

Even More Reasons To Be Downtown

Attracting more people on more days to places, that but for the events being held, few would experience has been the primary motivation behind the production and presentation of most downtown events. The advent of new downtown offerings this spring and summer has certainly gone a long way towards introducing (or reintroducing as the case may be) people from across the region and visitors from the beaches to the beauty of our waterfront downtown and the local flavor and color of the offerings found here.

On every Thursday evening beginning at 5:30 p.m., we can all take advantage of the beautiful sunset as seen from Pensacola's newest park, Plaza de Luna. "Sunset Thursdays at Plaza de Luna" always have live musical entertainment, a costumed character known to children, and the most spectacular sunsets found anywhere. Attendees bring their own lawn chairs, blankets, and pick-nicks. It is truly a family affair.

The third Friday of each month during the summer brings a two-story inflatable screen to Commendencia Slip, at the southern end of Jefferson Street, to show family-friendly first-run movies to hundreds spread out on the lawn next to the bay in chairs and on blankets that they brought from home. "Friday Family Flicks" recreates the "under the stars" experience of the old drive-ins except without the cars starting at 7pm.

The first Friday evening of each month brings "First Fridays Alive after Five" to the first block of East Romana Street just east of Palafox Place. From 5pm to 8pm, live local bands perform in the street to the delight of hundreds of cheering fans. A different type of music is highlighted each month.

And let us not forget the phenomenally successful Palafox Market in the center block of Martin Luther King Plaza between Chase Street and Gregory Street every Saturday between the first of June and the end of September. The Palafox Market is open from 8 am to 1 pm and features some of the best locally grown produce, baked goods, live music, and artisans that can be found anywhere in the three county region. Nine hundred to 3000 people each Saturday can't be wrong.

And best of all, these new "events" are free. Attending these activities allows us to experience new parts of downtown and see and hear new offerings. The crowds attracted to each of these new downtown events have not been overlooked by downtown's businesses. Many have already adjusted their offerings, hours, or orientation to take advantage of these new (and growing) market opportunities. Downtown and all of our community are the better for it. Isn't it great when a plan comes together.

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Pensacola Downtown Improvement Board