



March 6, 2006

DNA Member News

Getting bigger every month...

Welcome to 9 new members! New members are: **Michele Belden, Nora and John Mosher, Emily Mize, Joe Acker, Mitch Bugge, Cecilia Cendana, Suzanne Levitt and Mary Middleton**. If you know anyone who would like to join, point them to Paula Feltner (Paulajfeltner@aol.com).

We're going wild in downtown Des Moines...

March came in more like a lamb than a lion, but we've got lions anyway, we've got flamingoes, we've got room-sized bugs, and a mysterious influx of men with mustaches!

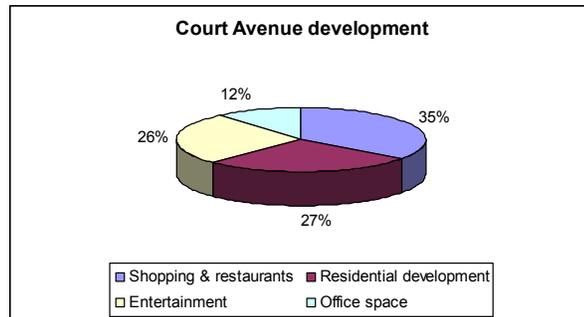
- **"The Lion King"** from Disney is here at last, starting March 3rd and running until April 9th. It's a marvel of imagination, color, and music, award-winning and not to be missed – but you've got your tickets already, right?
- How about **"Pink Flamingoes"** at the Downtown Art Center? DMAC Downtown at 9th and Walnut is throwing its first **"Pink Flamingo Lounge Party"** on March 10th from 8:00 pm until midnight. The fundraiser features a Caribbean vacation paradise with dancing, refreshments, and cash bar. Tickets are \$35. Call 271-0336 for more information.
- The **Science Center is throwing a family picnic** to celebrate its latest film, **"A Rain Forest Adventure – Bugs!"**. Treat your kids to a picnic, décor that includes giant bugs, and activities from 11:00 to 1:00 on Saturday, March 11th, followed by the film. For prices and info, call 274-6868 or go to www.sciowa.org.
- Those men (and maybe a few women) in mustaches? They're donning or growing their brushes to get their **first beer free every Monday in March at The Royal Mile**.

Thank you for sharing...

In February, we asked you for your opinions about Court Avenue redevelopment and about downtown development generally in a **DNA Court Avenue Redevelopment Survey** sent out to our members. Over a quarter of you responded (25.4%), and the results are on their way to policy makers, planners, and influential people around Des Moines – but we wanted you to hear the news first. **Here's what you said:**

- **Your #1 priority for downtown is street-level shops and restaurants.** More than 9 out of 10 people agreed that activity and life at street level are a prerequisite for a thriving downtown.
- Items selected by over half of you as the most wanted elements on Court Avenue were:
 - Grocery store (88%)
 - Shops, boutiques and galleries (78%)
 - Book/magazine store (69%)
 - Movie-plex (63%)
 - Restaurants (57%)
 - Outdoor café or kiosk (51%)
- You said the same thing when asked about downtown development generally. Street-level shops and restaurants came first (92%), followed by specialty retail shops (86%), and evening hours for businesses and services.
- There was a surprising amount of interest in outdoor spaces where people could gather, eat, people-watch, and window-shop; 51% want an outdoor café on Court Avenue, and 45% want an open plaza or gathering space.

- When you were asked how redevelopment on Court Avenue should be divided, you chose shopping and restaurants as the largest portion of development, followed by people and entertainment.
- You want a grocery store, but not just any grocery store. Almost two-thirds (63%) chose a specialty full-service market with organic/natural products and take-out, like Whole Foods or Lunds. Only 28% chose a supermarket.
- You were just as decisive when it came to restaurants. Almost all (88%) would like more sophisticated casual restaurants like Centro, followed by casual neighborhood restaurants (59%), and delicatessens (43%). There was also quite a bit of interest in a wine bar on the west side of the river (37%), and one in five indicated their interest in ethnic restaurants.
- Over and over again, in your responses and your comments, you told us that in addition to basic services like cleaners and gas stations, you want unique development downtown, one-of-a-kind shops and restaurants and experiences. One of you said it best, *"We need small specialized services for residents and downtown workers and we need street level interest, not more huge chunks of concrete."*



Downtown development news...

- Construction has started on **111 City Lofts**, at 10th and Mulberry. The project will offer 64 condominium apartments when completed (winter, 2006). For more info or a virtual tour, go to www.111citylofts.com.
- Construction has started on the **Spaghetti Works building** on Court Avenue. Developed by Jim Hubbell, the project will provide 51 rental apartments on the upper three floors of the building, half reserved for moderate-income residents. For more information, go to www.desmoinesdowntownliving.com.
- Have you seen the **new DNA website**, www.desmoinesdna.com yet? Have any comments or suggestions? It's for you, so feel free to tell us what you want to see on it.

Save these dates!

- **Downtown gets poetic** with a **gala poetry event on Saturday, April 1st**, 7:00 pm at Hoyt Sherman Place Theater, featuring performances by **three outstanding poets, Molly Peacock, Mark Doty and James Tate**.
- **The new Central Library opens on April 8th at 10:00 am!** At last, we'll be inside looking out, instead of outside looking in. Bring your library card and be sure to congratulate Kay Runge, our favorite librarian, on a job well done! For more info, call 283-4152, or go to www.desmoineslibrary.com.
- **Get literary with the 2006 AVID series**, starting on **April 14th through May 8th**, and featuring best-selling author **Diane Mott Davidson**, local favorite **Michael Gartner**, Seattle writer **David Laskin** with a new book on Plains history, NPR book critic **Maureen Corrigan**, and Iowa City writer **Barbara Robinette Moss**. For info or tickets, call Jan Kaiser, 283-4103.
- **Celebrate Downtown!** DNA is joining with other organizations to throw a **3-day downtown party May 11th to May 13th** stretching from Gateway West to the East Village. Look forward to discounts at local vendors, music events, tours, food, activities, and the first Farmers Market of the year. It's going to be big and fun and not to be missed. Mark your calendar now! To volunteer, contact Ben Washburn, bawashburn@thelofts.net.

Downtown is better – and busier – than ever. Be a part of it and get to know your neighbors. Help us spread the news that DNA is making a difference! If you have news that would interest your downtown neighbors, email it to Isobel.osius@meredith.com.