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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WEDC grant helps Oshkosh turn an alley into an art gallery
Vibrant Spaces grant will create new event space

OSHKOSH, Wis., June 29, 2023 – The city of Oshkosh is receiving a \$30,845 Vibrant Spaces grant from the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) to fund the transformation of an underused alley space into a functional public gathering space in downtown Oshkosh.

The Vibrant Spaces grant program is designed to help cities and towns revitalize underused spaces to build community and attract future residents. Through this grant program, communities across the state of Wisconsin will be investing in their workforce attraction and small business development by creating inviting, walkable spaces in their downtowns, gateway districts, and economic centers.

“Investing in vibrant communities where people want to live, work, and raise families is critical to attracting and retaining workers in our state,” said Missy Hughes, secretary and CEO of WEDC, the state’s leading economic development organization. “These grants will help communities create new gathering places in thriving downtowns to draw in residents, visitors, new businesses and investments.”

To encourage economic and community growth in downtown Oshkosh, WEDC’s Vibrant Spaces grant will fund the reimagining of a downtown alley into a public gathering space. This project, located in the 400 block of Main Street, will bring public art to the community and enhance the image of the area. Additionally, this project is set to bring visitors and future residents to the 10 businesses and 15 residential units surrounding the space. The spot will serve as a place for community events, including pop-up galleries and the local musical groups weekly meetings.

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“By beautifying and activating underutilized public spaces throughout our Central City, we are encouraging foot traffic and activity which makes spaces like the Algoma Alley safer and more inviting for visitors and residents of Downtown Oshkosh,” said Jessica Meidl, Manager of the Downtown Oshkosh Business Improvement District. “Public art has also had such a tremendous impact on the quality of life in Oshkosh and we are excited to provide more paid opportunities to local artists that the community will be able to enjoy. Additionally, by adding seating and lighting we hope to encourage more programming and activity within the alley.”

The Vibrant Spaces Grant program is an initiative within WEDC’s Community Development and Investment (CDI) grant program. Projects were evaluated based on their ability to create visible and pedestrian oriented public spaces that attract and accommodate multiple users and activities. Successful projects demonstrated that they would benefit the local district, nearby businesses, and the community as a whole. Communities were required to match grant funds and begin construction this summer.

For more information about the Vibrant Spaces grant that Oshkosh is receiving, please contact John Zarate, Economic Development Specialist, at (920) 236-5028 or jzarate@ci.oshkosh.wi.us. Additional information on the grant can be found online at: <https://wedc.org/programs-and-resources/vibrant-spaces/>.

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ABOUT THE WISCONSIN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION:

The Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) leads economic development efforts for the state by advancing and maximizing opportunities in Wisconsin for businesses, communities and people to thrive in a globally competitive environment. Working with more than 600 regional and local partners, WEDC develops and delivers solutions representative of a highly responsive and coordinated economic development network. Visit wedc.org or follow WEDC on Twitter [@WEDCNews](https://twitter.com/WEDCNews) to learn more.