

Welcome to 2020. I hope everyone had a very pleasant holiday season great vacation. A lot has changed in 2019 and I would like to summarize all the changes, improvements, and activities in the River to Rail service area.

Changes in 2019:

1. Downtown Farmers Market was a great success all summer.
2. Mural completed on the east side of the American Legion.
3. City of Brainerd approved River to Rail suggested incentives as proposed by R2R committee.
 - a. No SAC/WAC fees in R2R corridor
 - b. No building permit fees on improvements up to \$150,000. Negotiable on improvements greater than \$150,000.
 - c. BUF Loans available
 - d. TIF/tax abatement available for larger developments
 - e. Opportunity zone potentially available
4. The Lofts – Dave Pueringer’s remodeled apartments and business space in mini-mall opened.
5. Cattales Bookstore expanded doubling in size.
6. Rumbly Hall (old Iron Rail Saloon) opened for events.
7. Knotty Pine Bakery opens on Laurel St.
8. The Vice (expansion at Last Turn Saloon) opens on 8th.
9. Bob & Fran’s has a new façade.
10. Hills Pawn Shop has a new façade.
11. Numerous apartments have been remodeled and are all rented in several buildings.
12. Loco Espresso – Coffee shop and Boutique opens in the BN Center Tower building
13. Downtown Brainerd Business Coalition is getting some legs with a hard working group of business owners at the helm.
14. New City Administrator chosen for Brainerd – Jennifer Bergman – Congratulations!
15. Sheila Haverkamp, BLAEDC CEO, retired and search is underway for the new leader. Congratulations on your retirement Sheila – It is well deserved.
16. Tyler Glynn is hired as new BLAEDC CEO – Congratulations!
17. Destination Downtown 3 – a resounding success with three successful applicants –
 - a. Crow Wing Food Coop
 - b. Loide’s Oils, Vinegars & Luxury Appliances
 - c. Minnesota Makerspace
18. Ed Menk’s building sold – to Loide’s for new business as part of destination downtown.
19. Visit Brainerd has relocated and expanded in downtown.
20. New store opening next to The Gallery – Open City Thrift Store. The owner says “downtown Brainerd is the place to be”.
21. The Riverfront committee received some updated plans for the trails and spaces along the river.
22. The Water Tower committee applied for and were granted funds to do plans for a new roof for the historic water tower.
23. ETC.

This is not how I planned on spreading the word but will have to do for now. I have provided a Powerpoint describing these improvements to BLAEDC for sharing with all that are interested, including some pictures.

I thank you for your support and look forward to getting back together and working on this again as soon as we get through this coronavirus pandemic. In the meantime, stay healthy and give me some feedback and ideas.

Bruce Buxton
River to Rail Coordinator
218-330-9260
brucebuxtonwsn@gmail.com