

SELECTED PRESS COVERAGE FROM 2010 PROGRAM

[Back to Local News](#)



Updated: 8:07 AM Nov 22, 2010

Five new stores coming to DTSB for the holidays

South Bend


Five new stores will soon open in downtown South Bend because of the "Pop Up Shop" program.

Posted: 6:10 PM Nov 19, 2010

Reporter: Mark Peterson, Katherine Rufener

Email Address: mpeterson@wndu.com,
katherine.rufener@wndu.com



 13 people recommend this. Be the first of your friends.

Story

 10 Comments

Font Size: [A](#) [A](#) [A](#)

New [shops](#) are popping up all over downtown South Bend.

Five new stores will soon open their doors because of the "Pop Up [Shop](#)" program.

The program offers free rent from Black Friday until New Year's Day.

"We had probably 30 applicants and 60 plus [phone calls](#), and really gave us great opportunity to choose from a wide variety of potential vendors in all of those spaces," said DTSB Executive Director Marco Mariani.

The first store opening will come Monday when A Homestead Shoppe begins selling lighting and home décor products at 123 South Michigan. The store opens at 10 a.m. and will hold an open house starting at 4 p.m.

"Most importantly it will add to the downtown [shopping](#) experience over the month of December for every one coming downtown for all our holiday activities Santa's house and workshops, the tree lighting and a long list of other holiday activities downtown for December," Mariani said.

Imagine That! Will operate a toy store at 117 S. Michigan. Party, Work & Play will set up shop at 132 S. Michigan, selling clothes, accessories and shoes. Heritage Arts and Crafts will do business at 140 S. Michigan, while the Michiana African American Chamber of Commerce Inc. and Friends Holiday Market will be open weekends at 229 S. Michigan in the City Center Building.

All the stores should be open by December 3rd.



Tenants selected for free downtown South Bend retail space

Posted: Nov 17, 2010 3:13 PM EST

Downtown South Bend is adding some new businesses for the month of December. And the rent is free. The plan is to try to convince people to shop the downtown area.

Tamara Nicholl-Smith, the director of downtown business recruitment, says the goal of the project is to create long-term lease prospects for new tenants and get retail business back into the area.

"It's been a very long time since the majority of that block has been nothing but retail and restaurants," said Nicholl-Smith.

Among those opening stores is Marlene Hollenkamp, whose toy store, Imagine That!, was hit hard by the construction in Mishawaka.

"Downtown South Bend has a lot to offer, it's really very charming. It really suits us well, I think it's a good match," said Hollenkamp.

Also opening is A Homestead Shoppe, a store based in LaPaz whose owner Bruce Albert says typically caters to those seeking wholesale lighting.

He says the short-term lease allows him to move seasonal products into a market that is accessible to everyday customers. It will also allow him to keep five workers that he would normally be forced to lay off.

And as for Marlene, she's not having to hire extra workers, but knows the extra work will be worthwhile, especially if the holiday season ends up being as strong as some experts are projecting.

The five stores opening are:

- Imagine That!; a children's toy store.
- A Homestead Shoppe; featuring unique holiday decor and interior lighting.
- Party, Work and Play; an apparel and gift store.
- Heritage Arts and Crafts; a store focusing on fun crafting
- Michiana African-American Chamber of Commerce Inc. Holiday Market; which features an array of various vendors unique to Michiana.

All of the storefronts are located in the 100 block of South Michigan Street in downtown South Bend, near the College Football Hall of Fame.

Shop owners test downtown South Bend waters Program lures them to heart of the city for the holidays



Marlene Hollenkamp stands in her downtown shop, Imagine That, which she hopes to keep in downtown South Bend after the holiday season. (Tribune Photo/BARBARA ALLISON)

By HEIDI PRESCOTT, *Tribune Columnist*
9:07 p.m. EST, December 2, 2010

Marlene Hollenkamp initially did not know if she should jump at the chance to open a store for the holidays in downtown South Bend.

“Reluctant, reluctant, reluctant,” she says, describing the uncertainty she felt about requesting more information about the free rent offer from Downtown South Bend Inc.

Late one evening she drafted an [e-mail](#) containing questions about the program, mulled it over and finally clicked “send.” The next morning Hollenkamp, owner of the Mishawaka toy store Imagine That, received an enthusiastic response.

The reply came from Tamara Nicholl-Smith, downtown [business](#) recruitment director for DTSB, who could not believe her luck and timing. “Marlene’s store was on my list,” she admits, “but I hadn’t contacted her yet.”

That was just a few weeks ago, but today Imagine That and five other stores are officially opening their doors for the holidays in the 100 and 200 block of South Michigan Street. A town crier will be drawn in a sleigh along the street at 4:45 p.m. to proclaim the stores open.

They include: Imagine That; A Homestead Shoppe; Party, Work and Play, Apparel & Gifts; Indiana Home; Center City Holiday Market and Artrageous. The stores will be open seven days until Christmas.

Hollenkamp held a soft opening last week, and both program leaders and downtown merchants have been pleased by the results.

“I didn't expect her to start selling out of things yet,” says Nicholl-Smith. “I knew she would be popular, but I didn't expect people to warm so quickly.”

Mariam Malkovsky, who owns neighboring Bombay Boutique, has noticed an uptick in foot traffic.

“I think this program is bringing new people downtown,” Malkovsky says. “It's a great idea to have this [incentive](#). It gives them the opportunity to experience downtown before they might sign a long-term lease.”

Some [business owners](#), like Hollenkamp, are planning to remain downtown through February — as long as no one knocks down the door to pay rent for their spaces, Nicholl-Smith says.

A few are already considering long-term leases.

“If you saw how much work we put into this in the last 10 to 14 days, we've done everything like a real store,” says Greta Claeys, who opens a new store today called Party, Work and Play Apparel & Gifts.

She also owns Greta's Bridal. The store, which has been in business for 27 years, is located on Lincoln Way East in South Bend. Claeys used this opportunity to do something a little different.

“But we wanted it to look as pretty as any specialty boutique so people know we're committed,” Claeys says. “It's the image; if it's not a good image they won't come back or go to our other location.”

Hollenkamp believes that is the main difference between the downtown stores and traditional holiday pop-ups in malls: most of the downtown stores operate other area locations.

“Even if we didn't stay downtown, we don't disappear after the holidays are over. We have a reputation and offer customers a sense of comfort,” says Hollenkamp, whose main store is located at 707 N. Main St., near downtown Mishawaka.

Instead of going it alone, Hollenkamp found a handful of small-business owners to join her in South Bend, including Mary Labuziowski, who owns the Laugh Out Loud Co. and sells items inside Plymouth's LifePlex.

Together, their storefront offers everything from toys and games to rubber chickens and Groucho glasses to hand-painted chairs. In joining forces, they are more easily able to staff the store.

“Fun is our common element, wouldn't you say, Marlene? Everyone here is creative,” Labuziowski says, adding how art classes start at the store next week. “We think life should be fun,” Hollenkamp says.

She is excited to be part of a commercial district, an area where consumers window shop, for the first time in her career.

“I've never experienced this,” Hollenkamp says. “I've never been part of a cluster of stores; my store has always been a destination.”

Through the temporary program, the business owners hope to also draw business to their permanent locations, Claeys explains.

“When you're in business a long time like us, you're sort of forgotten,” she says. “Because new stores are always coming in, especially national chains that grab the spotlight, the independent store owner tends to get left to the side. We want to change that.”

Have you heard?

It appears a new women's fashion retailer is expanding into our market and planning a location at Heritage Square in Mishawaka, according to a recent job posting for store managers. ... Emerald Cuts salon and spa is planning to relocate from University Commons, which is being converted to a medical plaza, to City Plaza shopping center in Mishawaka, according to a state construction report. Its 4,000-square-foot space is under remodel near the future new Tilted Kilt restaurant and bar. ... Join our next live online chat from noon to 1 p.m. Tuesday.

Heidi Prescott's column runs on Fridays and Sundays. When she's not shopping, contact her at hprescott@sbtinfo.com or (574) 235-6070. You can also check out her blog at www.southbendtribune.com and [Facebook.com/thebasket](https://www.facebook.com/thebasket).

Pasted from <<http://www.wsbt.com/news/wsbt-shop-owners-test-downtown-wate-120210,0,4876332.story>>