



## Celebrate Downtown weekend draws crowds

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They came from Oregon, Wis., Madison, Roscoe, Rockton and South Beloit, to name a few, to Celebrate Beloit.

A Friday night street dance drew hundreds of people to downtown Beloit to kickoff the weekend's events. On Saturday, rows of merchants, some with home-grown goods, others with an array of handcrafted items, and still others who were serving food of all types, greeted throngs of shoppers who braved high humidity to sample their wares.

"We come every Saturday from the time it opens to the time it closes," said Carl Springer of Rockton as he made his way through the crowd with his dog, Brindel, while he waited for his wife. "It's encouraging to see (all these people) and its good for the shops."

Saturday's offerings marked the 19th annual event which is the Downtown Beloit Association's biggest fundraiser.

Roscoe's Rita and Richard Stiffler came for the veggies and to check out Beloit's new, brick-paved downtown streets, lighting and other changes.

"We haven't seen the work they have done up here," Rita Stiffler said. "It really is quite beautiful."

Flowers were one of the hits of the day. From Gensler Gardens to Natalie Ortega from Oregon, Wis. to the Xiong family from Madison, visitors lined up to buy bouquet after bouquet of fresh summer favorites. Brats, cheese curds, fresh squeezed orange juice and homemade min-donuts, kept shopper full while they filled bag after bag with live, metal, ceramic and cloth goodies.

"I do this every year," Kristin Gensler, of Gensler Gardens said, as she hurriedly filled fresh vegetables and flowers that were quickly flying off crates and make-shift shelves. "It's a good way to get our name out there and a good way to sell it."

Gensler said a moist spring and dry very hot weather have produced some "growing" challenges this year, however, now that the delayed crops have come in, things are looking good.

"It has been a different year for produce that is for sure," she said.

While there were many displays to choose from, one of the more unique displays was that of Robert Buck of Bosamatt Enterprises. The author of three books and maker of flutes from PVC pipe that

sound like “the real thing, made by Native Americans” hails from Machesney Park.

He didn't have the lines of potential buyers the produce stands did, but he did play music from his flute and shared several stories from his books. *One Way Home* is the tale of his mother and an orphan train. Another *Way Home* is about his brother's year in Vietnam and his latest book *Into the Light*, was posted on Amazon just last week.

“I enjoy writing,” he said, as he played one of his flutes. “These do sound like the real thing. It's amazing what you can do with PVC pipe.”