



## Chocolate Walk gives visitors a taste of downtown

APRIL 16, 2011 BY JEFF BARRON • THE EAGLE-GAZETTE STAFF

"I've seen businesses that I didn't know about," the Lancaster resident said. "Like the maternity shop, a craft store I didn't know about and some of the restaurants and cafés I didn't know about."

About 400 people took to the streets Friday evening, visiting 34 downtown businesses that were giving away chocolate treats to anyone with a goody bag.

After they paid \$10 at the Lancaster-Fairfield County Chamber of Commerce, visitors were given a bag and a map of the participating businesses.

The idea was to introduce people to the downtown and have them come back.

"I'll be back," Jacobs said. "We'd like to see the downtown get nice again."

Stix in Time music store co-owner Tim Spires said people were waiting in line to get a chocolate guitar from his shop.

"This benefits us quite a bit," he said. "Because there are people coming in that didn't even know we were here or have never been in here. We have a guitar student now who found us through last year's Chocolate Walk. We might not sell a whole lot of goods during this time, but the whole purpose is to get people in here. And when they do need something, they'll know where we're at."

Ohio Glass Museum archives director Pattie Frohnapfel said the museum likes to be known as part Main Street.

"We feel that we're vital to the community," she said. "We're one of five museums here in town, and we have a changing exhibit twice a year now. This opens up the downtown to expose the various businesses that some are not aware of that are still here in the downtown area."

Frohnapfel said Chocolate Walk is a good way to get local residents to know about the museum.

"We find that the local people for the most part do not participate on a daily basis," she said. "Most of our traffic comes from out-of-town visitors."

Minute Bar manager Mary Sorell was tempting passers-by with vanilla-and-chocolate-covered strawberries, chocolate martinis and chocolate cake shots.

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"We have a lot of people asking questions about us," she said. "A lot of them don't even know we're here until they come out on the Chocolate Walk. But as soon as they come in for the Chocolate Walk, they do return. It happened last year, and I know it will happen this year."

While business owners looked at Chocolate Walk to increase revenue, Shelley Gygi, of Baltimore, had a different reason for coming.

"I saw this in the paper and thought, 'chocolate'," she said. "I heard there were going to be bands, and it sounded like fun."

Indeed, some businesses did have live music to entertain visitors.

Main Street Lancaster Executive Director David Uhl said all tickets were sold out by Wednesday.

"There's a lot of people," he said. "It's a great night, and the weather is holding up. This is a great night in downtown Lancaster as we kick off the warm-weather season."

Upcoming Main Street Lancaster events include the Rally in the Alley on May 20 and the Gus Macker basketball tournament June 17-19.

Proceeds from Chocolate Walk go toward downtown revitalization

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