

Main Street In Motion

Aug. 2009 - Oct. 2009 The Main Street West Union Newsletter Volume 3, Issue 3

Special Points of Interest:

- WU-Stock!
- Committee Reports & Information
- The Public Art Committee
- Where's the money?
- What does Main Street do for WU?
- Conservation Corps photos



Join us for fun, friends, and food!

By Karla Organist, Promotions Committee

The Promotions Committee continues to work on activities and events that promote Downtown West Union and its businesses as a fun place to shop and be!

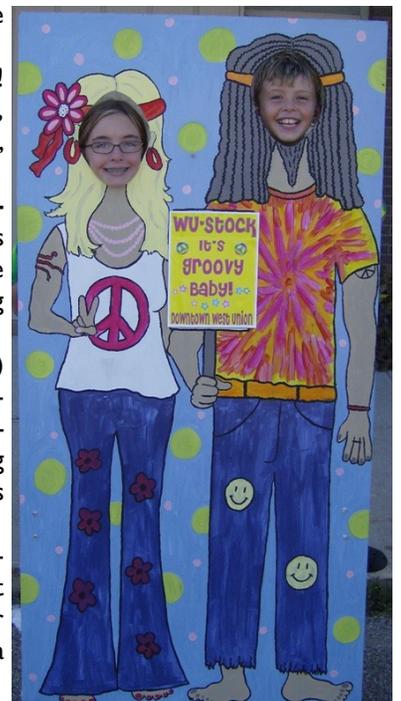
We have been hosting bimonthly **“WU-Light Specials,”** in which participating businesses offer specials during a specific time and our committee provides treats, a door prize and hosting help! We also provide posters and a press release, and have worked out a special ad rate with our local paper.

So far, each WU-Light Special has been well attended! Our next one will be held at NAPA on Tuesday, August 11, from 4–6 p.m. If you would like to host a WU-Light Special, please contact the office to schedule your date.

We are also busy planning for our largest event, **WU-Stock**. WU-Stock will be held on Saturday, Aug. 29, this year. The event will feature an early morning bike ride (BRAWU), and at noon, the festivities start with a beanbag tournament.

Following at 2:30 p.m., Central Empire Wrestling (CEW) will put on a great show – this was a big hit last year! Featured bands will be Swing Crew and Bad Habits. Family-friendly activities will be available all day long; we’re planning on mini-golf, and an Extreme Slide! Join us for fun, friends and food!

The Promotions Committee is always looking for additional members to help us dream up promos and events that will help cash registers ring and bring people downtown for fun and activity! Consider joining us – we always have a good time!



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Promotional DVD, market analysis move forward

By Dick Woodard, Business Improvement Committee



The Business Improvement Committee has a couple interesting projects going, which hopefully will impact favorably with businesses and residents alike in West Union. Please read on, as you may play a part in the success.

With the financial assistance of the Fayette County Community Foundation, our committee is in the process of preparing a script for a promotional DVD, which will highlight some of the positive features of West Union. A professionally produced video will be manufactured that may be forwarded to potential businesses and individuals who might be interested in locating in West Union. Who knows, our speakers may be future "American Idol" candidates!

Another major project will be a market analysis to learn what goods or services might be of benefit to West Union. The goal is to help current businesses by providing options to supplement their lines of merchandise or service. Individual businesses will receive a short survey that will supply valuable, confidential information. Individuals may be contacted as they shop or dine to complete a different survey. The survey period starts in early August and will continue less than a month, so please keep an eye out and help with your input.

The committee recently reviewed exciting qualifications for a below-market-interest-rate loan program offered by our two local banks. Available to all West Union businesses, the loan may be used for such improvements as windows, doors, improved accessibility, energy-efficiency measures, and myriad other options. It is a super resource for businesses wishing to make improvements that will make our community a more appealing place to live and work.



Mark Your Calendars...

main street west union presents the Third Annual:

music • food • friends

WU STOCK

AUGUST 29th, 2009

downtown west union

great FOOD!

EXTREME SLIDES!

mini-golf!

cold drinks!

groovy photo ops!



wu-hoo!! sponsors:

BRAWU Bike Ride: 8:30 a.m.
 Beanbag Tournament: 12:30
 C.F.W. Wrestling Show: 2:30-4:30
 Swing Crew: 4:30-7:30
 Bad Habits: 7:30-11:00

music

- ♥ Cline Services ♥
- ♥ Moss Service Center ♥
- ♥ Dessel Roach Furniture & Floors ♥
- ♥ Oelwein Daily Register ♥
- ♥ Kerndt Brothers Savings Bank ♥
- ♥ WU Chamber of Commerce ♥
- ♥ Lauer & Lauer Insurance ♥
- ♥ Heying Firms ♥
- ♥ NAPA Auto Parts ♥
- ♥ Haven Electronics ♥
- ♥ Lilac Lanes ♥
- ♥ Northeast Iowa Realty & Appraisal ♥
- ♥ Northern Rent-All ♥
- ♥ Fauser Energy Services ♥
- ♥ TeKippe Engineering ♥

partners:

- ♥ Barrel Drive-In ♥
- ♥ Bemiss Distributing ♥
- ♥ Black Hills Energy ♥
- ♥ Farm Bureau Financial, Frank Olson ♥
- ♥ Fauser Energy Services ♥

August

- Aug. 3-8 - Missoula Children's Theater
- Aug. 10 - WU Trash Pickup Day
- Aug. 11 - WU-LIGHT Special @ NAPA
- Aug. 11 - MS Board Meeting
- Aug. 19 - First Day of School
- Aug. 20 - Main Street West Union @ the State Fair
- Aug. 25-26 - Downtown Summit, Ames
- Aug. 29 - WU-STOCK!

September

- Sept. 7 - Labor Day - office closed
- Sept. 8 - MS Board Meeting
- Sept. 9-10 - Main Street Iowa Tech Visit
- Sept. 26-27 - Fayette County Mystery Tour
- Sept. 27 - Palmer Lutheran Health Center Open House

October

- Oct. 2 - NF Homecoming
- Oct. 9-11 - NE Iowa Artists' Studio Tour
- Oct. 13 - MS Board Meeting
- Oct. 29 - NE Iowa Community Development Conference in Waverly

For more information on these events, contact the Main Street/Chamber Office 422-3070.

'So what's in it for me?'

By Robin Bostrom, MSWU Program Director

"So what's in it for me?"

This seems to be a question that is asked of our office quite frequently these days. We all know that the economy is tough right now, and many of us are looking for signs that things are getting back to "normal." With recent job losses across the nation and right here in West Union, all of us are looking for ways to cut back and save some money.

Main Street West Union has worked hard to put some great programs together to help business owners and residents save money and protect our environment all at the same time. It's just one more way our Green Pilot Project is working to make our community a better place to live! Here's a quick description of our programs and how they work:

* **Energy Efficiency Grant Program** – Available to any business in the downtown district. Business owners can apply for rebates up to \$1500 for installing energy-efficient products in their buildings. Things such as new windows, doors, insulation, or lighting all qualify. Not only will you save on installing the new items, but you will save each and every month on your heating and cooling bills. And you can also apply for rebates from Alliant or Black Hills Energy. It's a win-win situation!

* **Green Pilot Workshops** – All residents can take advantage of the many FREE workshops offered to learn about some of the new "green" measures being incorporated into our Downtown Streetscape Project. Several residents have already made a rain barrel for their home. They are already saving money by using rain water instead of tap water to water flowers and plants this sum-

mer.

Several residents attended weatherization workshops and received FREE items to help stop drafts and improve their heating and cooling costs. Watch for more programs coming this fall.

* **Below-Market Interest Rate Program** – Any business in West Union can take advantage of this program available through both Kerndt Brothers Savings Bank and First National Bank. A great loan rate is available for those who are making improvements to their buildings. Contact your local bank or the Main Street office for more information

* **Facade Grant Program** – Over \$5,000 is still available to help pay for new windows, doors, paint, or sign projects for downtown businesses. Applications are available at the Main Street office and must be received *before* you begin your project.

* **FREE Design visits** – If you're thinking about making some changes but don't even know where to begin, schedule a design consultation through Main Street. Our state experts will listen to your ideas and help you craft a plan that's within your budget and works for your personal situation.

* **Special Sales Events and Community Festivals, too!** – MSWU is always working to bring special sales events to our local customers and fun things to do for the family, too! Mark your calendars for Saturday, August 29, and plan to have some fun with us during WU-Stock in downtown WU.

As you can see, there really is something "in it for you" in West Union right now! Enjoy the rest that summer has to offer!



WU-LIGHT
SPECIAL!
4:00 - 6:00 p.m. August 11th
NADA Auto Parts
Join in the Fun with the KVIK Harley

112 E. Elm Street, West Union

* VISTA Report

Public Art Committee 'draws' on experience

By Michelle Zander, AmeriCorps VISTA

While visions of Main Street transformations dance in our heads, let's not forget about incorporating **art!** The inclusion of art inspired the creation of the Public Art Committee. The committee was formed with influence and guidance from Bruce Williams with the Iowa Arts Council; Cammie Scully, director for the Waterloo Center for the Arts; Mary Huber with the James & Meryl Hearst Center for the Arts; and Darrell Taylor from UNI. Invitation was made to local artists, city staff, engineers, and art teachers to come together to apply their artistic talents to the incorporation of artistic elements into our streetscape.

The committee's first meeting in April focused on an application made to the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs for \$10,000 to hire an artist. Despite the lack of funding, the committee of volunteers continued to collaborate. With Main Street West Union's Guiding Principles in mind, members talked about medium, materials and ideal places to incorporate art like bump-outs, street lighting, bike racks, seating areas, fountains, and the courthouse square. The committee determined that the mission of public art should reflect the history of West Union, especially in regard to selecting and utilizing local materials like limestone, copper, and the bricks underlying our streets. The art should be durable and conservative, yet modern and possibly abstract. Local artists should create the art to illustrate elements that symbolize the area.

To help guide the committee, the Conservation Design Forum (CDF) arranged an evening colloquium with artist consultant Margo Mazer. Some ideas embraced at the meeting included:

- * simple limestone blocks spread throughout the streetscape with carvings of leaves, butterflies and coneflowers
- * mosaics of water and/or fish like trout
- * metal elements of prairie grasses
- * benches positioned around the trunks of trees, shaped like the shadow of treetops.

All of these artistic elements emulate West Union's original prairie knob and its surrounding open, expansive beauty.

The next engagement for the Public Art Committee was to spend a day viewing public art in nearby communities. First we visited the University of Northern Iowa, where we saw art in the form of solar panels, natural materials such as prairie grass, and limestone arches with carvings of inspirational words and figures. In Cedar Falls at the Hearst Center for the Arts, we examined art in the sculpture garden. We observed public art in their streetscape like... "Ebb Tide" by Tom Stancliffe at Fourth & Main streets and "Gateway to the Trails" by Bruce White at Peter Melendy Park on First & Main streets. At the Waterloo Center for the Arts, Cammie Scully shared drawings and plans for their art projects and showed us examples of integrated public art in the area.

Rest assured, the creative destiny of West Union is in able hands with this artistic group of community-minded volunteers!

Did you say 'free money'?

By Greg Ptacek, MSWU Board President



In this edition of the Main Street newsletter, I am going to discuss some thoughts I have about West Union's proposed Downtown Streetscape Project, which MSWU supports.

There have been numerous meetings that have taken place since the project started, and in a number of the more recent meetings, the phrase "free money" has entered into the discussion. The "free money" is in reference to the grants and other funding opportunities that can help pay for the project.

Well, we all know that there is no "free money." Then where does the money for these grants come from? It comes from the taxes that all of us pay. In other words, the funds have already been appropriated for current grant opportunities from taxes you and I have already paid.

I then wish to ask an important question:

What is wrong with trying to bring some of those tax dollars back to West Union to improve the quality of life and for the economic improvement of our downtown?

I am a newcomer to West Union, having moved here in 1999. I remember the frustration that various West Union organizations were experiencing in trying to get the State of Iowa to help with various economic development programs.

Well, now the eyes of numerous state and federal agencies are looking at West Union. These agencies have programs that can pay for much of the cost of the Streetscape Project. However, in order to obtain these funds, there must be a demonstration of financial support by the City, County, local residents and businesses in West Union.

The project itself must also implement elements of "green" principles and sustainability. West Union's Streetscape Project does have those elements and would be an excellent fit for various grant programs that are being offered at the present time.

Some of the programs are part of the new "stimulus" package and may not be available for future opportunities. I know that our local city government has expressed a concern about the condition of our present water and sewer

facilities. There are grant-funding opportunities that could help with those facilities, and the City should be exploring those opportunities.

One more thought regarding grant opportunities: Some people have asked, "Why don't we try to get jobs in West Union?" A number of the same agencies that have expressed an interest in our Streetscape Project can work with the City and local economic development organizations to put together incentive packages that could help to stimulate business development. If we turn our backs, all of these opportunities will go away, and I don't believe West Union can afford to let that happen.

As I indicated above, the proposed Streetscape Project will have to show financial support from the City. This will obviously mean some type of bonding. The current bonding rates are the lowest I have seen and are in the 3% to 4% range. Some people would like to wait until the economy turns around or improves and THEN complete the Streetscape Project. Guess what? Bonding costs will move into the 5% to 6% range, thereby

doubling the burden of borrowing costs to you and me as taxpayers. I do not consider this to be fiscally responsible or beneficial. Also, by waiting, material and labor costs to complete the project will increase, which, again, is not beneficial to the taxpayers.

One last thought... I believe the proposed Streetscape Project will spark economic development. It may not be immediate, but I think that site selectors and entrepreneurs looking for future development will be seeking progressive forward-thinking communities in which to locate. This will increase job opportunities, school enrollment and retail activity.

I believe that now is the time for all of us to be talking to our local City Council representatives and County Supervisors about these important issues. Let them know that we cannot afford to pass up the opportunities I have just talked about. Also, talk to your neighbors and business associates about these important issues. The future of our community may depend on it.

Thanks.

* Design Committee Update

Grab those grants while the gettin' is good!

By Jon Biederman, Design Committee

The MSWU Design Committee is encouraging downtown property owners to take advantage of grant programs for improvements to their property.

The first is the **Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Incentive Program**. This is offered by the Iowa Department of Economic Development and Main Street West Union, and it is designed to significantly supplement existing rebates from Alliant and Black Hills Energy. By taking advantage of these rebates, property owners can greatly reduce the payback period for energy-efficiency upgrades.

It is very important to make buildings as efficient as possible as we look toward a future district geothermal heating and cooling system. By weatherizing our downtown buildings, the size of the geothermal system can be reduced. A complete list of qualifying improvements, rules, and application form is available at the Chamber of Commerce office. **Improvements must be made by August 31**, so time is critical to take advantage of this program.

Another worthwhile program is the **Facade Improvement Grant** sponsored by the Main Street West Union Design Committee. Eligible properties are those within the downtown business district. This program provides up to \$1,000 for exterior window and door replacement, up to \$750 for exterior painting, and \$750 for signage and awnings. Several grants for improvements have been awarded this year, and funding remains for more projects. The application form is available at the Chamber/Main Street office.

BUSINESS BINCO WINNER!



Summer fun abounds; autumn plans await

By Sue Wolf, Organization Committee

Although our committee has remained busy with MSWU activities the past couple months, we've definitely had a chance to catch our breaths after a hectic spring.

Dairy Day fun

Our committee spearheaded the creation of the Main Street West Union float for Dairy Day on June 6. It certainly brought back memories of building Homecoming floats in high school! MSWU committee members and volunteer Wayne Havenstrite constructed a finely built, colorfully decorated birthday cake in honor of West Union's 160th birthday. Thanks to MSWU's Mike and Lynn Lauer for lending us their trailer.

In addition to the float, our committee was in charge of organizing the Dairy Day bingo stand, which unfortunately was cancelled due to the cold.

Even though the day was a little gloomy, weather-wise, a nice crowd enjoyed the annual Dairy Day parade and the many activities set up downtown to entertain them. Thanks to all who supported this fun annual event!

It's Fair time!

We thank all of you who stopped by our Main Street West Union booth at the recent Fayette County Fair. We enjoyed visiting with you and telling you about our program and West Union's proposed Streetscape Project.

On Thursday, Aug. 20, from 5-9 p.m., Main Street West Union will be represented at the Iowa State Fair with a special booth. Local volunteers will be on hand to greet fairgoers, hand out goodies, and share information about Northeast Iowa and our wonderful community of West Union.

Pledge Drive

Our committee is continuing to refine special fundraising packets for our upcoming Pledge Drive. As we strive to raise money to operate our Main Street West Union program, we will be able to share with potential donors plenty of valuable information about our program, including MSWU's goals and accomplishments, the Main Street Four-Point Approach implemented through our MSWU committees, and the program's positive impact on the community. In addition, we will do our best to answer any questions you may have about the Main Street program.

We hope you will consider becoming a three-year pledge donor, if you are not already.

A MSWU holiday treat

We are also planning another MSWU fundraiser for this fall. We aren't releasing the details just yet, but we think you'll like it – and just in time for the holidays! Stay tuned.

Wanted: Team members

Our Organization Committee would love to have you join our team! Our monthly meetings last an hour (usually the first Wednesday of the month at 5 p.m. at the Chamber office).

If you're a regular reader of this "Main Street in Motion" newsletter, you already have some idea of the different activities with which each MSWU committee is involved. We Organization Committee members think we're a pretty fun group: Greg Ptacek, Carolyn Havenstrite, Derek Heins, Mary Anne Hoey, Michelle Zander, Robin Bostrom and me. The fall is a great time to get involved in MSWU, so give it some thought, won't you?

If you'd like more information, feel free to contact any of us, or just come to one of our meetings to check us out (no obligation). We think you'll want to come back!



Green Roofs and Ham
A Bedtime Story
By Daniel Haug

You might ask "A green roof? Now what does that mean?"
Why should my house have a roof that is green?
A roof is a thing to keep out the rain and snow.
A roof is no place for a garden to grow.

But I'll tell you, a roof ought to be so much more;
A meadow to view from the fifty-first floor,
A blanket to soften the sun's scorching glow,
And a means to attenuate stormwater flow.

Yes, a roof is a thing to keep out rain and snow,
But have you ever wondered where that water goes?
It goes into a gutter and then to a creek,
Where a hydrograph shows an alarming steep peak.

In spring rivers rise and turn banks into gullies.
In the summer they dry up; fish flop on their bellies.
When the water soaks into the ground and moves slow,
The level of rivers never got this low.

Since the streets were all paved and the buildings were brick,
The rain has been running to lakes awfully quick.
Some soil on the roof would give water a place
To soak in and drain out at a leisurely pace.

I see you consider "all you say is great,"
But my poor little house couldn't hold that much weight.
...Well, if weight is an issue or access or change
...Or if pitch is too steep or the area is large
...Or you don't want to fertilize, water or weed 'em,
Try an extensive green roof that's planted with sedum.

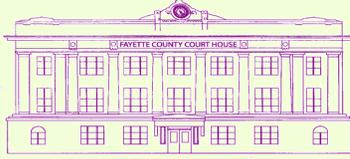
An extensive green roof has shallower ground,
And you don't let the people go walking around.
Nutrition is poor and it suffers from drought,
So choose tough plants like the sedums I was talking about.

Or wildflower—you can find some as tough
That grow in thin soils atop dolomite bluffs!
Liatris aspera and Geum triflorum
These natives are gorgeous! You don't want to ignore 'em!

I can see you still look a bit apprehensive
Are the benefits clear, but it sounds too expensive?
Well, that's just because I forgot to mention
Evaporative cooling and heat retention.
Green roofs heat up slow and they keep out the chill;
They are certain to lower your utility bill!

A means to attenuate stormwater flow;
A blanket to soften the sun's scorching glow;
A meadow to view from the fifty-first floor;
Yes, green roofs are wonderful! Let's build some more!

Main Street
West Union



101 North Vine Street • West Union, IA 52175

«Name»

«Mailing Address»

«City State for Mailing»

Main Street West Union Mission Statement

The mission of Main Street West Union is to preserve and enhance the vitality of our downtown through the education and encouragement of all citizens to work together to promote our community as a vibrant place to shop, work and live.

Main Street West Union Board Members

Greg Ptacek, President
Ron Saboe, Vice President
Troy Johansen, Secretary
Dick Woodard, Treasurer
Robin Bostrom, Executive Director
Neal Bentley
Jon Biederman
Gail Hackman
Erin Heins
Mike Lauer
Mark Moser
Sue North
Jim Updegraff
Joe Winter



Mystery Building

Can you guess where this building is, and what business is there now?

The answer is hidden somewhere in this issue!