

## Avenues West Overview

Located just west of downtown, Avenues West serves a densely populated urban neighborhood. The 90 square blocks of the Avenues West neighborhood offer recreation, business, education and varied living opportunities to almost 30,000 people on a daily basis. Avenues West is bounded by I-43 on the east, 27<sup>th</sup> Street on the west, I-94 on the south and Highland Avenue on the north.

Prior to its incorporation, the Association was known as the Avenues West Neighborhood Association and was dedicated to the revitalization and development of the historic "Grand Avenue" district.

On June 25, 1987, the Avenues West Association, a not-for-profit membership association, was incorporated. It serves as an advocate for development and revitalization, aesthetic enhancements, cooperative marketing and planning, networking, and the promotion of safety throughout the neighborhood. The association and its partner the Avenues West Business Improvement District (BID No.10) provide leadership in promoting community stability, balance of land uses and economic development. The BID, with a separate seven member board of directors, was formed in late 1992 as authorized under Wisconsin Statutes and continues to contract with the Association for staffing and goal implementation. During the past 22 years, Avenues West staff size has fluctuated from one part time person to two and one half full time employees.

In addition to coordinating the neighborhood's Landlord Compact over the past sixteen years, the Avenues West Association currently coordinates meetings for business operators and property owners on 27th Street. It has two Task Force groups, Safety and Security, and Economic Development, which include experts in the specified fields who collaborate to achieve improved conditions for the neighborhood. In 2008 Avenues West became the sponsoring organization for the SOHI Main Street program on 27<sup>th</sup> Street.

The Association also holds five general meetings each year featuring informational speakers. One of those meetings is the Association's only fund raising event - the annual "Together We Can" Awards Luncheon and Silent Auction. This is when the Community Investment and Impact Awards are presented.

The Avenues West Association's eleven member board of directors represents a broad range of neighborhood stake holders. The staff can be reached at: 624 North 24<sup>th</sup> Street, Milwaukee, 53233. Telephone 414-933-0640; fax 414-933-0641; or, by e-mail at [avenueswest@sbcglobal.net](mailto:avenueswest@sbcglobal.net). The SOHI manager can be reached directly at 414-933-9007 or by e-mail at [manager@sohidistrict.org](mailto:manager@sohidistrict.org)

## SOHI District – Main Street

Working with volunteers, supporters and funders, the SOHI District made major strides in 2009. From committee planning to community clean-ups, the district worked to garner support among local businesses, residents and the City of Milwaukee to make change. Crime and safety issues were at the forefront of many SOHI District work plans and activities. The SOHI District online presence has risen to new heights using technology to connect supporters and funders across the country. The SOHI District has been able to increase efforts in reporting property violations in addition to working with the Milwaukee Department of City Development (DCD) on a comprehensive Master Plan to address traffic congestion and the physical condition of the street. Other major highlights for the year include the grand opening of Izzy's on State (a local restaurant) and the continuation of the SOHI Saturday and Taste of SOHI events.

**Goals:** Following work plans from 2008, the SOHI District was able to reach the established 2009 goals. Both Taste of SOHI and SOHI Saturday were held this year with a combined attendance of 300. The district held several clean-ups, business security trainings and was involved with three security surveys. The district opened a new business, creating 7 full time equivalent (FTE) jobs. Using art by local students, seven vacant storefronts received an artistic make-over. SOHI held its first Arts and Antique Seminar in the spring.

### ▪ **Promotion Committee (PC)**

Increasing SOHI's online presence, while promoting local news and business, was a daily activity for the Main Street manager. The district produced and uploaded 36 videos representing over 150 hours of video edit time on SOHI's YouTube Channel. Constant Contact was the new email format for 2009, adding an additional 140 email addresses for a total of 688 active emails on SOHI's email list. Despite the economic climate, the district was able to fundraise for both annual events, Taste of SOHI and SOHI Saturday, while partnering with local churches St. Paul Lutheran Church and Greater Utopian Pentecostal Church. The district also played as a backdrop to an independent Hollywood film entitled "No God, No Master." MATC Professor Steve Burleson's E-Commerce class provided pro bono services to the district resulting in a savings of \$10,000.00 in website design cost. The new website will be running in 2010 providing information access to SOHI, Avenues West Association (AWA), and Business Improvement District (BID) #10.

### ▪ **Economic Restructuring Committee (ERC)**

The ERC held an Arts and Antique Seminar with the support of the Small Business Administration, County of Milwaukee and DCD. 200 hours of time were spent with local businesses providing support and direction ranging from sales and promotion to development and façade improvements, throughout the year. A total of 70 district letters for business and real estate development were sent to various parties.

- **Design Committee (DC)**

The Design Committee worked this year with DCD and the Wisconsin Department of Transportation on the SOHI District's streetscape plan and timeline. The committee also developed cost estimates and guidelines for the streetscape plan, plus guidelines for SOHI funding of façade projects. Main Street manager Keith Stanley reported close to 300 property violations to the Milwaukee Department of Neighborhood Services (DNS). Over 80% of the reported violations were verified. Led by Quorum Architects, the SOHI District addressed two vacant properties with artwork by local Milwaukee Public School students. The former West Pointe Condominium project received an artistic window treatment with the assistance of local artist Tia Richardson and Neighborhood House youth.

- **Job Creation**

Izzy's restaurant opened in July to much fanfare with both local articles and television spots. The restaurant created seven FTE jobs and has energized the State Street business community.

- **Safety**

There were three security surveys completed by the Milwaukee Police Department with the assistance of the SOHI District manager. Overall crime for the Avenues West and Historic Concordia areas was down from the past few years, however, the SOHI District did see a small increase in criminal damages and robbery. The surveillance program on North 27<sup>th</sup> Street has been successful in assisting police and resulting in several arrests and the issuing of tickets to violators. Operation Red Light was also a Milwaukee Police Department initiative that worked to successfully decrease prostitution in the area.

SOHI volunteers participated in a community clean-up with the Milwaukee Police Department and Neighborhood House and plan more for 2010. Working with the Avenues West Association, SOHI assisted in graffiti removal by providing regular documentation for relay to the Milwaukee Police Department and DNS.

**SOHI District Manager and Committee Chairs:**

District Manager – Keith Stanley

Design Committee Chairman – Brian Scotty

Economic Restructuring Committee Chairman – John Hennessy

Promotion Committee Chairman - Open

Organization Committee Chairman – June Moberly