

Fond du Lac Arts Council News Release

February 1, 2010

Fond du Lac Area Foundation Awards Community Impact Grant to Fond du Lac Arts Council

The Fond du Lac Arts Council (owner and operator of Windhover Center for the Arts) has been awarded a \$30,000 Community Impact Grant by the Fond du Lac Area Foundation. This grant will be utilized specifically to engage the services of the consultant firm Schreiber Anderson & Associates(SAA) to assist the Fond du Lac Arts Council and it's project partner the Downtown Fond du Lac Partnership(DFP) to create a re-development plan and establish an implementation program for a proposed Arts, Education and Entertainment District.

Schreiber Anderson Associates will bring a highly skilled and talented team of consultants to this project to ensure a successful outcome. The SAA Team includes The North Group Inc, cultural arts consultants of New York City, BEST Real Estate Group, Inc, market analysis and real estate development consultants of Cottage Grove, WI, and Coalesce, marketing and communications consultants of Appleton, WI.

According to Arts Council executive director Kevin Miller the grant was awarded on December 8, 2009. Said Miller, "The Community Impact Grant not only provides necessary funding, but also signifies widespread support within the community for the project. The Arts Council is honored and extremely thankful to receive this grant."

Fond du Lac Area Foundation executive director Sandi Roehrig said the Arts Council grant proposal was successful because "the desired outcome was dedicated to improving the quality of life for the entire community. This project will help the Arts Council create a thriving downtown centered on the arts, but because of the collaboration with the DFP, so many critical components of our community will be served – economically as well as culturally."

Regarding the collaboration between the Fond du Lac Arts Council and the Downtown Fond du Lac Partnership, DFP executive director Amy Hansen felt "both organizations were committed to creating a dynamic downtown that is a point of destination for the community as well as the region. Working together gives the project a better chance for success."

The SAA Team has 25 years of experience helping communities throughout Wisconsin and the Upper Midwest plan and implement vibrant downtowns. Miller added, "One of the strengths of Schreiber Anderson's proposal was their view that the success of the Arts, Education, and Entertainment District is strategically linked to the success of the entire downtown." For that reason, Schreiber Anderson will prepare a comprehensive vision that includes all of the re-development districts identified by the DFP's Economic Re-structuring committee.

These Re-development districts are:

Arts, Education, and Entertainment District which is currently comprised of arts, education and entertainment organizations featuring Windhover Center for the Arts, Children's Museum of Fond du Lac, Fond du Lac Public Library, and the historic Ramada Plaza Hotel. This district

also includes several underutilized and vacant properties including the Historic Retlaw Theatre Complex. The vision for this district is to have a thriving environment filled with entertainment, dining and shopping options both during daytime and nighttime hours.

Second district is the Gateway District – Corner of Main and Johnson Streets. The north entrance to downtown is currently a mix of underutilized properties and inconsistent design. The vision for this district is a cohesive mix of high traffic businesses blended with an appealing streetscape to establish a welcoming atmosphere as consumers and visitors are entering the downtown.

The third potential re-development district is The River Walk District – adjacent to the Fond du Lac River and Hamilton Park, which runs throughout the downtown. One of the concepts for this district is to redevelop and define properties for family and residential uses taking advantage of the close proximity to the newly expanded YMCA.

These re-development districts have been included in the city’s proposed downtown comprehensive plan and will be utilized as the template as the project develops. City Community Development Director Wayne Rollin commented, “This is a logical next step in implementing the Downtown Plan. It’s good to see this kind of excitement.”

SAA Project deliverables will include concept drawings of each of the three districts that will be used to solicit new businesses and developments along with fund raising strategies and a feasibility study.

On February 16 - 18, the SAA Team will host a Community Immersion Workshop at Windhover Center which will include several meetings and opportunities for the public to provide input about this important project. For more information regarding these sessions please call either the Downtown Fond du Lac Partnership at (920) 921-9500 or Windhover Center at (920) 921-5410.

