

Upcoming Events

First Friday Gallery Nights

First Friday of
every month, 5-8 pm

Summer Concerts

Each Thursday* 6-8pm
June 17-August 26

Summer Sidewalk Sales

July 29-31, 2010

Art in the Heart

Opening July 2

Exit Saigon

September 18-December 5

* For full schedule check
downtownithaca.com

Downtown Ithaca Stems the Tide of National Recession

Downtown Ithaca is systematically beating back the national recession that has ravaged many other commercial centers across the country. The evidence is the addition and expansion of ten new businesses in the Downtown Business Improvement District over the better part of the last half-year.

The soon to open new value clothing store called the Thrift Boutique, located at 111b The Commons, marks the tenth new business to call Downtown Ithaca home in the past six to eight months. From a brand new brewpub, to a sushi restaurant, to a pharmacy and a fabric re-use store, Downtown Ithaca is regaining its economic footing while adding a variety of restaurants and retail establishments to an already diverse commercial district.



Welcoming Jillian's Drawers: one of many recent ribbon cuttings in Downtown Ithaca

While other cities throughout the country continue to languish, the growth in Downtown Ithaca has been slow and steady resulting in an occupancy rate that now stands at 91%. Only 12 months ago the rate had dropped to 86%. This resurgence has been noticed nationally. According to the Kiplinger letter, "... smaller cities are seeing improvement before some bigger cousins... From Huntsville to Peoria, Billings and Chattanooga to Ithaca, NY metro areas with populations below a million and enjoying the swifter pickup in economic activity." Downtown Ithaca Alliance Executive Director, Gary Ferguson, agrees stating that "downtown Ithaca has fundamental strengths and assets that will serve it well going forward. This new growth is further evidence of the potential and possibility that exist downtown".

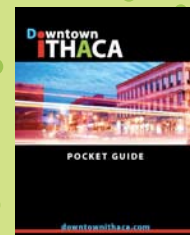
While Ithaca has certainly not been immune to the global economic recession, all signs currently point up as new and newly expanded businesses stake a claim in Downtown Ithaca's economic future.

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twitter.com/downtownithaca
[youtube.com/downtownithaca](https://www.youtube.com/downtownithaca)

Hot off the press -- A revised & expanded Downtown Ithaca Pocket Guide

Get yours at any downtown merchant, the Visitor Center or at the red kiosk on the Commons. The new guide includes shopping, dining, lodging and entertainment information as well as event dates, a downtown map and TCAT route info.



Message from the Executive Director

As summer 2010 descends on us, I invite you to do two simple activities that will make a difference to downtown and as well as bring a smile to your face.

First, invite friends or family to Ithaca this summer and be sure to bring them downtown. Recently the Tompkins County Convention & Visitor Bureau released a study from Chmura Associates that analyzed our tourism and visitor market. As we report in this newsletter, 42% of all visitors come to see and partake of shopping, dining, and fun in downtown. This includes day trippers, overnight visitors, and people visiting family and friends. That is where you come in. Downtown is a special place that folks from outside of Ithaca find fascinating, unique, and one-of-a-kind. Arrange to bring your own guests to downtown this summer. You will be doing your part to build our local economy and share our own community gem- downtown.

Second, you yourself need to come downtown to walk, stroll, shop, and dine- rediscover what is here. We've added more new businesses in 2010... great shops and restaurants both. Look through this newsletter to read about some of them. Our occupancy rates are now back to normal levels and summer in downtown is a special treat... flowers, outdoor art, free music and concerts, shopping, and dining all fuse together to make an unforgettably positive experience. There is ample parking for all--- our three garages are open and ready for you. This is a special place--- you owe to yourself to rediscover this amazing place we call downtown.

Happy summer and see you downtown.

-Gary Ferguson

Chmura Tourism Study Recognizes Downtown

The Tompkins County Convention & Visitor's Bureau has just released a baseline study of regional tourism that has demonstrated the value and importance of downtown and the Commons to the local economy and to regional tourism. Downtown was a key destination for visitors- 42% of visitors to Tompkins County visit downtown and/or the Commons. It is just as likely to be visited by university and college visitors as people traveling for other reasons. Downtown beat out wineries, arts, and museums as a preferred destination, and trailed the universities as the most visited place. Parks, waterfalls and gorges, for example, were visited by 39% of all visitors.

Overall, the Chmura study found that 843,000 visit Tompkins County in 2009. Most were leisure travelers- 75%. Half of

these visitors came from New York State, with the metro New York City area the leading source of our tourists. Many of these folks are repeat visitors- 69% had been to Ithaca previously. These visitors also tended to be highly educated and affluent- 41% had incomes of \$100,000 or more and 41% of visitors had graduate degrees. Half of all visitors stayed in hotels; 31% stayed with family and friends.

This study shows the power and potential of tourism to be a strong positive impact on the local economy and clearly demonstrated the importance of a strong, vibrant, and attractive downtown. To view a copy of the Chmura study Executive Summary, visit www.downtownithaca.com

Downtown Ithaca Alliance Elects New Board Members

The Downtown Ithaca Alliance (DIA) is pleased to announce the election of a new board president and welcome the addition of two new executive committee members as well as two new board members. Newly elected board president Steve Hugo, principal associate and project manager at Holt Architects, replaces outgoing two-term DIA board president Joseph Gaylord. Michael Cannon, Assistant Vice President of Commercial Banking at Tompkins Trust Company, will serve as the newly elected Vice President while downtown resident and Health Care Marketing Manager for Cbord, Tanya Vanasse will be the acting Vice President of Marketing and Member Service. Rounding out the Executive Committee via re-election are; Secretary Ursula Kurman Browning, Treasurer Jeff Dobbin, Vice President for Business Retention and Development Mack Travis and Vice President of Special Events Joseph Wetmore.

Scott Miller and Lynda Thompson join the DIA board of directors. Scott Miller is a partner in the law office of Holmberg, Galbraith, van Houten & Miller. Scott and his wife Teri Miller are the current owners and operators of downtown restaurants Madeline's and WildFire. Lynda Thompson rejoins the board after having served a board term from 2005-2008. Lynda is the manager and buyer for the House of Shalimar and the buyer for Ithacards. The Downtown Ithaca Alliance welcomes all new and returning members to the board of directors and executive committee. The Downtown Ithaca Alliance is a State of New York chartered not-for-profit organization charged with the revitalization, development, promotion and management of downtown Ithaca.

New Smoking Ban

On April 7, 2010 the City of Ithaca became the first community in New York State to adopt outdoor smoking regulations. The legislation will become effective on August 1, 2010 and prohibits smoking in parts of the Commons, at outdoor dining tables and mobile vending sites, at outdoor special events, within 25 feet of bus shelters, public playgrounds, entrances to schools and city buildings and elevators in city parking garages. A copy of the legislation and a map can be found at City of Ithaca under News.

Ambassadors on the Commons

You may have noticed the red information booth set up in the fountain area. The booth is staffed seven days a week by two hospital-ity ambassadors. You can pick up a copy of our Downtown Ithaca pocket guide, browse through our collection of menus from Commons restaurants, check out the TCAT schedule and ask questions of our trained staff. Also on duty are two clean ambassadors who water and weed the plantings, pick up litter and make our Commons a nicer place.

Beautification

On May 9th the Beautification Brigade from Co-operative Extension partnered with downtown merchants in bringing container plantings to the front of Commons stores. The merchants supplied the dirt and the pots and the volunteers planted flowers appropriate for the amount of sun. The Brigade is also responsible for the flowers in the planters around the Commons.

A New Downtown Landmark: 130-132 The Commons

Work has begun on what will surely become a new Ithaca Commons landmark... the renovation of the 130-132 The Commons building. Formerly known as the Plantations Building, new owner Sunit (Lex) Chutintaranond will be undertaking a full and complete redo of the property. The total project will cost nearly \$2.5 million and will result in a new 4,085 square foot restaurant on two floors plus eight (8) units of upper story apartment housing. The restaurant will focus on fine Asian fusion dining and will be owned and operated by Lex, one Ithaca's premier restaurateurs. The apartments will be one bedroom in size, with two earmarked as affordable units. The project has been

supported with funding assistance from the Tompkins County IDA downtown tax abatement program, a Restore New York grant, funding from the Ithaca Urban Renewal Agency, and from the use of federal and state historic tax credits. A late fall opening is planned.



Commons Redesign Update

Since last fall Sasaki & Associates has been working for the City of Ithaca on a concept plan for the re-design of the Ithaca Commons pedestrian mall. Built in 1975, the Commons is in need of surface repairs as well as underground utility upgrading. Sasaki & Associates has been working with a City appointed client committee to review and vet options and alternatives. The firm made a major presentation of the new concept at the DIA Annual Meeting in April and simultaneously to Common Council and the Board of Public Works.

The City sought feedback on the new plan and forwarded comments to the consultants and the client committee. Because this is only a concept plan, there

will be opportunity to tinker with details prior to the completion of construction drawings. This would include considering such important details as the size of performance structures, the number and types of seats, the treatment of public art, the type of surface, and the specific types of trees and planters to be utilized.

The next step for this project is to secure additional capital funds to complete the construction drawings and then to secure capital funds for actual construction.

To view the concept plan, go to the City web site (www.Cityofithaca.org) or the Downtown web site (www.downtown-ithaca.com).

Art in the Heart of the City Returns

Art in the Heart of the City begins its 11th year this June. Six artists will be showing about a dozen pieces. The exhibition will kick off on July 2nd with a reception and a guided tour of the pieces by the artists. Look for returning artists Mary Beth Ihnken and Estela de Paola de Lerma. New artists will be exhibiting in stone and steel, wood, found materials and steel and aluminum.

Green Street Mural Project

If you've driven down Green Street you've probably noticed the mural under the Aurora St. bridge. The artist Jonathan Matas is commemorating Ithaca's history as an important site on the Underground Railroad.

MARKETING & EVENTS

In Case You Missed it...

Red Bull and Chocolate?

For successive weekends in Downtown the West End of State street came alive with Chariot Races and a Chocolate Street Fair. Saturday April 24th marked the inaugural Red Bull Chariot race in Upstate New York. Teams of College Students from throughout the Central New York region flooded into Downtown Ithaca to race home-made crafts in a competition sponsored by energy drink company Red Bull. In addition to the teams of college representatives, over 1,000 people joined in the action as fans and spectators. May 1st marked the arrival of Charlie and the Chocolate Factory at the State Theatre and in celebration of the timeless classic, "Charlie's Chocolate Street Fair" was born. Charlie's chocolate street fair featured carnival games, magic, face painting and a Willy Wonka cake complete with a flowing chocolate river.



Awards Ceremony at the Red Bull Chariot Races

Sidewalk Sales

Sidewalk sales will return to Downtown Ithaca this year on July 30th and 31st with a special preview day of bargains on July 29th. This year everything from clothing and jewelry to toys and housewares will be a part of the mega discounts to be found throughout the Commons and abroad. Downtown merchants roll out annual sales during the last weekend in July as part of a time honored tradition that brings out the shopper in everyone.

M&T Bank Summer Concert Series

Summer Concerts return to Downtown Ithaca every Thursday evening from June 17th to August 26th in the Bernie Milton pavilion. Local musical stalwarts and fan favorites the Burns Sisters, Hubcap and the Sim Redmond band join alongside first-time Summer Concert series performers Revision, Australian pop-sensation Ry Cuming and Latin Salsa band El Rumbon. Additional dates include two performances by the Ithaca Concert Band and a special Wednesday night Grassroots preview show.

First Friday Gallery Night

The 2010 First Friday Gallery Night series got off to a prolific start in January with eleven shows taking place in 9 different locations throughout Downtown Ithaca. The newly adopted, expanded First Friday format for 2010 has allowed for greater participation from both non-traditional gallery night sites, non-traditional gallery night art forms and added participation from interested parties outside of the business improvement district. First Friday Gallery Night events for 2010 have included the unveiling of a children's public art display, the integration of music as well as the use of select theatre arts presentations.

Downtown to Launch Custom Gift Card

The Downtown Ithaca Alliance is preparing to launch its new Gift Card Program. Replacing Downtown Dollars, our old paper gift certificate program, the new plastic gift cards will use a credit card based system so that all merchants who accept Mastercard can participate. The system is closed loop, meaning dollars on the cards can only be used at terminals in Downtown that are registered. The DIA hopes to increase the use of the gift card thereby keeping more dollars in our Downtown economy.



2009 Downtown Sidewalk Sale



2009 Summer Concert Series

MARKETING & EVENTS

Coming Soon...

Website Updates

DowntownIthaca.com is getting ready to re-launch with some new updates that will assist merchants to publicize their events and help consumers to find what they need. The new site includes a Google search function which enables prospective consumers to search by topic or keyword. A new events calendar will allow for all events large and small to be included on a daily event schedule. The site will also feature a new blog, enhanced social media access, and additional audio/visual material.

Employee Discount Program

The DIA is getting ready to launch the new Employee Discount Program. This program has been in place for retail to retail businesses to encourage referral between locations. In response to popular demand, the new program will provide discounts to all downtown employees. There will be two categories of discount, Reciprocal and Regular Employee. Employee Discount Cards will be issued in the first week of August and be valid for one year. Employers can submit discounts or employee names to Shannon@downtownithaca.com.

Hospitality Star Program Visits Downtown

Downtown Ithaca played host to the Hospitality Star program on June 8, 2010. The program is designed for people in the hospitality industry to help build knowledge about the Tompkins County hospitality industry and learn skills to apply in their jobs. Program attendees include bed and breakfast operators, hotel front desk employees, area attraction operators, and other hospitality ambassadors. New in 2010, the program visited Downtown and attendees were provided with a sampling of downtown restaurants at a luncheon followed by a full tour of downtown shopping, dining and attractions.

Exit Saigon: Enter Little Saigon

Downtown Ithaca will be welcoming a Smithsonian Institution traveling exhibit showcasing the Vietnamese-American refugee experience from September 18 to December 5, 2010. Exit Saigon: Enter Little Saigon – Vietnamese America since 1975 is the title of the exhibit. A celebration of cultural diversity, Exit Saigon explores civic and political issues as well as the intergenerational tensions experienced by families as they negotiate new lives in a new country. The exhibit comes through a collaboration of Community Center Programs of Cornell University and the Downtown Ithaca Alliance.

Orientation Sessions

Ithaca College welcomes its new class and their families to orientation sessions from June 18 to July 16th. Staff from the Downtown Ithaca Alliance is participating in the seven sessions by providing information including maps and pocket guides to downtown. The sessions are designed to help the students get familiar with their new college, register for classes, and gain familiarity with their new community.

Shenanigans to Independence!

The DIA continues its monthly advertising campaigns after experiencing over 4,000 participants in our Shamrock Shenanigans and Mother's Day promotions from March to May. Autumn Leaves Used Books and House of Shalimar were our merchant winners for collecting the most responses. Our new Independence Day Buy Local campaign is running over seven radio stations from June 25 to July 4. This campaign, in partnership with Local First Ithaca, features the reasons community members should support locally owned, independent businesses. You can also find Downtown Ithaca ads in print in various summer guides, featuring our Shop, Dine & Play campaign.

Ithaca Festival Spring Craft Show

Downtown Ithaca came alive for the Ithaca Festival and Spring Craft Show from June 3rd to 6th. Following the popular Thursday evening parade, the festival took place Friday and Saturday in Downtown and on Sunday in Stewart Park. Festival attendees were treated to music, entertainment and children's activities in Downtown on Friday and Saturday. The Downtown Ithaca Alliance hosted the Spring Craft Show with over 110 vendors demonstrating their wares.

New Businesses

The Bodhi Tree 154 The Commons



The Bodhi Tree is “a zen store and more” offering sterling and gemstone jewelry, handmade incense, lotions and soaps, batik tapestries, and unique women’s clothing and accessories.

Exscape 156 The Commons



This upstate retail chain store chose to open an additional retail outlet on the Commons because of the promising economic times that lay ahead in Ithaca. They offer a large selection of glass smoke shop items.

Jillian’s Drawers 171 The Commons



The newly re-located and expanded Jillian’s Drawers has opened a brand new 5,000 + square foot store that boasts one of the largest selections of natural parenting accessories available anywhere in the country.

Palmer Pharmacy 131 E. Green St.



The convenience of a local pharmacy is a welcome addition to Downtown Ithaca. Palmer’s is a full-service pharmacy with an old fashioned ice cream parlor featuring locally-made Cayuga Creamery ice cream.

Bandwagon Brew Pub 114 N. Cayuga



Featuring a fine selection of craft brewed beers and a creative food menu, Bandwagon Brewpub has already begun the process of expansion in order to accommodate the growing demand for their popular line of beers.

Waffle Frolic 146 The Commons



Waffle Frolic, a new coffeehouse and waffle bar, features a variety of waffles and baked goods along with a cozy atmosphere complete with sofas and bookshelves.

Thrift Boutique 111B The Commons



Thrift Boutique is our most recently opened new business. They are a value clothing store offering gently used clothing and accessories for women, men, teens and children; yet another sign of Ithacans’ commitment to sustainability.

Prize Diner 116 W. State St.



Ithaca’s latest all-American dining establishment featuring a variety of homemade staples like meatloaf and chicken noodle soup. Owners Helen and Chris of Owego, NY moved their home-style operation to Ithaca, NY.

SewGreen 114 N. Cayuga



The newly opened fabric re-use store, SewGreen, was started by long time recycling and re-use advocate Wendy Skinner. The SewGreen retail store is helping to lead Ithaca’s hands-on consumer sustainability movement.

Headdies 103 The Commons



Headdies Glass Gallery has expanded it’s retail chain pipe shop business to the Ithaca Commons. They offer American made glass pipe art as well as live glass blowing demonstrations.

Capital State Kitchen 138 W. State St.



At the corner of W. State Street and Geneva lies Ithaca’s newest Asian themed restaurant; Capital State Kitchen Sushi. It is owned and operated by the current owners of the Capital Corner restaurant located on the same block.

Ithaca Transcendental Meditation Program 103 W. Seneca



Carol Travis has been teaching TM for 20 years and practicing for 32 years. Along with Dr. Joel Wysong, Travis is offering classes in this unique and easy-to-learn style of meditation.