

# Road, entertainment options under construction downtown

Written by

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For the Enquirer

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As work crews descend upon Michigan Avenue at the start of construction season, businesses and event organizers are busy doing construction of their own.

The work on water mains and sidewalks ties into the ongoing Downtown Transformation, which includes the creation of the International Food Protection Training Institute and the eventual move of the Math and Science Center to downtown, said Alyssa Jones, communications and events manager for the Battle Creek Downtown Partnership.

"This is the third year of the transformation and unfortunately the most visible, but the end product is what will tie all the pillars together," Jones said.

Currently, Michigan Avenue is closed from Carlyle to McCamly Streets for phase one of the project.

Phase two will begin in June or July, with Michigan Avenue from McCamly to Capital

Avenue being closed, but many events will continue as planned.

"We have about 50 events planned downtown this summer," Jones said. "Some are basic, run-of-the-mill ideas, things we have every year: farmer's market, Spring into the Arts, Vibe@5 and Post Band concerts, but we also have some construction events planned to bring people downtown and show them the construction is not scary and not something to be avoided."

One construction event will be held in conjunction with Art in the Park on June 18, where sidewalks will be decorated by professional chalk artists.

"The community will be able to vote for the pieces they like best," Jones said. "It's just something to get the community into the construction area to see what's happening with the construction downtown."

While parking along Michigan Avenue is out of the question, a map on the Battle Creek

Downtown Partnership's website lists the closest parking areas for each downtown business.

"If you're going to Arcadia, you can just click on their name below and the map will highlight the closest parking area: you can park in the ramp or in the adjacent parking area," Jones said. "Downtown businesses are still accessible."

Arcadia Brewing Company, one of the first businesses to be affected by the construction, hasn't seen a huge drop in customers, founder and president Tim Suprise said.

"It's been really encouraging," Suprise said. "It's just early in the process. The true test is over time."

Construction is also underway inside Arcadia to improve both brewery efficiency and the atmosphere for patrons.

"We're in the process of building a deck/beer garden," Suprise said. "It'll add value to our atmosphere and environment. We're also in the middle of an expansion, enough to hold 12,000 barrels and a canning line."

A loading dock will have to be moved to accommodate the deck, but Suprise expects work to begin on the deck in the next 30 to 45 days.

Arcadia's schedule is still under construction, but Suprise has high hopes for the summer.

"We have special events planned, but our schedule hasn't been put together yet," Suprise said. "We're always looking for ways to engage our customers and allow them to hang out."

However, one popular event remains in limbo so far.

"Originally we were planning Blues, Brews and Barbeque, which is an event we've held for eight or nine years now," Suprise said. "It's quite popular, but it's not a definite event this year. After phase one gets done in August, we'd have a short window to have it."

BC Green Drinks holds their monthly gatherings at Arcadia at 5:30 p.m. the fourth Tuesday of every month, Jennifer Sellers of Kingman Museum said.

Topics this summer will include Wal-Mart's organic waste recycling program, the concept of "peak oil," where oil production peaks before terminally declining, and sustainability organizations such as Tiller's

International and the BlueGreen Alliance.

Just past the construction down the street, Paul Conkey, owner of the Griffin Grill & Pub, also has a big summer planned.

"We're planning things with [Battle Creek Unlimited] to get a rotating mid-week party," Conkey said. "We'll also be doing outdoor barbeques and expand our side patios."

Street construction won't make it to the Griffin until June or July, but Conkey remains optimistic about it.

"They redid the [State Street] parking lot about two years ago, and we survived that so I think we can survive this," Conkey said. "As they're doing phase one the crosswalks up and down both side of the street have been open most of the time. So as long as they keep the crosswalks through it'll be okay."

Conkey also hopes some of the bigger draws downtown help bring in patrons.

"It's always nice to see things at the arena," Conkey said. "Last year, when they held events, we held outdoor concerts from the middle to end of August."

Alyssa Jones also has only one thing to say to people who turn their cars around at the mere sight of construction.

"Stop your car, get out and check it out," Jones said. "Nothing has stopped. Things may be rotated into a different area, but

they'll still continue. If you're from the area, you understand what's going on: it's exciting, it's progress. One day you'll say 'I remember when we did this.' It'll look great."

For more information on downtown construction projects, parking and event calendars, visit [www.downtownbattlecreek.com](http://www.downtownbattlecreek.com).



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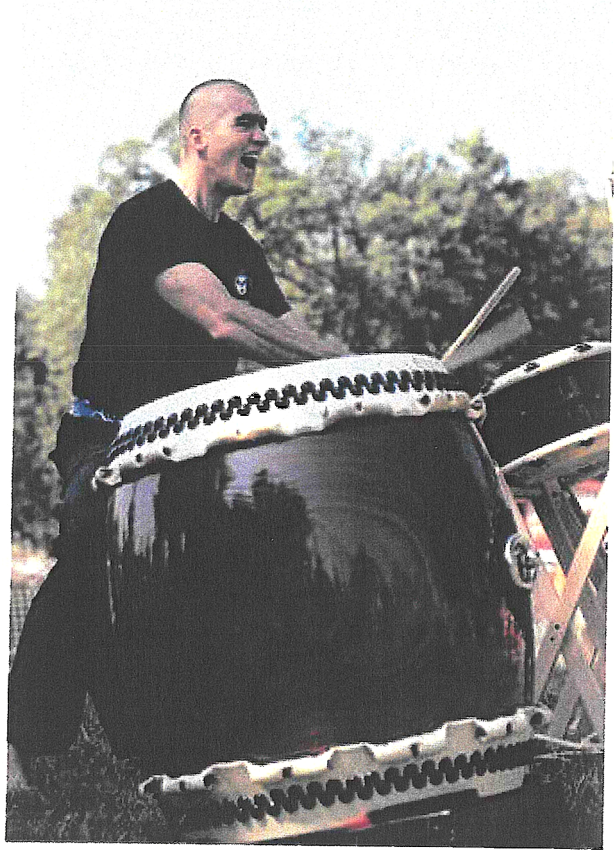
Brigette Leach talks to a customer at the 2010 Battle Creek Farmer's Market. This year, the market opens

at 9 a.m. Saturday. / Kevin Hare/The Enquirer



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Many Mexican folk dances will be performed by Fantasia Ballet Folklórico Dance on June 21 at the Miller Stone Building.



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Raion Taiko, an intense form of ensemble drumming

from Japan, will be performed July 19 at the McQuiston Center.

## Summer events in downtown Battle Creek

- » **Battle Creek Farmer's Market**, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. May 7-Oct. 29; Festival Market Square.
- » **"Doubt, A Parable,"** 8 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays, 3 p.m. Sundays; May 13-22; First United Methodist Church, 111 E. Michigan Ave.; \$15-\$20; [www.whatado.org](http://www.whatado.org).
- » **Defying Gravity: Local children's choirs**, 7:30 p.m. May 14; First Congregational Church, 145 Capital Ave. N.E.; \$8-\$16 in advance, \$2 more at the door; 565-2199; [www.yourmusiccenter.org](http://www.yourmusiccenter.org).
- » **Flash Flood opens**, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. May 28; Full Blast, 35 Hamblin Ave.; 966-3667; [fullblast.org](http://fullblast.org).
- » **Green Drinks**, 5:30 p. m. May 26, June 23; Arcadia Brewery, 103 W. Michigan Ave.; [www.greendrinks.org/MI/BattleCreek](http://www.greendrinks.org/MI/BattleCreek).
- » **BC Cruisers**, 7 p.m. Thursdays; begins June 2 (tentative); [groups.to/bccruisers](http://groups.to/bccruisers).
- » **Yoga in the Park**, 5:30 p.m. Tuesdays June 7-Aug. 30; Mill Race Park.
- » **Post Band Concert series**, 7 p.m. June 9, 16, 30 and July 7, 14, 21; free.
- » **Cereal Festival Parade**, 6 p.m. June 10; parade route: VanBuren Street to Capital Avenue to West Michigan Avenue to Commerce Pointe; [www.bcfestivals.com](http://www.bcfestivals.com).
- » **Cereal Festival**, 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. June 11; downtown Battle Creek; [www.bcfestivals.org](http://www.bcfestivals.org).
- » **Outdoor movies**, dusk June 18, July 16 and Aug. 20; Mill Race Park.
- » **Art in the Park and Chalk the Avenue**, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. June 18; Mill Race Park; [www.artcenterofbattlecreek.org](http://www.artcenterofbattlecreek.org).
- » **Mexican Folk Dances: Fantasia Ballet Folklorico Dance**, 11 a.m., 1 and 2:30 p.m. June 21; Miller Stone Building, 77 N.E. Capital Ave.; free; [www.willard.lib.mi.us](http://www.willard.lib.mi.us).
- » **Barbara Bailey Hutchison concert**, June 28: 1 p.m. at Miller Stone Building, 77 N.E. Capital Ave., 6:30 p.m. at Helen Warner Branch, 36 Minges Creek Place; free.
- » **Festival Market Music Series**, 11:45 a.m. to 1 p.m. Wednesdays July 6-Aug. 31; Festival Market Square.
- » **"The World of Toys" with Zeemo**, July 12: 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. at Miller Stone Building, 77 N.E. Capital Ave., 6 p.m. at Helen Warner Branch, 36 Minges Creek Place; free; [willard.lib.mi.us](http://willard.lib.mi.us).
- » **Vibe@5**, 5 to 8 p.m. Fridays July 15-Aug. 26; Friendship Park; [downtownbattlecreek.com](http://downtownbattlecreek.com).

- » **"Twelve Angry Men,"** First United Methodist Church, 111 E. Michigan Ave.; \$15-\$20; 8 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays, 3 p.m. Sundays; July 15-30; \$15-\$20; [whatado.org](http://whatado.org).
- » **Cruise the Gut**, 5 to 10 p.m. Aug. 13; downtown.
- » **Raion Taiko Drums**, 7 p.m. July 19; McQuiston Center, 100 W. VanBuren St.; free; [willard.lib.mi.us](http://willard.lib.mi.us).
- » **West Michigan Capoeira**, 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. July 26; Miller Stone Building, 77 N.E. Capital Ave.; free; [willard.lib.mi.us](http://willard.lib.mi.us).
- » **Madcap Puppets: "Jack and the Gentle Giant,"** 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. Aug. 2; Miller Stone Building, 77 N.E. Capital Ave.; free; [willard.lib.mi.us](http://willard.lib.mi.us).
- » **Jim Merrills: The Magic of Germany**, 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. Aug. 9; Miller Stone Building, 77 N.E. Capital Ave.; free; [willard.lib.mi.us](http://willard.lib.mi.us).

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