

ENTERTAINMENT

HOUSEKEEPING ITEMS – Jillian

If I could have your attention: please take your seats at this time so that we can begin today's presentation. We ask also that you silence your phones at this time.

Today's presentation is expected to last approximately an hour, with a light reception immediately following. We invite you to stay.

Please welcome Kalamazoo's mayor, Bobby Hopewell.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION – Mayor – 2 minutes

- Thank you for attending
- Acknowledge attendees, diversity of stakeholders
- Acknowledge elected officials
- Call up Sean McCann and Tonya Schuitmaker

Brief Comment – Fred Upton – 3 minutes

Brief Comment – Representative Sean McCann – 3 minutes

- Recognize Terry Kuseske and Bob Jones.
- Call up the chairman of the board for Downtown Kalamazoo Inc., is Bob Doud

INTRO – Bob Doud - 4 minutes

- Reason for State of Downtown
- Why we continue to gather annually for the information, and the importance of a strong, "aware" constituency.
- Weave in his history since mid-90's
- Introduce Ken Nacci

INTRO COMMENTS – Ken Nacci

Thank you, Bob.

What Bob didn't tell you is that he's retiring in June from Bronson Health Care after 23 years. He has served on a variety of our Downtown organizations over the past 15 years and we're grateful - and thankful - that Bob has committed one more year of volunteer service to Downtown Kalamazoo Incorporated as Immediate Past Chair before he goes off into the downtown sunset...

Let me just say a few things about Bob's career. He is a man with a very diverse and illustrious past. You might not have known this, but before he came to Kalamazoo, he was a young, budding actor. He then came to this town for a career as a surgeon before finally settling into healthcare administration at Bronson Hospital.

All kidding aside, Bob you've been an excellent, inspiring and supportive leader, whose influence in developing downtown programs and projects has paved the road, or, to use our theme for today, '**set the stage**' for the next group of committed volunteers and the businesses and interests they represent. Bob – your talents, passion and long-time committed support of the efforts we are going to present today **are** very much appreciated. Let's give Bob a round of applause.

Thank you.

Well, we've recognized our attending elected officials and truly appreciate their being here today. I also want to thank Governor Snyder for "setting the stage" for our State of the Downtown Address by opening for us earlier today at the Kalamazoo Rotary lunch. So thank you, Governor Snyder.

(Contemplatively/Reflectively)

"Setting the Stage"... sounds a bit Shakespearean, right? For those of you who know your British literature - "setting the stage" takes root from the idea that *(read with an attempt for drama)* "**All the world's a stage and all the men and women merely players....**

You know, I can't do it justice...Neil, Neil Bremer- you have that Shakespearean presence...

'All the World's A Stage' – Neil Bremer

Neil (In dramatic voice)

All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players:
They have their exits and their entrances;
And one man in his time plays many parts,
His acts being seven ages.

The acts of a city are aged as well. For if a man is like a city, filled with diversity, energy, chaos searching for order... Then, a city is like a man in his different ages; alive, capable of growth, stagnation, death, and rebirth.

The ages of men and cities are known.

At first the infant,
Mewling and puking in the nurse's arms.
And then the whining school-boy,

And then the lover,
Sighing like furnace, with a woeful ballad
Made to his mistress' eyebrow.

Then a soldier, Full of strange oaths and bearded like the pard, Jealous in honour,
sudden and quick in quarrel,

And then the justice,
In fair round belly with good capon lined,
With eyes severe and beard of formal cut,

The sixth age shifts
Into the lean and slipper'd pantaloon,
With spectacles on nose and pouch on side,

Last scene of all that ends this strange eventful history is yet to be writ.

For... When you're alone
And life is making you lonely,
You can always go downtown
When you've got worries,
All the noise and the hurry
Seems to help, I know, downtown

Just listen to the music of the traffic in the city
Linger on the sidewalk where the neon signs are pretty
How can you lose?

The lights are much brighter there
You can forget all your troubles, forget all your cares and go
Down.....

Ken: Neil! That's not...I mean thank you for offering that artsy speech about all the world's a stage...but even I know.....that's not Shakespeare!

Neil: Yes...it is!

Ken: Not that last part! Those were the lyrics to Downtown by Petula Clark!

Neil: Well...yeah...but, she's ENGLISH!

Ken: Look, I appreciate you tying the Shakespeare to setting the stage for downtown....but, what do you say we get back to the program about the great things ahead for downtown and Kalamazoo?

Neil: Sure!

Ken: (Optional) Ladies and gentlemen, Neil Bremer...

Ken:

We're using that theme today to demonstrate how the planning efforts and results of the past year in downtown re-development has been put in to place by countless individuals, each playing various parts to "**set the stage**" for continuous growth. What has been achieved these past 25 years in our redevelopment efforts has been a progressive, evolving effort in preparing the central business district for continued growth....a growth that provides opportunity for businesses to thrive, our organizations to serve, and our residents to have a safe and enriching quality of life.

"**Setting the stage**", though theatrical in literal reference – and we did try to have some fun with that earlier - is intended today metaphorically, to remind us that we cannot rest on our laurels for past accomplishments. We have to continue working constantly to re-evaluate, reassess, adapt, and think ahead so as to meet the economic challenges of the day for the NEXT BIG IDEA .Simply, "Setting the Stage" helps to describe the charge given to the D's and its volunteers to supporting redevelopment of the urban core.

I would like at this time to recognize those individuals in the audience who serve on the Board of Directors of Downtown Kalamazoo Incorporated, the Downtown Development Authority, Downtown Tomorrow Incorporated, Downtown Kalamazoo Charities Association, and the various committees through which we do our work. Would you all please stand. These are many of the volunteers who this past year oversaw and guided downtown policies, projects and programs. Let's give them a round of applause.

Thank you, to each and every one of you.

Now: to the STATE of the Downtown. What **IS** the STATE of the downtown? We have several means of measurement, studies and program updates that we believe help to tell the **CONDITION** of downtown Kalamazoo. Today, we will review these programs and projects. The best way to do so is through the committee structure of Downtown Kalamazoo Inc. which support all the various sectors and interests of its downtown stakeholders.

COMMITTEE OVERVIEW – Ken Nacci

BUSINESS RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

Let's first start with the Business Recruitment and Retention Committee. Several studies completed this year serve as measurements for change and barometers of progress:

While the 2010 **Employee Count** shows a **gain** from Pfizer of 200 new employees, this gain was roughly offset by the losses due to cutbacks at other large employers. Of the 600 businesses that responded to our survey, just over 200 indicated a change: interestingly, 103 businesses gained employees and 103 lost.

Due to a handful of lost businesses, office vacancy increased from 14% to 15.4%. Total vacancy, however, remained unchanged due to the addition of over 33,000 square feet of retail venues (the Globe and Beer Exchange, for example), which lowered retail vacancy to 10.7%.

Residential remains the healthiest part of downtown development. Yet again, we saw a vacancy rate below 1 1/2 percent, which has prompted new residential projects that will each add between 2 and 28 units.

Tenant Change List

In 2010 we lost a total of 16 office spaces, two of which were larger office tenants. Some of the loss was made up by the expansion of existing companies and the addition of smaller users. Property owners have noticed the increased interest from the smaller companies, and this year we'll see two co-working spaces, where entrepreneurs can pay a monthly fee to get out of their basements and into a vibrant office environment with conference rooms, high speed internet and good coffee

Changes in the retail scene - which includes restaurants, entertainment, and shopping - are MUCH more positive, and show a growth trend: A total of 11 new establishments opened their doors. We lost four. WELCOME to all our new businesses!

One of these new memorable experiences is thanks to Ryan Reedy, who once again produced a one-of-kind venue, the SKY DECK. It's projects like this, an example of constant re-invention of space, that puts downtown Kalamazoo on the map in nightlife entertainment.

Retail Incubation Program

Our retail incubation program continues to seek out new concepts that compliment the current mix. We are creating wealth by investing in entrepreneurs and creating vibrancy by filling storefronts with well-planned businesses. Two of three retail incubator businesses have survived 2010 and two more are near approval for 2011 as they continue to work on their business plans. Both look to be open in spring or summer of this year.

The Business Recruitment Retention Incentive Program made nearly \$32k in grants to assist 11 new and relocating businesses within downtown.

The Building Revitalization Program made over \$47k in grants to assist 6 different projects, ranging from storefront signage to new residential units.

The Kalamazoo Mall storefronts are a barometer of our success. For the first time in decades we can say that every storefront on the Kalamazoo Mall between Michigan Avenue and Lovell Street are occupied **or** have plans in place for retail use.

Education is a major component of "retention". DKI staff supports the Downtown Kalamazoo Retail and Restaurant Association which offers an annual day-long seminar to help businesses reach their best customer service potential and establish downtown as a center for excellence in customer service. The ***Connecting with Customers*** conference has become a popular event. This year the conference will be here at Cityscape on Wednesday, March 3 beginning at 8 AM.

We should also recognize the work of Discover Kalamazoo Inc. for the work Greg Ayres and his team has done to create a customer-service training program that also aims to develop a culture of excellence in not just the local hospitality industry, but for the retailers who serve as our “front line” connectors with guests and patrons.

Another barometer of success is the Kalamazoo Gazette Reader’s Choice Awards – which once again, shows downtown stores and businesses as having SWEPT the awards in most all categories in top rankings and runner’s ups. Though not a program of DKI, we recognize and promote the results of the Kalamazoo Gazette’s Reader’s Choice Award as a measurement of community support.

Congratulations to all those who placed this year.

At this time, I’d like to highlight a few businesses that have excelled in their industries.

A true destination retail store, Memories Bridal and Evening Wear, owned and operated by Derek and Adrienne Wissner, continues to national statewide recognition by their industry peers for excellence, recently adding to their accolades “Best of Weddings” from The Knot Magazine .

I’d also like to shine a spotlight, if you will, on Retro, owned and operated by Bob Gillion and Tom Clark. Retro is located on the Kalamazoo Mall and sells vintage furniture and accessories. No longer a drop-in for bargain hunters, they are now sought out by decorators, collectors and keepers of the “RETRO” movement. Their largest challenge – keeping the store filled with inventory because of the sales volume. That is a barometer of success.

Special congratulations go to Larry Bell for the expansion of the Eccentric Café. The tavern is all ready open, and construction will soon be complete.

And to Farmers Alley Theatre: Its 2010 accomplishments include seating over 10,000 patrons in its black box setting of 100 seats, and being at 91% capacity for the 2010 calendar.

These are only a few examples among many that allow us to brand downtown Kalamazoo as a unique destination and experience with much to offer.

MARKETING

Our marketing committee members are the “Keepers of the Brand”, guiding image and event marketing.

In 2010 we continued with the LOOK CLOSER campaign, using radio, print advertising and the digital billboards (point to the screen) ... whose outreach was expanded to GULL ROAD, and this year in 2011 will include the new digital sign on US -131.

We continued to see record crowds in attendance at downtown events. Signature events such as ART HOP, and our high traffic generators such as the Kalamazoo Public Library, Kalamazoo Valley Museum, Radisson Plaza Hotel, the Arts Council and retailers as a whole, have created a critical mass of compelling attractions and helped to create a full experience for downtown visitors.

New to 2010 was the FOLLOW THE SCOOTER: Where's Buddy? campaign. Buddy was a scooter that traveled around from store to store, with a loyal following of customers who were after winning him. Buddy's wide appeal and success in generating a "buzz" on the street and on-line will see the campaign repeated this summer.

Marketing efforts also plunged into the world of social networking and electronic news worlds. If you have NOT joined the conversations, participated in the idea generating, or witnessed the feedback that is produced from this social media phenomenon, I encourage you to do so. Today, we are able to announce a following of 8,000 "friends" who help us understand the attitudes, values and behaviors of our current and potential visitors and customers.

DOWNTOWN KALAMAZOO ASSOCIATION CHARITIES

The Charities board serves two basic functions: to organize and fund major traffic generating events that create a "sense of place" and to manage the Arcadia Creek Festival Place

DKAC makes possible important events for Kalamazoo such as the Doh Dah Parade, Art on the Mall, Mixer on the Mall, Safe Halloween and the Holiday Parade. We estimate that these events collectively draw nearly 100,000 visitors downtown annually.

In 2010, the DKAC approved a record number of events for the Arcadia Creek festival place.

- 42 events from April through October
- \$371,000 was reported to have been raised for charitable contributions to area organizations from festival sales.
- And these events are estimated to have attracted over 150,000 attendees throughout the season.

Last year, DKAC focused on policy and procedures that produced an emergency evacuation plan.

For 2011, the board will be re-evaluating the late –night festival scene through a survey it is now conducting, to determine what the impact is to our business and residential community.

RESIDENTIAL ADVISORY BOARD

The DDA Citizens Council continues to be the eyes, ears and sounding board to the Downtown Development Authority.

Last year the Resident Advisory Board began planning for a community garden for the downtown residents to be located at the corner of Rose and Lovell Streets. Stay tuned as this project unfolds and further develops this year.

As the 24-7 eyes, the Residential Advisory Board also helps to identify issues and concerns related to safety, and help to influence the the initiatives of the SAFETY committee.

SAFETY COMMITTEE

This group has worked diligently over the years to address and help problem solve the safety concerns – myths and realities - of urban life through its continued funding of a Community Police Officer, horse patrol, and lighting upgrades.

Preliminary reports on over-all crime statistics for the downtown area continue to show a decrease, and as we see here, a third consecutive year of reduced part one crimes.

PARKING COMMITTEE

Now to our most animated committee, the parking committee.

This group of downtown stakeholders continued to work through the Five Year Parking Plan as approved by the DDA and City Commission. Highlights include:

- Completing stair and cross walk repairs to provide better safety access for customers and
- Planning for new technology improvements including Electric Vehicle charging stations.

The Committee implemented Revenue Enhancement strategies on July 1, 2010, **and** to meet the demands of growth on the west end of downtown, the parking system added 208 surface parking spaces.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE – MEASURING PROGRESS

- The committee reports show us what we’ve accomplished over the last year. The 2009 Downtown Comprehensive Plan is our long-term guide for “setting the stage”.
- Here is our report card on where we are, in our opinion, on meeting the goals of the plan. We’ve used the luminaries to grade ourselves. The best grade is an allocation of THREE LUMINIARIES, and where you see an N/A, we have had had NO ACTIVITY.

We have much yet to do. As you can see, we have made progress. At the end of the day, it's our responsibility to promote and develop a downtown center that the community supports. To close out today's presentation, we've asked Crawl Space Eviction to help us demonstrate all that downtown offers through the eyes of the family experience.

CLOSING SKIT – FAMILY/ establishing a sense of place