

## **2008 Resolution: Make Downtown TR Even Better**

We all like to celebrate the history of Two Rivers.

...Like recalling downtown TR in the “good old days,” when major retailers like JC Penney and Montgomery Wards lined the main street, along with locally-owned grocery stores, men’s and women’s clothing stores, bars, restaurants, etc.

The role of downtown has changed over the years, but it remains the center of the community, vital to TR’s future.

And, thanks to a lot of hard work by a lot of people, downtown Two Rivers is becoming known as a really cool place...a place where creative, ambitious people can achieve entrepreneurial success.

In short, we have lots of reasons to celebrate what’s **right here, right now**, as this old town’s central business district keeps getting better and better.

So, let’s celebrate—and patronize--the businesses that opened here in 2007:

--**Sew Much Wool**, the outstanding quilt and fabric shop at 1813 Washington. Kudos to owners Tammy and Elliot VanderBloomen, who have created a great retail space and venue for classes in quilting and other fabric crafts.

Thanks also to their landlord, Tom Harney of Plymouth, who purchased the building in 2006 because he liked what he saw in downtown TR. Tom has spruced up the building, and is working to fill its second storefront.

--**Tea and Roses**, the tea room and antique shop at 2122 Washington. Sue Wrege and Terry Seinitz, recent transplants from Illinois, saw the potential of this property, a cool little cottage in the midst of downtown.

--**Luigi’s Italian Restaurant**, which brought outstanding Italian fare to the corner of 22<sup>nd</sup> and Jackson. Antonio and Christina Mannino relocated from Port Washington, and have created a pasta and pizza lovers’ utopia in an outstandingly cool building. (“Remember when” it was the vacant and deteriorating former U.S. Oil Station?)

--**Anytime Fitness** which arrived just in time to help burn off calories from those pizzas and cannolis. Anytime’s TR location is operated by an ambitious young entrepreneur, Mike Langley. The business is housed in a former auto repair shop at 1506 20<sup>th</sup> Street, now beautifully upgraded by landlord Bob Pietroske. Thank you, Bob!

**Color Blind Studios**, featuring professional photography and a lingerie boutique, also opened in 2007, at 2022 Washington Street, Suite C (20<sup>th</sup> Street side of the Unique Flying Objects building). Clinton Andrews added tattooing and body piercing later in the year.

**Tedeschi Insurance Services** opened at 1613 Washington Street, with local agent Matt Richmond joining the ranks of new, young professionals in downtown TR.

--**Club Atlantis** is located in the beautifully renovated former Elks Club at 1415 16<sup>th</sup> Street. A new downtown hot spot for food, drink and live music, Club Atlantis is the latest addition to TR's "arts and entertainment district"--a term that honestly applies to our resurgent downtown.

--As 2007 came to a close, Jason Prigge and Kevin Voysey brought us **Abotzo**, a wine and gourmet shop located in the building at 1513 Washington Street that also houses **Element American Bistro**. Check out Abotzo's great wines, Wisconsin artisan cheeses and other gourmet treats.

Eight new businesses in 2007—now there's something to celebrate!

Let's not forget that 2006 was also a great year downtown, with business openings that included:

--**Element American Bistro**, already a Manitowoc County culinary landmark

--**Stumpjack Coffee**, home of "Fine Coffees, Ambiance, and Hip Art"

--**Shipwreck Adventures**, featuring diving gear and expeditions, plus canoe and kayak sales and rentals

All of this has happened since TR's "Big Dig" of 2005: the seven month reconstruction of Washington Street that temporarily made downtown look like a war zone...but brought it back looking better than ever.

Look back just a little further, and you will recognize other businesses that have added to TR's retail mix in recent years: **Walgreens, Unique Flying Objects, Patsy's Highway 42 Mobil Mart, Cousin's Subs, Auto Zone, The Medicine Shoppe's downtown location, new digs for Subway, Pam Wargin Insurance and Nature's Scentiments, great storefront renovations by GJ's Salon, Inman Jewelers, Dalebroux Jewelers, Paczkowski Dental, and others.**

No wonder the Two Rivers Business Association continues to proudly proclaim: **"It's Right Here—The New Two Rivers."**

Sure, there have been setbacks, like the recent closing of businesses like Arvy's, the Copper Kettle, and Marettis on Jefferson. And we miss active downtown volunteer Cathy Sager and her businesses, Gifted Talents and Grandma's Sewing Shop. (Cathy relocated to Michigan to be closer to family.)

But business turnover is normal, and vacancies create new opportunities. Investors and entrepreneurs continue to actively pursue commercial sites in downtown TR, and are pleased to find strong support from the business community and City Hall.

A new investor from Illinois just purchased the historic building at 1608-12 Washington Street, and has a new tenant signed for one of the building's storefronts (former Grandma's Sewing location). He has property in Kewaunee, and after driving through Two Rivers for several years, decided that now is a good time to invest in downtown TR.

Word has it that sale of another longstanding downtown business is pending, and there has been activity on several downtown area properties that are currently on the market.

2008 promises to be another great year for downtown TR, with more new businesses, more special events, and more beautification activity further enlivening the coolest downtown on the lakeshore.

The business and property owners of downtown TR, in partnership with Main Street, the TRBA and the City, are doing more than just celebrating history—they're making it.

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