



MISSOULA DOWNTOWN ASSOCIATION
BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT
MISSOULA DOWNTOWN FOUNDATION

May 18, 2020

Local Media & DT Community

START OF OUT TO LUNCH & DOWNTOWN TONIGHT SUMMER SERIES DELAYED TWO WEEKS

For the first time in history, the start of the beloved Out to Lunch Summer Series – as well as the commencement of the Downtown ToNight Summer Series – will be delayed until June 17-18, due to the current coronavirus pandemic and the current phased guidelines for reopening the economy.

Produced by the Missoula Downtown Association, the Out to Lunch Summer Series began in Caras Park in 1986 and this year's series will be the 35th consecutive season of the weekly food and live music events held every Wednesday in June, July and August. Modeled after Out to Lunch, the Downtown ToNight Summer Series began in 2001, adding adult beverages to live music and food offered Thursdays after work during the summer months. 2020 marks the 20th season of the popular Thursday evening events.

Based upon the current COVID Reopening Guidelines provided by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the State of Montana (MT), and the Missoula City County Health Department (MCCHD), large public gatherings are not recommended during phases 1 and 2.

"We have so much to be thankful for in our community, and both Out to Lunch and Downtown ToNight bring people together in Caras Park every week," said Bob McGowan, President of the Board of the Missoula Downtown Association. "While our volunteer planning committees are prepared to roll out these programs, we want to be thoughtful and responsible on how we provide these offerings for our community members and neighbors."

During a normal season, the Downtown Missoula Partnership typically deploys an estimated 35 vendors, nearly 40 entertainment groups, and almost 45 activity providers throughout the summer events season, and close to 100 businesses contribute sponsorship dollars to fund the events. These programs generate nearly \$430,000 in direct food & beverage consumption each year.

With commerce, connectivity and confidence in mind, the Missoula Downtown Association will be working with vendors, sponsors and musicians to develop new protocols and expectations for the programs, and more information will be released as it comes available. The planning committees have spent the last four months planning for the 26-

event season, booking live music, selling sponsorships, and selecting food vendors and children's activities. The MDA and its organizing committees will implement a biweekly assessment of the current environment, state guidelines and MCCHD Health Orders before cancelling future Out to Lunch or Downtown ToNight events.

"It's very difficult to plan for events in this current environment, but our staff and committee members have been diligent in moving the planning efforts forward for these beloved summer activities," said Linda McCarthy, Executive Director of the Downtown Missoula Partnership. "Summer events in Caras Park contribute significantly to Missoula's culture and our economy, so we will do what we can to sustain as many of those events as possible."

"The economic impact of Caras Park events and Saturday Markets is huge for our Downtown businesses," McCarthy said. "With a questionable tourism season on the horizon, we will do what we can to offer admission-free activities in Downtown for all Missoulians interested in connecting to their community. We want our community members to feel comfortable and cared for when visiting the heart of Missoula, no matter what they're doing."

For more information, visit www.missouladowntown.com or contact the Downtown Missoula Partnership Office via phone (406-542-4238) or email (info@missouladowntown.com).

Downtown: Connecting Our Community!