

## Studying Downtown Duluth's Retail Potential

A new tool will soon be in the hands of the Greater Downtown Council and property owners.

Minneapolis-based McComb Group, Ltd. has been conducting a market analysis of Duluth's Downtown Waterfront to identify potential for additional retail stores and services. Although the economy has been lagging recently, this study looks beyond that to try to identify demand in the coming years.

The consulting group has been focusing on several tasks to formulate their conclusions. Among them, they have recorded the existing tenant mix and retail sales as well as conducted surveys of shoppers with the assistance of merchants. McComb Group will be providing an

estimate of visitor spending potential for the Downtown and trade area purchasing power. They also hope to identify retail categories that can be supported in Downtown Duluth.

"What stands out immediately from our findings is the number of customers from outside the trade area," said Jim McComb, President of McComb Group. "This reinforces the magnitude of the visitor business and creates a hidden opportunity. We hope to give the GDC a clearer path for recruiting new businesses that can capture those visitors and compliment the existing tenant mix."

Shoppers from outside Downtown Duluth's trade area represent 42 percent of the respondents to a customer survey. Of these visitors,

41 percent were from the Twin Cities Metro Area and 25 percent from greater Minnesota. Visitors from other states represented 31 percent and 3 percent were from foreign countries. This survey, conducted for only one week in September, captured visitors from 31 other states, emphasizing Duluth's importance as a visitor destination.

With some vacancies in new construction and existing storefronts, the GDC took on such an initiative to provide a common vision for stakeholders. It's expected that the report can serve as a guide and marketing tool.

Report findings will be released in mid-December. **GDC**



GREATER DOWNTOWN COUNCIL

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# Great News

FROM THE GREATER DOWNTOWN COUNCIL

## A Card for Every Occasion

The Greater Downtown Council is pleased to unveil its latest initiative to help drive traffic and sales in Duluth's Downtown Waterfront District. Just in time for the holiday shopping season, the GDC is offering the Duluth Downtown Waterfront Gift Card.

"This is a great opportunity to give a gift that offers options galore," said Kristi Stokes, President of the GDC. "Card holders will have countless choices, whether it's shopping at their favorite retailer, catching dinner and a movie or enjoying a relaxing massage, this card will work throughout the District."

Designed to work anywhere in the Downtown Waterfront that accepts Visa, the card offers great convenience to the customer.

It also allows customers to enjoy and explore the individuality of the many businesses that blanket the District. To purchase your gift card now, stop by the Greater Downtown Council office at 5 West First Street or go online to [www.downtownduluth.com](http://www.downtownduluth.com).

The Duluth Downtown Waterfront District—It's More You!



## 45 Days of December underway...

The holiday spirit that started with the unveiling of the Storefront Window Displays and the annual Northland NewsCenter Christmas City of the North Parade still permeates the downtown area. This is the 3rd year of the Greater Downtown Council's Lighting and Window Display contest; it has quickly become a source of camaraderie and competition for the businesses throughout the downtown. New to the contest this year was a category for retailers only.

The gauntlet was thrown down by past winner ZLB Plasma and the competition for the "People's Choice" Trophy was fierce as decorating themes and ideas came to fruition.

Brought back again this year as part of the GDC's 45 Days of December Holiday campaign was the highly popular Wish Book. This gift guide highlights the seasons "must have" gift ideas available from our featured downtown merchants.

What makes this catalog so exceptional is its insertion into Living North Magazine and its 22,000-plus distribution. Visitors to our fair city will find a copy of Living North at their

hotel, Duluth News Tribune subscribers found it with their November 19th paper, and many more had it delivered to their homes or picked it up at local stores. *Continued Inside*



## New DECC Arena Opening Dec 2010

"Under Construction" will be a common phrase at the DECC for the next two years. Work is currently underway on a 475-car expansion of the parking ramp and come spring crews will be building the new DECC arena.

It's been a long-time in the making following years of planning as well as lobbying for funding. Despite the fact that Duluth residents voted overwhelming nearly three years ago to increase the city food and beverage tax to support the project, state funding was not finalized until earlier this year. Other funding partners include UMD.

"After many years of dreaming about what our new arena could be, it's great to finally see what a wonderful facility Duluth is going to have for sporting events, concerts, conventions and more," said Mayor Don Ness. "The new Duluth arena will stand alongside any other arena as among the best in the world."

Final designs for the arena include "open bowl" viewing, such that the arena floor can be seen from nearly every point including the concourse and concession stands. Private suites will be available and a new skywalk link will connect the expanded parking ramp and Northwest Passage from Downtown to the new arena.

The design team also paid close attention to the needs and desires of the arena's primary tenant—UMD hockey. Both the men's and women's teams will enjoy expansive locker rooms, training space and a weight room.

"When we set out to design the new arena, we took into consideration everything that was great and right about the current DECC," said Jim Swords of HOK Sport, whose company is teaming with Duluth's SJA Architects on the arena design. "The new arena will allow University of Minnesota Duluth hockey and regional commerce to thrive, all while providing a dynamic gathering space for fans."

The arena will have seating for 6,600 during hockey games and more than 8,500 for concerts. It's slated to open in December 2010. **GDC**



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## WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE DOWNTOWN?

**DECEMBER 11-14, 18-21**  
Duluth Playhouse presents  
"It's a Wonderful Life"  
Thurs-Sat 7:30 pm • Sun 2 pm

**DECEMBER 12-14**  
Minnesota Ballet presents  
"The Nutcracker"  
Fri & Sat 7 pm • Sun 3 pm  
DECC Auditorium

**DECEMBER 12-14, 19-21**  
The Polar Express—Train Ride  
www.northshorescenicrailroad.org

**DECEMBER 18TH**  
"It's a Wonderful Night"  
Shopping Event

**DECEMBER 13-14, 20-21**  
Santa and His Live Reindeer  
Sat 11 am-4 pm • Sun Noon-3 pm  
Fitzer's Courtyard

**DECEMBER 26** • 3 pm-5 pm  
Free Family Skating Party  
DECC Arena

**DECEMBER 31** • 7 pm  
Duluth Superior Symphony Orchestra  
New Year's Eve with "The Lettermen"

**JANUARY 2, 9, 16, 23, 30** • 8 pm  
Renegade Comedy Theatre presents:  
Comedy Night at the Peasantworks  
Porch in Canal Park

**JANUARY 3** • 2 pm-5 pm  
10th Annual Warmer by the Lake

**JANUARY 10**  
21st Annual Duluth Bridal Show  
9 am-3 pm • 3 pm fashion show

**JANUARY 16-18, 23-25**  
Duluth Playhouse Children's Theatre  
"The Araboolies of Liberty Street"  
Thurs-Fri 7 pm • Sat 1 & 4 pm • Sun 2 pm

**JANUARY 17** • 8 pm  
Duluth Superior Symphony  
Orchestra—Classical 4

**JANUARY 21** 5 pm  
GDC Annual Dinner Meeting  
Decc Harborside Ballroom

**JANUARY 23-25, 30-31**  
Change of Pace Productions  
presents "All My Murders"  
Fri & Sat 7 pm • Sun 1 pm  
Midi Change of Pace Dinner Theater  
Fitzer's Complex

**JANUARY 24** • 12 pm-2 pm contest  
Fitzer's Hosts the John Beargrease  
Cutest Puppy Contest

**JANUARY 25** • 3 pm-5 pm  
Free Family Skating Party  
DECC Arena

**JANUARY 31**  
8th Annual Polar Plunge  
Lake Superior • Grandma's Sports Garden

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# 45 DAYS OF DECEMBER

DOWNTOWN WATERFRONT

Continued from cover

December 4th was an extra special day in the downtown; it was Halfway to the Holidays. On this day our Clean and Safe Team handed out 1,500 candy canes and carolers were stationed throughout the Greater Downtown to add to the holiday festivities. As daylight faded on this special Thursday, many joined us in Lake Superior Plaza (Lake Avenue & Superior Street) from 5-6pm for treats around the fire, carolers, ice sculptures and the presentation of awards for the Greater Downtown Council's Lighting and Window Display contest.

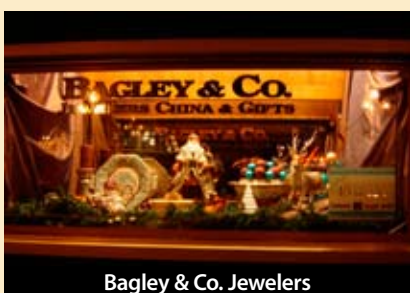
There is still plenty of time in the Greater Downtown Council's 45 Days of December campaign to grab your list and check it twice. "It's a Wonderful Night" is a new downtown shopping event to be held on Thursday, December 18th. Just in time for the last minutes shoppers, on this exceptional night you can enjoy extended holiday shopping hours, unique deals, and after-parties at Dubh Linn Pub and Baja Billy's at Fitgers featuring free appetizers and drink specials. **GDC**



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Coppola Artistica

## The historic Greysolon Plaza is serving up some changes.

A taste of Black Woods Grill & Bar can now be found in Downtown Duluth. Catering services for banquets and events at Greysolon Plaza are now operated by Black Woods at Greysolon. Plus, come early next year, the Black Water at Greysolon will be opening on Superior Street.

"We feel so privileged to serve in Greysolon," said Director of Operations Julie Thoreson, "It's a great venue with so much history-our staff is really excited and proud to be there."

With restaurant locations in Two Harbors, Proctor and Duluth's London Road, Black Woods owner Bryan Flaherty has had his eyes on expanding services into the Downtown.

"We've been looking at opportunities in the Downtown for a



few years now and Greysolon was the ideal fit," said Flaherty. "There is a growing amount of energy in the Old Downtown and we want to be a part of it by investing back into the community."

Black Water at Greysolon is being touted as a casual, classy lounge that will serve a niche in the market.

"We'd like to bring back a slice of the history from the old Black Bear Lounge," said Thoreson. "It will be a comfortable, relaxing lounge with a full drink menu including our martinis and wine list, and specialty plated appetizers."

While renovations to the Ballroom wrapped up for catering service to commence in November, work on the Black Water is not expected until the first of the year with an opening slated for mid-February. **GDC**



Downtown Computer



Duluth Superior Symphony Orchestra



Duluth Pack



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