

# Holidays

## DDA shelves program to make way for something new

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Apparently ready for a change, the Farmington Downtown Development Authority last week decided to shelve the long-running "Holidays Around the World" program.

The DDA-sponsored Saturday event traditionally focused on fun for the children, including a visit from Santa Claus. But, said some DDA members during a meeting Jan. 4, it didn't really result in booming holiday season sales, the time of year merchants bank on more than any other.

With the aim of boosting December business, the first Friday of that month will be when the new-look holiday program is unveiled.

Although usual holiday decorations, themes and promotions will remain, the new DDA program will primarily focus on a gift certificate giveaway, intended to bring shoppers back. Approximately 80 DDA members with customer traffic (such as restaurants, retailers) will be given \$100 worth of gift certificates to dole out to holiday shoppers, said Judy Downey, executive director of the authority. The DDA will supply about \$8,000 for the certificates.

Downey and other DDA members decided it's time for a different

approach to the holiday program. "Shop With Holiday Dollars in Downtown Farmington" was one suggested name for the event.

"There's a lot of competition for Santa," said Downey during the meeting. "When you're looking at an expenditure of nearly \$9,000 (from the DDA) for an event, you want to leave an impact on downtown shopping." Downey said "everybody does the same thing," namely bringing in Santa for the kids. "Let's do something that would mean dollars to our retailers."

Winners of gift certificates would be required to redeem them at whatever store they won them at, Downey added.

To help customers make the rounds, a walking map of the downtown shopping district likely will be put together for the promotion.

Meanwhile, although the "Holidays Around the World" program was popular with families, that didn't always translate into dollars being spent at downtown businesses, such as the Farmington Center Florist. The owner of the florist, DDA member Linda Trezinski, supports a different direction.

"I don't think we need to revolve (the holiday program) around the children anymore," said Trezinski, quick to note that

there also is the annual Halloween trick-or-treat program and DDA-sponsored kids' events in summer and winter.

### See and flee

Trezinski, who emphasized that she has nothing against having such programs for children, said retailers would be "more apt to help us (the DDA)

out if we help them out." One problem with the old program, Downey explained, was that families often left Farmington after seeing Santa, and headed to shopping centers elsewhere.

"I'm going to hype the dickens out of this," Downey said. "I think it's time for a change, and I'd like to see something that

would benefit everybody in the district."

After the meeting, Downey said the program change isn't being done to shortchange the kids, nor to stifle holiday spirit.

"It sounds tacky, or commercial in a way. But many of our merchants rely on holiday dollars to survive the rest of the year."

**"I think it's time for a change, and I'd like to see something that would benefit everybody in the district."**

Judy Downey  
—DDA director

## Get tickets in town

Tony Kenny and Jury's Cabaret-Irish "All Star Revue" will appear at Orchestra Hall, 3711 Woodward at Parsons in Detroit at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 23. The event will benefit St. Patrick's Senior Center, which has served the frail seniors of Casa Corridor as well as throughout Detroit for 27 years.

Advanced ticket sales are \$25 for balcony; \$30 main floor; \$40 dress circle; and reserved boxes at \$50 each.

Tickets may be purchased at the following local businesses:

Mac Murphy's Restaurant, 3901 Grand River, Farmington Hills; and the Celtic Shamrock Shop in downtown Farmington across from the Civic Theatre.

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