

A street scene during a car show. The street is lined with brick buildings and trees. Several classic cars are parked along the side of the road, including a red convertible, a silver sports car, a red pickup truck, and a blue pickup truck. The sky is overcast. The text "The Sustainability of Warsaw First Fridays" is overlaid in white on the image.

The Sustainability of Warsaw First Fridays

Kosciusko Leadership Academy Presentation

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Sponsored by:

City of Warsaw

Kosciusko Chamber of Commerce

Warsaw Community Development Corporation

“Warsaw First Friday is an ongoing event that brings a festive atmosphere to downtown Warsaw. Once a month the downtown streets are turned into a huge block party. Downtown merchants host the party.”

– *WarsawCDC.org*

First Friday Warsaw History

- Originally implemented in 2007 by downtown Warsaw merchants
- Purpose is to increase foot traffic through the Historic Courthouse District areas to generate awareness of downtown businesses and ultimately increase patronage and downtown business revenues
- Events include a variety of monthly, theme-based events at which community members may socialize and *connect*.



Stakeholder Interviews Conducted

- Warsaw First Friday Originator: Keith Reinholt, Reinholt's Town Square Furniture
- Current First Friday Coordinator: Paula Bowman, Latte Lounge & Cave on the Square
- Former Merchants Committee Member: Cindy Dobbins, Buffalo Street Emporium
- Kosciusko Chamber of Commerce CEO/WCDC Director: Rob Parker

- Downtown Warsaw Business Survey
- Warsaw First Friday Vendor Surveys Survey
- Warsaw First Friday Facebook Friends Survey

Key Issues Disclosed / Stakeholder Interviews

- City Events Coordinator transitioning into retirement...
- New event ownership, reorganization, and volunteers needed
- Decreasing activities / opportunities for public engagement
- Event cancellations and early stop times = negative public perception
- Declining public attendance / foot traffic through merchant stores
- Declining store revenues during First Fridays
- Additional funding needed to improve event activities
- Additional funding needed to support merchant staff
- Merchant stores closed or close early during First Friday events

Downtown Warsaw Merchants Survey Responses



Downtown Warsaw Merchants Survey Responses

- 56% of merchant survey respondents said they participated in First Fridays within the past 1-5 years
- 76% of merchant respondents said they think First Fridays are beneficial, and of those...
 - 19% of respondents say they benefit from increased foot traffic
 - 44% say they benefit from increased business awareness
 - 6% say they benefit from increased business revenues
- 90% of merchants respondents say First Fridays should be continued (33.33% of that number suggest the following...)

Downtown Warsaw Merchants Survey Responses (continued...)

- Too much focus on outside vendors, food trucks, and live music
- Need to create better activities and special events to draw a paying crowd
- Create opportunities for engagement on all streets to include all merchants
- Rotate between Center and Market Streets
- Earlier communications with merchants and promotions are needed
- Utilize a greater variety of media for marketing and promotions

(Current promotions include free radio, newspaper, flyers and social media)

Downtown Warsaw Merchants Survey Responses (continued...)

- Reestablish the Merchant's Committee
- Focus on events that don't conflict with holidays, city and family events
- Resume use of an event map for merchants, vendors and event attendees
- Seek new or additional sponsorships/event hosts
- Consider trying Second Saturdays or other events
- Move the event to Central Park
- Continue hiatus during winter months

Warsaw First Friday Facebook Friends
and **Warsaw First Friday Vendor Survey Data**

are provided within the white paper and will be taken into consideration by
the new event owners and organization team members

Regional First Friday Research

- We conducted online research with Auburn, Goshen, and Wabash, Indiana First Fridays to look at event themes, organization, marketing and funding
- We attended Goshen's February Fire & Ice First Friday
- We conducted in-person interviews with:
 - Goshen First Fridays Originator, Gina Leichty (Eyedart)
 - Goshen First Fridays Event Coordinator, Adrienne Nesbitt (Eyedart)



Goshen First Fridays A Model For Sustainability

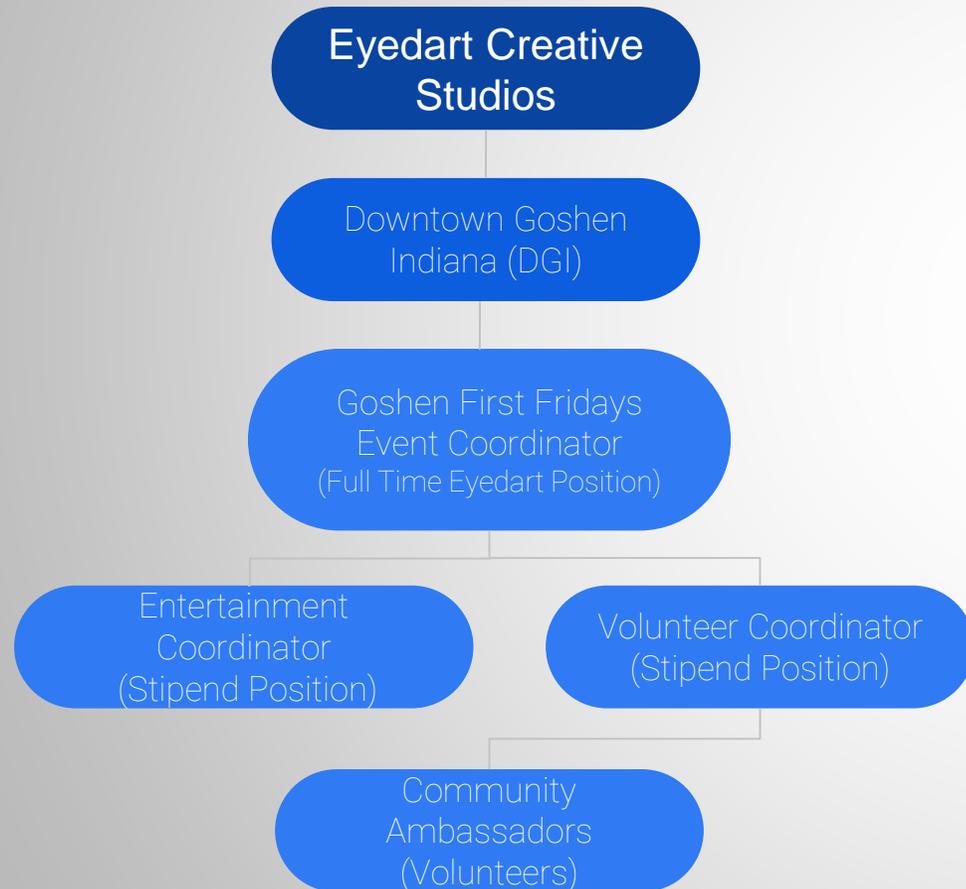
Goshen First Fridays

Event Ownership

- Started in 2007 by Gina Leichty and her husband Ben Stutzman (Eyedart Creative Studio) to provide support and awareness for downtown Goshen businesses and usher its revitalization...
- Eyedart is on an annual retainer from the City of Goshen; facilitating the Downtown Goshen Indiana (DGI) organization and overseeing Goshen First Fridays
- Eyedart staff provide(s) event coordination and the creation of Goshen First Friday advertising, promotions, and special activities supporting materials

Goshen First Fridays

Organizational Structure



- DGI Partner(s) and Goshen First Friday Event Coordinator, Adrienne Nesbitt, determine event themes and activities
- Event Coordinator directs
 - Entertainment Coordinator
 - Volunteer Coordinator
- Volunteer Coordinator oversees Community Ambassadors (Volunteers)
- Community Ambassadors serve as volunteers for various aspects of the events

Goshen First Fridays

Best Practices

- No event cancellations EVER - 12 First Fridays per year rain or shine
- Focused on downtown merchants walkthroughs and restaurant patronage
- Limited Out-of-County Businesses Vendors
 - Required sponsorship fees
 - Non-merchant vendors restricted to the Courthouse lawn
- Limited number of food trucks at a rate of \$250 per month (vs. \$80-\$90 Warsaw)
- No political or religious booths
- Not-for-Profits participate for FREE - booths located on the Courthouse lawn
- Additional event funding/support earned through special/ticketed events

Goshen First Fridays

Funding Through Downtown Goshen Indiana (DGI)

Presenting Sponsors - \$20,000 (x 4)

\$80,000

City of Goshen, Goshen Health, Community Foundation of Elkhart County, Elkhart CVB

Legend Sponsors - \$10,000 (x 4)

\$40,000

Genesis Products, Goshen College, FIVE Core Media, Globe Radio

Partner Sponsors - \$5,000 (x 5)

\$25,000

ATC World Class Trailers, Goshen Chamber of Commerce, INterra Credit Union, OSMC Orthopedics, Froggy 102.7

Luminary Sponsors - \$2,500 (x 9)

\$22,500

Goshen Parks & Recreation Dept, Indiana Arts Council, Centier Bank, Dick Lehman Pottery, Evolve Chiropractic, Greencroft, Sterling Vineyards, U93 family of FM radio stations, Model Real Estate

Goshen First Friday Sponsorships Totaling ~\$167,580

Some Media Sponsorships in Trade

Goshen First Fridays

Additional Funding

Downtown Goshen Indiana (DGI) Memberships provide additional funding...

Heroes - \$1,000 (x 9) \$9,000

Community Relations Commission (City of Goshen), Growing Kids, Acruity, Duley Press, Elkhart River Restoration Association, The Goshen News, Quality Inn, Tim & Meg Shelly, Yoder Culp Funeral Home

Champions - \$500 (x 17) \$8,500

Constant Spring, Dana Miller Building Solutions, Duley Press, Eyedart Creative Studio, Goshen Brewing Company, Goshen Dam Beer Run Club, Goshen Motors, Greensweep Cleaning Services, Inn on South 5th, Kelly Jae's Cafe, Maple City Market, Mid America Film Makers, Paragon Printing, Solution Source, Troyer Foods, Zehr Construction, Weston Fribley

Basic DGI Membership \$350 x Unknown.....Unknown

***Event Registrations and Ticket Sales.....Unknown**

***Downtown Goshen Indiana / Goshen First Friday
Sponsorships and Memberships***

Over \$185k Annually

Of that

\$150k is budgeted for Goshen First Fridays!!!

Budget covers staff wages, volunteer and entertainment coordinator stipends, monthly and special event marketing, promotions, and advertising, event entertainment and an annual year-end appreciation dinner for First Friday Community Ambassador volunteers.

How Does Warsaw First Friday Funding Compare?

2019-2020 Funding through Warsaw Community Development

\$75 Individual Memberships x3.....	\$225
\$150 Business Memberships x 46.....	\$6,900
\$500 Corporate Memberships x 9.....	\$4,500
\$1,000 Corporate Membership x 1.....	\$1,000 *
\$1,500 Corporate Membership x 1.....	\$1,500
\$2,500 Corporate Membership x 2.....	\$5,000
\$5,000 Grant/Sponsorship x 1.....	\$5,000 *
\$33,000 City Partnership	\$33,000
(Covers compensation for Co-Coordinator wages)	
2019 First Friday Vendor Fee Revenues.....	~\$6,000

2019-2020 WCDC Member/Sponsorship Funding: \$58,625
First Friday Warsaw Annual Budget: ~\$39,000

Annual Budget covers Co-Coordinator Wages, entertainment, advertising and promotions, and items for special events.
 Remaining funds absorbed into Kosciusko Chamber of Commerce for supporting staff members.

* Denotes grant funds specific to First Fridays

Goshen First Fridays

Key Sustainability Factors for Implementation...

- I. Establish Ownership
- II. Organization, Staffing Support, and Volunteers
- III. Increase Funding
- IV. Improve Marketing and Promotions
- V. Create New Opportunities for Engagement

Warsaw First Fridays

Key Sustainability Factors for Implementation

i. Establish Event Ownership

- January 1, 2021 City of Warsaw passes Warsaw First Friday event ownership to...
- Kosciusko Chamber of Commerce / Warsaw Community Development Corporation assumes responsibility for organization and funding of the events.

Warsaw First Fridays

Key Sustainability Factors for Implementation

II. Structure Organization, Staffing & Volunteer Support

1. Reestablish the Merchant's Committee

- Merchants Committee consists of C4 district business owners or up to one employee representative per merchant
- Meets annually (at a minimum) to help develop new themes and/or build on existing themes to improve them
- Encourages non-committee business owners to become engaged in downtown events, offering ideas for in-store promotions and special events geared toward increasing foot traffic, awareness, and revenues.

Warsaw First Fridays

Key Sustainability Factors for Implementation

II. Structure Organization, Staffing & Volunteer Support (cont.,..)

2. Event Coordinator (full time position)

- Determines monthly themes in cooperation with Merchant Committee
- Handles communications with merchants, vendors, community, City partner and representatives, and media
- Creates and/or oversees all paid and unpaid promotions for each event
- Directs the following...

Warsaw First Fridays

Key Sustainability Factors for Implementation

II. Structure Organization, Staffing & Volunteer Support (cont.,..)

3. Recruit an Entertainment & Music Coordinator

- Stipend position - paid monthly at a rate to be determined
- Seeks and schedules Performing Arts in cooperation with Event Coordinator
- Coordinates performances at Center Stage and/or side streets
- Responsible for background music in coordination with monthly themes and performances in cooperation with event sponsors/hosts
- Provides announcements on the sound system as needed during events
- Oversees set-up/tear down sound system and stage(s) with Community Ambassadors (volunteers)

Warsaw First Fridays

Key Sustainability Factors for Implementation

II. Structure Organization, Staffing & Volunteer Support (cont.,...)

4. Recruit a Volunteer Coordinator (Community Ambassadors)

- Stipend position - paid monthly at a rate to be determined
- Seeks Community Ambassadors to fulfill volunteer needs for each event
- Assigns tasks for Community Ambassadors/Volunteers at each event
Event set-up, maintenance, event hosts/greeters, and tear down, etc.
- Coordinates and distributes Community Ambassador t-shirts, caps, etc. in cooperation with Event Coordinator
- Co-Coordinates annual Community Ambassador appreciation dinner and gifts in cooperation with Event Coordinator

Warsaw First Fridays

Key Sustainability Factors for Implementation

II. Structure Organization, Staffing & Volunteer Support (cont.,..)

5. Recruit Community Ambassadors (Event Volunteers)

consisting of...

- Downtown building owners, business owners, professionals and/or employees
- County / City Government Officials and/or employees
- WCDC Partners and/or Event Sponsors/Host Representatives
- Kosciusko Chamber of Commerce / Warsaw Community Development Corp. Officers and staff
- Kosciusko County Retirees
- Local college and/or high school students seeking public service opportunities
- Other?

Warsaw First Fridays

Key Sustainability Factors for Implementation

III. Increase Funding through WCDC

- Increase First Friday sponsorship rates and pursue additional sponsors
- Increase WCDC Annual Membership Rates and pursue additional members
Note: WCDC provides financial, marketing and event support for downtown businesses and revitalization efforts for a nominal membership fee of \$75 - \$150 annually, yet not all merchants are members.
- Create ticketed events that will increase foot traffic through stores while creating new revenues for First Fridays
- Create new revenue streams through the implementation of ad sales opportunities such as within new community newsletters

Warsaw First Fridays

Key Sustainability Factors for Implementation

IV. Improve First Friday Marketing & Promotions

- Hire one full-time/dedicated marketing individual to support WCDC, First Fridays, and downtown merchants and events
- Create a new logo / rebrand the event(s)
- Implement a NEW website specific to downtown merchants, events and First Fridays
- Implement a NEW *Downtown Warsaw Events* consumer electronic newsletter
 - Include *subscribe* opportunities on web page and social media
 - Create additional revenue from C4 District/WCDC member and non-member merchants who wish to advertise to consumers within the monthly newsletter(s)
- Provide First Friday business promotions through social media for merchants and restaurants who participate each month

Warsaw First Fridays

Key Sustainability Factors for Implementation

V. Create New Opportunities For Engagement for Businesses

- Increase outreach into surrounding Kosciusko County communities...
- Implement additional food trucks at Market and S. Buffalo Streets
- Eliminate “Center Stage” performances that monopolize patrons time/attention + funds
- Implement local street musicians in front of merchants, restaurants, or inside and promote
- Implement and *artists* demonstrations and exhibits
- Add activities specific to young children, teens, families, and seniors at various locations
- Resume ticketed events i.e., scavenger hunts, wine + chocolate, etc.
- Implement additional picnic tables on the streets/in front of downtown restaurants
- Resume and promote sidewalk sales or events such as “Downtown Days”
- Create and promote In-store promotions, contests, discounts, etc. with merchant committee

...

Warsaw First Fridays

Key Sustainability Factors for Implementation

Establishing new ownership of the events; creating a structured organization of individuals to support them; increasing funding; and improving event marketing and promotions are essential keys to the sustainability of Warsaw First Fridays. We hope you will consider how you can be involved and support the Sustainability of Warsaw First Fridays and its objectives.