



La Porte Urban Enterprise Association outlines 2023 accomplishments

La PORTE, IN (Feb. 29, 2024) – Last year was one full of successes for the La Porte Urban Enterprise Association, according to Board President Mike Riehle.

Formed in 2002, the La Porte UEA awards grants each year to local businesses and residents residing within the Urban Enterprise Zone. In 2023, the UEA was proud to award more than \$123,000 to aid 13 business owners. These monies historically have been used to make façade renovations and to improve the outward appearance of buildings within the zone. Last year, Riehle said the UEA unanimously voted to expand the programs to include internal renovations and upgrades.

“Our board takes pride in utilizing our budget to make the most significant impact to this community,” Riehle said. “Each year we take a look at every program we have available for our zone businesses and residents. Enhancing and improving our already popular business and residential grant programs only fosters the growth of these opportunities and leads to more and more individuals taking advantage. In turn, this improves La Porte’s overall quality of place, which is a UEA priority.”

The UEA also awarded tens of thousands of dollars in special grants last year to benefit the community as a whole. This included a more than \$60,000 investment in the City’s incredibly popular Dumpster Program, which was responsible for the removal of more than 2 million pounds of trash from our community. The UEA’s commitment to this program not only allowed for the return of the program for another season, but also extended the services to cover most of the calendar year.

Committed to helping our downtown flourish, the UEA granted upwards of \$30,000 to support community events happening in the heart of La Porte, such as the Farmed & Forged Market and the Friday Night Live events. In its first-ever season, Farmed & Forged brought a weekly average of 400 shoppers to our downtown, providing access to fresh, locally grown produce and goods. In their third year, the Friday Night Live events provided three free evenings of entertainment throughout the summer and drew record crowds.

In continued partnership with the City of La Porte Park and Recreation Department, the UEA awarded \$40,000 to support expanded parking along Truesdell Ave. near the Dennis F. Smith Amphitheater in Fox Park. Between Arts in the Park and headlining acts at La Porte LakeFest, attendance at Fox Park events has grown tremendously in recent years. This expansion will help to mitigate some of the current demand on parking as we head into the busy summer months.

The past year was one full of accomplishments for the UEA, and 2024 promises just as much success. For residents or businesses seeking more information on the UEA, contact Mary Ann Richards at 219-362-8260 or visit cityoflaporte.com.

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The La Porte Urban Enterprise Association (LPUEA) is a 501(c)3 not for profit organization which serves as the governing body of the La Porte Urban Enterprise Zone. The Association acts as a liaison among Zone residents, businesses and the City of La Porte for any development activity and programs that affect the Zone and its residents. The Mission of the La Porte Urban Enterprise Association is to be a comprehensive economic and community development organization that fosters new investments, partnerships, job creation and redevelopment of the Enterprise Zone.