



DTA to expand Downtown shelters and bus stops

Way back in 2002 the DTA along with many downtown partners including the Mayor's Downtown Task Force and of course the GDC started an in-depth analysis of bus use in and around the downtown area. Many issues existed at that time including just too many people waiting for buses at the Transit Centers. When the Transit Centers were designed they were expected to have about 4,000 people per day using them. By 2002 over 5,500 were there. There were four goals for the study: Enhance the operation of the transit system within the greater downtown area; Diminish the people congestion at major stops where it exists; Facilitate transfers to multiple destinations so as to diminish wait times; and Increase through routing as needed and practicable the number of buses going through downtown rather than terminating downtown. As an example of progress on the last goal over 1,000 people per day no longer need to transfer in the downtown area. They have a one-seat bus ride from their home to their destination.

The study came out with long and short range recommendations. The major long term recommendation was to construct a major Off-Street (Superior Street.) Transit Terminal. Short range recommendations were to alter existing major stops to provide more room for pedestrians as well as transit riders, install heated shelters with more real-time information, and spread out the passenger boarding areas.

After trying to establish the major terminal at several different sites with out success, the DTA moved back to the short range plan. The Planning Commission and City Council reviewed the plan last fall and approved the necessary items to allow for construction. This was not without some controversy. The GDC was instrumental in setting up meetings with the DTA and affected property owners to improve the plan.

The DTA has hired LHB, Inc to do the design work on the new bus shelters as well as the improved stops. Final designs are expected to be completed this winter and the DTA is looking to start construction in early spring. The goal is to get the work done before the major tourist season starts and with minimal traffic impact.

Basically, sidewalks will be expanded and shelters placed in that area. Overall there will be five new stops and a total of eight new bus shelters will be constructed (old ones replaced). The stops will use only 18 more lineal feet than what is currently used by the DTA. A total of 240 lineal feet were not used for parking. Parking will also be impacted! At least fifteen new parking spaces will be constructed on Superior Street.

This short term project does not preclude the DTA from looking toward future projects such as a major terminal in conjunction with the Depot and proposed passenger rail project. **GDC**



5 West First Street
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www.downtownduluth.com

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MARK YOUR CALENDAR

BAYFRONT FESTIVAL PARK
9th Annual "Warmer by the Lake"
Saturday, January 5th, 2-5pm

DECC
The Duluth Bridal Show
Saturday, January 12
10am-4pm / 3pm fashion show

Greater Downtown Council Annual Dinner
Wednesday, January 16
Social 5pm / Dinner 6:30pm / Program 7:30pm
DECC—Harbor Side Ballroom
42nd Annual Duluth Boat, Sports, and Travel Show
February 13-17
Wednesday and Thursday 5pm-10pm
Friday: 12 noon-10pm
Saturday: 11am-10pm
Sunday: 11am-5pm
DECC

Broadway in Duluth presents "Riverdance"
March 4th and 5th
Tuesday: 7:30pm
Wednesday: 2pm and 7:30pm
DECC Auditorium

DULUTH SUPERIOR SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
DECC Auditorium
Masterworks Program 4
Saturday, January 19, 8pm
Riders in the Sky
Saturday, February 9, 8pm
Lollipop Concert
Sunday, February 10, 3pm
Masterworks Program 5
Saturday, March 8, 8pm
Natalie MacMaster
Sunday, March 30, 7pm

FITGERS
Jan. 25-27, Feb. 1-3, Feb 8-10
Change of Pace Productions Presents
"Fermata Nowhere"
Fridays & Saturdays
Dinner-6:30pm / Show-8pm
Sundays
Dinner-12:30pm / Show-2pm
Held at Midi Dinner Theater/
Fitzer's Brewery Complex

RENEGADE COMEDY THEATER
Stones in His Pockets by Marie Jones
March 13-15, 20-22, 27-29
The Book of Liz by Amy and David Sedaris
February 7-9, 14-16, 21-23

SACRED HEART MUSIC CENTER
The Singers—Minnesota Choral Artists
Saturday, January 26, 7:30pm
Catie Curtis—Folk Music
Saturday, February 2, 7:30pm
Peter Mayer—Folk Music
Saturday, February 23, 8pm
Shafaatullah Khan—Indian Music
Friday, March 21, 7:30pm



**WELCOME
NEW GDC MEMBER**

Wachovia Securities
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Suite 700
Duluth, MN 55802

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JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2008 • VOLUME 25 • NO.1



Great News

FROM THE GREATER DOWNTOWN COUNCIL

Enhancing Duluth's Reputation— The Importance of a Healthy Downtown 23rd Annual Dinner Meeting: January 16, 2008

The Greater Downtown Council invites you to attend its 23rd Annual Dinner Meeting on Wednesday, January 16th, 2008 at the DECC Harborside Ballroom.

Highlighting the celebration will be a keynote address from Duluth Mayor-Elect Don Ness.

Ness will be sworn in as Duluth's next mayor on January 7, 2008. He has served as a Duluth City Councilor for 8 years and just two years after joining the city council, he was elected President at the age of 27.

"My vision for Duluth is that it becomes a premier small city in the Midwest, not only as a place to play, but as a place to live, work and put down roots," says Ness.

Don and his wife, Laura, have been active supporters of our downtown. He serves on the GDC's Special Initiatives Task Force,

continued on inside...



Keynote Speaker: Don Ness

THE GREATER DOWNTOWN COUNCIL WOULD LIKE TO THANK THESE SPONSORS FOR THEIR GENEROUS SUPPORT OF THE 23RD ANNUAL DINNER MEETING:

PLATINUM:

GOLD: Oneida Realty Company • St. Luke's Hospital • Fryberger, Buchanan, Smith & Frederick, P.A
Radisson Hotel Duluth Harborview • Gap West Broadcasting • Republic Bank

BRONZE: Reuben Johnson & Sons • North Shore Bank of Commerce • A & A Enterprises, Inc. • FI Salter Co. Inc.
Maurices, Inc. • Block by Block • Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation • Holiday Center Merchant's Association
The Jamar Company • Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites/Labovitz Enterprises, Inc. • Grandma's Inc. • A&L Properties
US Bank • LHB, Inc.

SPECIAL SERVICES: Glenwood Signs & Awards, Inc. • Service Printers of Duluth, Inc.

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And the winners are...

Congratulations to the winners of the Holiday Window Display contest. In the 3-Dimensional category, the *Electric Fetus* took top honors. In Lighting, *Grandma's Saloon and Grill* lit up the night. And in the Painted Window Art category, *ZLB Plasma Services* won for its showcase of Duluth landmarks. For the second consecutive year, top vote getter—*ZLB Plasma Services* earned the People's Choice Trophy.

Once again the Greater Downtown Council presented the *45 Days of December* for the holidays. Downtowns traditionally have been the gathering spot, the town center, and the place to be and be seen. Building upon the energy and enthusiasm from its 2006 inaugural year, the GDC hoped for the 2007 holiday campaign to build unity, strengthen commerce and showcase the assets of our central business district.

"I like how the campaign calls attention to the Downtown and how it reminds people that there is an alternative to shopping over the hill. Especially on Black Friday, Downtown Duluth and Canal Park offer a personable experience at a family owned store" said *Bagley and Company* owner Rick Heimbach.

Our 45 Days of December promotion consisted of three components: *The Wish Book*, *The Holiday Window Display Contest*, and the *Halfway to the Holidays Event*.

The Wish Book was a gift guide that allowed participants to highlight one to two "must have" gift ideas for the holidays. It was a stand-alone book in 2006 with a distribution of approximately 2,000. We were excited this year to partner with *Living North Magazine* to include the guide in their November/December holiday issue. With 20,000 in distribution and delivered in the *Duluth News Tribune*, this partnership enhanced our businesses visibility and offered a fantastic marketing return. Twenty-six merchants took advantage of this promotional opportunity and they also donated merchandise to be used as prizes at an estimated retail value near \$4,000. To become eligible to win one of these fabulous Downtown prizes, all one had to do was vote for their favorite Holiday Window Display. KOOL 101.7 announced winners daily.

The Window Display Contest started with the installation of red curtains to mask windows normally meant to entice

customers in. For our purposes, we wanted to build excitement and intrigue. Retailers were more than a little excited to band together and offer our community a "taste of old".

"I like how everybody gets involved in this community spirited event" said *Electric Fetus* manager Carrie Brown. She added that people seemed to be catching on from last year and expects the promotion to keep attracting more attention each successive year.

Windows dressed in their holiday finery were officially unveiled on November 16th just before the *Northland NewsCenter's Christmas City of the North Parade*. Bringing back fond memories or creating new ones was our hope for families, friends and visitors strolling down our cobblestone streets and peering into the *Holiday Window Displays*. While businesses were banding together with holiday spirit, there was also a competitive spirit in the air as they sought to create a window display that would garner more votes from the judges and the public. The public voting period lasted three weeks until the *Halfway to the Holidays* event. A huge thank you goes out to our friends at *WestmorelandFlint* and *Swim Creative* for assisting with the creation of the Greater Downtown Council's holiday window.

The Halfway to the Holidays event was held this year on December 6th. This day, designed to be festive and memorable, was filled with carolers in the Skywalk, candy cane give-a-ways, in store promotions and open houses with cider and cookies throughout the Greater Downtown. Early afternoon at *Lake Superior Plaza* (corner of Lake Avenue and Superior Street) ice sculptures were created before our eyes. As the sun set we gathered round fires to enjoy warm food and beverages courtesy of *Grandma's* and *Jitters* and to listen the songs of the season by the *East High Choralaires*. The announcement of Window Display winners was the culmination of weeks of hard work by our Downtown businesses.

Thank you to all who took part in the *45 Days of December* campaign, whether you promoted your business in the *Wish Book* and/or joined the camaraderie of the *Window Display* contest or the *Halfway to the Holidays* event, the Greater Downtown Council is grateful for your participation. **GDC**



Ace Hardware



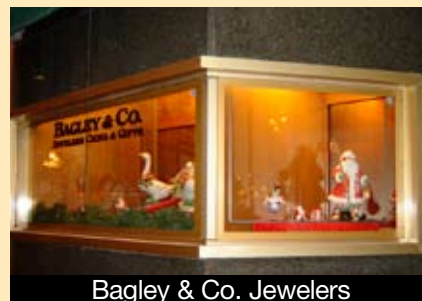
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Electric Fetus



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Frame Corner Gallery



Grandma's Saloon & Grill



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KOOL 101.7 & Greater Downtown Council



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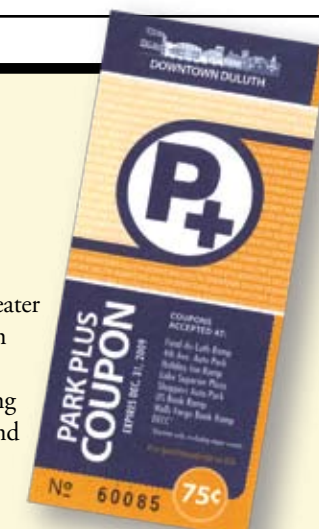
ZLB Plasma Services

Downtown Parking Made Easy

Don't forget about Park Plus. The Greater Downtown Council operates a parking program in conjunction with downtown ramps and the DTA. Even though there are literally thousands of parking spaces on the street, sometimes they are hard to find or you or your customer may want to stay for an extended period of time. Ease up any congestion with on-street parking and get a discount.

Members of the GDC receive discount prices on Park Plus coupons to provide to their customers to park or ride the DTA for free. Most ramps have easy access to the Skywalk system so your car and your feet can stay snow free. Look for the Park Plus decal at your favorite business. And if you are a business looking for a new opportunity to serve your customers, give us a call to try out the program! Coupon books are available for purchase at these locations: US Bank, North Shore Bank of Commerce, Wells Fargo Bank, and the Greater Downtown Council Office.

Stay warm, stay dry and stay for an extended period of time. Utilize Park Plus. **GDC**



cover story continued...

Laura is a former GDC Board Member and they were former owners of a business in Old Downtown. Plus, as a Hillside kid, he spent a good deal of his younger years in downtown.

"There is both practical and symbolic importance in the economic health of our greater Downtown Waterfront district," says Ness. "It's important that we protect and enhance the status of having Duluth as the heart of our region's economy—a concentration of the brightest minds, an entrepreneurial spirit and the tools and resources necessary to do business in the Northland—all within Duluth's core business district. When Downtown Duluth thrives, it creates confidence and enthusiasm in our area's economy that is absolutely vital to creating new economic growth."

Please plan to join us to hear more from Mayor-Elect Ness and celebrate another successful year with the Greater Downtown Council. We will also present the following slate of candidates for the 2008 Board of Directors:

Chair: Abbot Apter, *Mercury Investment Co.*

Vice Chair: Tami Tanski Sherman, *Fitzer's*

Sec/Treasurer: Roz Randorf, *Duluth News Tribune*

Immediate Past Chair: Bill Bennett, *LHB, Inc.*

Board of Directors:

Second Term

Russ Schumacher, *Minnesota Power*

First Term

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Paul Leisner, *Radisson Hotel*

Kristi Schmidt, *SMDC*

Bob Mathiason, *Wells Fargo* **GDC**