



DOWNTOWN SAFE & SOUND

*The official Newsletter of Wilmington's
Downtown Business Improvement District*

January 2009
Wilmington, DE

Downtown Clean & Safe By the Numbers

Ambassadors' Activities for the
2nd Quarter of FY 2008
(October - December)

Graffiti Tags Removed: 157

Stickers/Posters Removed: 497

Garbage Removed: 153,000Lbs.

Assisted Video Incidents: 333

Self Initiated Incidents: 54

Incidents Involving Arrests: 32

Self Initiated Incidents
Resulting in Arrests: 18

Business Contacts: 534

Escorts: 169

Medical Emergencies: 78

Special Attentions: 14,516

Information/Directions: 1,454

Found Property: 6



A MESSAGE FROM MARTIN P. HAGEMAN EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Welcome to the New Year! In this issue of "Downtown Safe & Sound," we set the record straight about your safety Downtown, tell how getting around Downtown may get even easier, invite you to get to know Joe DiPinto, and introduce you to a hot, new restaurant. Look to the calendar of events list for ideas about great indoor entertainment during these colder months, with a new line-up of films at Theatre N, "Philadanco" at The Grand, "Spamalot" at the DuPont, and chocolate for your sweetheart – just in time for Valentine's Day – at the Third Annual Chocolate Festival.

We'll continue to do what we do so well, keeping Downtown clean and safe, and invite you to enjoy the cultural amenities of Wilmington. As always, please ask our ambassadors (in the black and yellow uniforms) for any assistance you may need.

Martin P. Hageman

DOWNTOWN CRIME: PERCEPTION VS. REALITY

"It is one of the safest areas in the City of Wilmington," says Wilmington Police Captain Nancy Dietz. "The highly publicized crimes that you hear or read about are not typically in the Downtown area," says Dietz. If so, then why does Downtown often suffer a false reputation when it comes to safety?

"It's a matter of perception versus reality," says Marty Hageman, executive director, Downtown Visions (DTV). "The News Journal reports the record number of shootings and homicides in the City of Wilmington," he says, "which may cause readers to believe that it's unsafe to come Downtown. The reality is that none of the shootings last year occurred Downtown. The unfortunate truth is that outside the perimeter of Downtown in any major city you'll find troublesome areas."

With the courthouse at 5th and King Sts., "there's a plethora of local, county and state police, and federal agents moving in and around Downtown, daily," says Mike Maggitti, DTV's director of safety. He points to low volume of pedestrian traffic, especially in the evening, as one of the main reasons for the public's misperception about safety Downtown, and Captain Dietz, an officer with 28 years of service who worked in the Downtown area, agrees.

"Statistically, Downtown is very safe when compared to other areas of the city, the Christiana or Concord Mall, or even Philadelphia's Broad Street – which, in terms of real crime, is much worse," says

Maggitti. "It just feels very different because we don't have the critical mass of people out and about to make people feel safe."

Buccini/Pollin Group's initiatives to create a more vibrant residential community, however, and Main Street's efforts to attract more commerce and cultural venues will help to generate more foot traffic in the area to change that.

Downtown – defined as the 70-square block Business Improvement District – is one of the most heavily patrolled areas in the city with at least five WPD officers by day, two by evening, and numerous other officers working extra duty assignments at the DuPont Theater, The Grand, and other places of business.

In addition, DTV patrols the area 16 hours per day, seven days a week, by motor vehicle, bicycle and foot, and monitors the area through the Wilmington Video Safety Partnership. This video surveillance system is the only one of its kind in the country – as its cameras cover the entire Downtown, and have assisted in more than 1,300 incidents and more than 300 arrests since the program's inception in 2001.

The next time you're downtown, look around and look up. You'll see our ambassadors on the street and cameras manned by our staff keeping careful watch over you, supporting the WPD in keeping you safe – so you can relax and enjoy yourself.

Seasonal Events

Mark your calendar for these exciting events in Downtown Wilmington.

For details on these and other events, visit: www.downtownwilmington.com or www.out-and-about.com/events.

January 15

HD Concert Series: Pearl Jam – Immagine in Cornice
Theatre N at Nemours

January 23

Philadanco
The Grand Opera House
(302) 652-5577

January 24-25

The Pavarotti Tribute: One Amazing Weekend in Petra
Theatre N at Nemours

February 6

20th Annual Wine Feast and Auction
Sponsor: Delaware Theatre Company
Chase Center on the Riverfront
(302) 594-1100

February 12

Third Annual Wilmington Chocolate Festival
The Wilmington Public Library
(302) 571-7407

February 19

HD Concert Series: The Grateful Dead Movie
Theatre N at Nemours

March 22

Jason Bishop (America's hottest illusionist!)
The Baby Grand
(302) 652-5577

March 24-29

Spamalot
The DuPont Theatre
(302) 656-4401

March 28

Casino for the Cure
Sponsor: Leukemia & Lymphoma Society
Chase Center on the Riverfront

March 28

The National Acrobats of China
The Grand Opera House
(302) 652-5577

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EMPLOYEE OF THE HALF

Working in a traditionally male role, supervising a team of 10 men, could be difficult for some women -- but not for Sherri Reeves (30), senior supervisor of the Cleaning Division. Recently named Employee of the Half, Reeves is "admired by everyone at Downtown Visions (DTV) for the effort she puts forth," says Paul Degnars, director of Cleaning Operations and Clean and Safe Services.

"I like the guys that I work with and they treat me with respect," says Reeves. "They see that I try to give my all everyday, I never come in with a bad attitude" she says, "and I just want to see everyone succeed." Reeves, who started with DTV in March 2001, says, "Some of these guys have been here five or six years and we're almost like family, not just coworkers."

Described as the "Go To person for her staff," Degnars says, "Sherri takes a vested interest in their success." Keeping focused on continual improvement and quality of work, Reeves helps her team to be better at what they do. "And I try to help in a manner that I would want someone to have with me," she says. "It's okay to tell someone about a mistake, it's just the way that you tell them."

Reeves lives in the Business Improvement District (BID) and takes pride in her community and the City of Wilmington. As she walks home at the end of the day to be with her daughters, Monet (11) and Alexis (14), Reeves says, "I smile to myself that the streets are clean and I know we're helping out."

That commitment to helping doesn't stop as this single mom clocks out at the end of a six-day work week, however. She's often been known to stop on her way home to help an individual or a store owner, even if it means going back to the shop to take care of things.

"If someone needs help, I help," she says. "They see the uniform and they don't know I'm off the clock." She doesn't mind, though, for she's setting a good example for her girls.

"I want them to know you have to work for what you want, and give that extra effort," she says. "They see that Mommy's doing what they consider to be a man's job in our society and they're proud of me. And I'm thankful, each day, for the job and the people that I work with."

MAIN STREET UPDATE

Main Street Wilmington enjoys a fashionable new address at 314 W. 9th St. in Wilmington's developing "Fashion District." The office at street level, so it's easier to stop by with inquiries or ideas. Director Clarence Wright can also be reached at 302.420.0859 or through the website at www.mainstreetwilmingtonde.org.

2ND ANNUAL HEROES NIGHT OUT

Watching Chief Szczerba of the Wilmington Police Department and Deputy Chief Kalinowski of the Wilmington Fire Department sling drinks in a bartending competition was like something out of the old Tom Cruise movie *Cocktail*. Okay...maybe not. But it was entertaining and they helped to raise money for a great cause, during the 2nd Annual Heroes' Night Out event, November 28 at the former site of Costa's Restaurant. Even DTV executive director Marty Hageman jumped behind the bar to help out.

DJ "J Rock" and the "Shot 'n a Beer" band, featuring WPD officer Paul Simonds on drums, had the place rockin' for the crowd of nearly 300 people that turned out for the occasion. Not only did attendance figures exceed last year's, but the amount of money that was raised, too, with the help of a 50/50 raffle and many items donated by the Fire Store and ING Direct that were used in the silent auction.

Heroes' Night Out was created by DTV to support the Police and Firefighters Remembrance Fund -- a fund begun by the Delaware Symphony Orchestra after 911 for the benefit of fire/policemen and women, and their families, in the event of a tragedy. The funds afforded them are separate and apart from any assistance they may receive from the City.



From Left to Right: Mike Maggitti, Shelley Maggitti, Kim Puit (guest bartender and volunteer firewoman for Five Points), and Paul Degnars

BOARD PROFILE: JOE DiPINTO

Through the eyes of a Wilmington man who seems to have lived the accomplished life of two men, concurrently – one as a family-man with a successful 36-year career with DuPont, and the other with a political career of equal length and achievement – we see the city's past, present, and evolving future. As a Downtown Visions board member, the director of Wilmington's Office of Economic Development, and city-dweller for more than 45 years, Joe DiPinto cares deeply about Wilmington and says he's "delighted by the contribution that Downtown Visions makes to the City's movement toward being a world-class city."



Born and raised in the Claymont area of North Wilmington, DiPinto spent much of his youth climbing through the woods of Arden, on hot summer days, to swim in the Naaman's Creek, walking to Mr. Scarpitti's corner store on "the Pike," going to school at Archmere Academy, and falling in love with a girl named Pat from Ursuline Academy. When Pat's family later moved to Virginia, Joe "courted her 800 miles and 300 feet, door-to-door," he says, and she became his wife.

"As our family grew, we made a conscious decision to live in the city, where the kids could walk to school, walk to the park, and we could enjoy the cultural offerings of urban living," says DiPinto, as he recalls taking the kids to see "Mary Poppins" at the Rialto Theater at 3rd and Market Sts.

They bought their home in The Highlands near Rockford Park in 1963, and DiPinto soon after became involved in their community association. In 1972 he won his district's seat in City Council – where he first met (now Mayor) Jim Baker – and he was re-elected three times, serving from 1973-1986, before securing a seat in the Delaware State House of Representatives in 1987.

Some may not realize that while a State Representative, DiPinto was instrumental in creating Wilmington's Downtown Business Improvement District (WDBID), which enabled the formation of Downtown Vision. In June 1994 he sponsored legislation for the WDBID, it passed in August, and Downtown Visions was born in October. DiPinto continued to serve in the House until 2006 when he assumed his current role with the City.

"When you look at the mission statement of the Office of Economic Development and its work to attract companies to Wilmington," explains DiPinto, "you see how important interrelationships with other institutions are. Downtown Visions, Wilmington Renaissance Corporation, Chambers of Commerce, the Downtown Merchants Association, the Business Roundtable and the different departments of the City all function together in a way that makes the city attractive and a compelling place to want to come to."

He believes DTV has played a significant role, through its clean and safe efforts, to improve the perception of, lend confidence to, and affect the decisions of those who have decided to develop here rather than somewhere outside of the City and points to BCBS, AAA and WSFS as examples.

"It's rewarding to hear people say that they're interested in coming here because they like what they're seeing," says DiPinto. "There's resurgence in the City and a substantial amount of investment that will continue to grow," DiPinto says, "and that can't happen unless DTV serves its purposes."

As DTV continues to complement the work of the City's Public Works Department in keeping the city clean, and the work of the Wilmington Police Department in keeping the city safe, DiPinto continues working – as both DTV board member and City official – for the betterment of the city and sharing it with others, both professionally and personally.

"G-Dad" as the grandkids call him can often be found with them at the Cozy Corner on Sundays when they visit, as he and Pat share the amenities of urban living with the next generation. "My wife and I are really dedicated to the City," he says. "We just love this place."

SECURITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE



Chief of Police Michael Szczerba addresses the Security Advisory Committee, December 10, 2008

At the Security Advisory Committee meeting, December 10, chaired by Wilmington Chief of Police Michael Szczerba and facilitated by Downtown Visions, Chief Szczerba announced that 25 graduating officers of the Wilmington Police Academy will soon begin serving the City of Wilmington, and the next class of recruits is scheduled to begin at the academy in the spring. This was welcomed news for the Security Advisory Committee, whose mission is to support the efforts of the Wilmington Police Department (WPD) in keeping Downtown safe.

This dedicated group comprised of security directors for major Downtown businesses came together in 1995 to form the Security Advisory Committee (SAC) and have been very effective in working with the WPD and DTV. Successful implementation of the Security Fax Network – a notification system of crime trends, street closings and emergencies via fax and internet, and the Wilmington Video Safety Partnership were direct outcomes of SAC meetings.

One of the issues raised and immediately addressed at the recent meeting was a concern about undesirables at the bus stop at Rodney Square making it unpleasant for people who ride public transportation to and from work. DTV has since increased the presence of Safety Ambassadors at that location during commuting times.

Plans for securing Downtown for First Night Wilmington were also presented at the meeting as SAC members were made aware of the potential impact on Downtown from the anticipated 10,000 attendees. WPD and DTV personnel discussed their roles and the coordination of City agencies all working together to ensure another safe and successful New Year's Eve celebration as Downtown rings in the year 2009.

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EASING YOUR WAY 'ROUND TOWN

Are you tired of the log-jam of buses at Rodney Square? Is parking your car a hassle and you wish that you could ride a trolley, shuttle or bicycle instead? Does the rush of cars along MLK Boulevard make you think twice about walking to the Riverfront for lunch? Concerns such as these are currently being examined as WILMAPCO heads up the Downtown Wilmington Circulation Study 2009, in cooperation with DelDOT, the Delaware Transit Corporation (DTC), the City of Wilmington, and consultants Whitman, Requardt & Associates, LLP (WR&A). Expected completion of the Study and the release of a detailed report of outcomes are set for August 2009.

The purpose of the Study is to look at the Downtown Wilmington Transportation Study of 1997 and evaluate whether changes implemented since that time address the needs of the area, currently. With the considerable growth and development the Downtown and Riverfront areas have seen in the past decade, the Circulation Study will also help to determine if additional improvements and transportation options are necessary.

Over the past several months, WILMAPCO began conducting a series of Advisory Committee meetings and Public Workshop presentations from which to both share and gather information. Some of the common themes revealed during those meetings included concerns of: ensuring a balance of travel modes; providing frequent transit service throughout the city; making Downtown more "walkable;" matching parking supply with demand; and reclaiming Rodney Square as Downtown's premier public space.

These concerns will be addressed in the updated circulation model, developed by WR&A, with recommendations for optimizing efficiency of all modes of transportation to advance a more livable Downtown where vehicle and pedestrian traffic flows easily. For updates and more information, visit www.WILMAPCO.org/downtown.

TAPAS IN LOMA! OLÉ!

The LoMa district has spiced up its culinary offerings with the recent opening of Orillas Tapas Bar & Restaurant, the new tapas bar and restaurant at 413 N. Market Street. Its international flare furthers the cultural appeal of Downtown as the area continues to flourish.

Orillas owner/chef Julio Lazzarini, previously of Deep Blue, Dilworthtown Inn and Four Seasons ilk, brings 14 years of culinary expertise to the table as he prepares authentic tapas and Mediterranean dishes sure to please any palate. And, with Wine Tasting Evenings every Friday, sampling a variety of tapas and wines is made easy.

Explore the flavors of Spanish cuisine in the elegant bar area with selections from 70 tapas dishes, or get comfy in the 60-seat dining room with a warm and hearty dish of paella. It's Old World cuisine in a hip, new Downtown establishment boasting an exquisite selection of wines from Spain, Italy, France, Argentina, Chile, and California – and, of course, red and white sangria.

It's the perfect new place for a business lunch, a quick bite with friends after work, or a hot date on "Ole Nights" with featured dancers and musicians. Open for lunch and dinner. For more information call 302.427.9700 or visit www.orillastapasbar.com.

LEAVE IT TO US!

Autumn leaves are beautiful as they change colors on the trees, but once they hit the ground they can become a hazard. Leaves become slippery when wet from rain or covered with snow, they can become tinder for fire when dry, and they often cover the cracks on the sidewalks which can cause someone to trip and fall.

For these reasons as well as the general unsightliness of them when blown across the streets and sidewalks of the city, leaf removal is an important service Downtown Visions provides its customers.

This year, DTV staff removed more than 15 tons of leaves from the Business Improvement District

