with community-centric snow sculptures, providing an Instagrammable opportunity for downtown visitors. Groups embraced the outdoors with guided snowshoe and ski tours, while a dedicated curling lane brought in a touch of friendly competition! The introduction of snow domes and ice tables added cozy spaces for socializing and warmth amid the chilly season. We are excited to continue our efforts to help the community embrace winter for years to come!





To further add fun and camaraderie to the winter season, the DDA organized the first-ever "Average Person Winter Olympics," inviting participants to partake in lighthearted winter games that took the drags of winter and turned them into a competition! The lineup of activities included The Key Dig, Boot and Shoot, Shopping Cart Race, Speed Dressing, and the Sled Relay! The competition was stiff, but the "About Average Almost Able-Bodies" were victorious in becoming Above Average Winter Olympians!

These efforts not only transformed the downtown area into a hub of winter activity but also encouraged the community to love and celebrate the unique joys that the winter season brings. Winter is an inevitable part of living in North Dakota, it's time we all start to learn new and unique ways to enjoy it!



Scan the QR code to see the Average Person Winter Olympics hype video!



A renewed **[focus]** in 2024

The Downtown Development Association is undergoing a strategic shift to enhance the vibrancy and aesthetics of downtown! While we will continue to fine-tune and enhance all of our signature events, we will also be enacting new initiatives to further support and expand existing events downtown. Many amazing community events happen downtown that are marketed nationwide for tourism, workforce, and other purposes. We want to help these events continue to contribute to the vibrancy and marketability of our community. Consistent events and programming also greatly enhance quality of life, create a sense of belonging, and contribute significantly to our local economy. In 2024, one DDA event alone had over half a million dollars in economic impact!



The DDA will also be putting an enhanced focus on our advocacy work for downtown cleanliness, maintenance, and trash and snow removal. Focusing on the aesthetics of downtown will help create a uniform experience that is consistently positive for visitors and locals alike. Aesthetics are the new economic development.

A clean and well-maintained downtown increases foot traffic to local businesses, creates a sense of belonging, and makes our residents proud to call this community home.

Our downtown is an important economic driver and a huge asset for new workforce recruitment, primary sector development, and employee retention efforts. By prioritizing this advocacy work, we will foster a downtown environment that reflects our commitment to creating a prosperous and welcoming downtown community. We envision a downtown that not only thrives but serves as a guide for economic growth and community engagement.



go grand,
go downtown.

downtownforks.com



Thank you

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		Waterfront Kitchen

Thank you

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DOWNTOWN
DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

WE COULDN'T DO ALL WE
DO WITHOUT *You!*

Community Drivers



Visionary Partners

