



SPECIAL TO THE JOURNAL

Street performer Rudy Uresti breathes fire in front of a crowd Friday at Main Street Walhalla's Second Shift.

Main Street Walhalla's new downtown series 'on the rise'

BY LAUREN PIERCE
THE JOURNAL

WALHALLA — Typically nobody enjoys working a second shift, but when it's a street fair — with live music, a juggler, food and more — it's a completely different story.

Second Shift, a once-a-month afterhours event series, aims to add to Main Street Walhalla's mission — to support and enhance the continuing economic development of downtown Walhalla while protecting and promoting its historic heritage.

Main Street Walhalla's executive director Libby Imbody said the series is "on the rise" and was born from residents having fond memories of "strolling through Main Street as kids."

"People can come to Main Street afterhours and bring the whole family," she said. "It has that fun hometown feel, and it's evolved into having something that also helps the businesses



THE DETAILS

Libby Imbody
Executive director
Main Street Walhalla
105 W South Broad St., Walhalla, SC
29691
(864) 977-0222
mainstreetwalhalla.com

play around with their store hours to see how that works out. A lot of our stores close around 4 p.m., so this is an opportunity

for them to stay open later once a month and get some different customers they might not usually get had they been closed."

PERFORMANCES

This month's Second Shift featured performances from Cannon and Cohen, line dancing and dance lessons led by Annette Orr and juggling by Rudy Uresti.

"I like finding unique street performers," Imbody said. "I think that's a niche that we have here in Walhalla that you don't see elsewhere in the area. We always try to find somebody to kind of stroll the streets and surprise people by doing their performances."

For Uresti, this was his first time performing as a juggler in Walhalla. He started out performing in Las Vegas with Cirque du Soleil and has traveled with Ringling Bros. and Barnum and Bailey Circus.

SERIES: 'We've gotten off to a really great start,'

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"When I worked for some of the bigger theaters and the bigger companies, I had to do what they wanted me to do," Uresti said. "It's kind of nice that I have the freedom to be able to use all the abilities that I have."

Eventgoers were able to sit down at the gardens outside of Durham Hall to listen to the melodies of acoustic duo Cannon and Cohen.

Imbody said the duo have played a few times in downtown Walhalla.

"They're very experienced and a lot of fun with their music," she said.

"They enjoy being a part of what's going on downtown, and we love having them each time."

FUN FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY

Main Street Walhalla advertises the event as a family-friendly event.

Imbody said doing so "makes sense economically."

"It makes sense to get



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Main Street Walhalla executive director Libby Imbody, left, and Sunni Ann owner Alis-aun Crenshaw chat Friday at the city's Second Shift event.

families to come to town because they're going to go out to eat, go shopping, so it's good to get the different generations," she said. "I think that's another thing that makes some of the events in Walhalla so unique. Usually,

we're geared toward all ages. I think the grandmas enjoy the clowns or the jugglers almost as much as the 3-year-olds do."

This time around there was even a stroller traffic jam, Imbody added.

"There were so many strollers on Main Street

Imbody said

on Friday," she said. "That says a lot about the walkability of our town."

SECOND SHIFT'S FUTURE

Imbody said it takes about 18 months for an event series like Second Shift to get off the ground and become "a habit" for residents to attend.

"For the retailers, it takes the same amount of time to really see the rewards of staying open later," she said. "Just talking to the business owners, I think some have even seen immediate rewards. The restaurants that stay open later are always full, and the stores are doing very well. That's really good news considering we've only had four of these events so far. Just like with anything else, it's getting the word out and getting people to stop by

after work."

Main Street Walhalla is already thinking ahead for next year.

"We'll run these through December and then we'll kick it back up next spring again with a new series," Imbody said. "We've already been thinking about ways to adjust it like how we do sponsorships, the hours, the locations, so it will continue to evolve and grow. We also have the support from city council and Mayor (Danny) Edwards as well.

"As far as going forward, we've got some great plans, and I can see it growing," she added. "We've gotten off to a really great start, and I can definitely see it becoming something big in Walhalla for years to come."