

Merchants, homes, Tomato Festival Come to Downtown Fairfield

By [Brian Miller and Karl Dumas](#)

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As city staff members begin the lengthy process of developing a comprehensive specific plan for downtown Fairfield and West Texas Street, your reporters thought it was timely to focus on fun and immediate happenings in downtown Fairfield – namely new businesses and the annual Tomato Festival.

Downtown Fairfield has some new merchants that we think will be very popular.

Famous Creations Cupcakery and Bakery has just opened at 835 Texas St., between the Pepperbelly's site and Harry's Sportsman Bar. Nicholas Gonzales-Rodriguez is a longtime Fairfield resident who is extremely enthusiastic about creative cupcake and specialty cake design. He specializes in wedding cakes, including "blackboard cakes" on which special messages can be "written." He has a huge Facebook fan base and even appeared this past week on "Good Morning, Sacramento."

Economic Notes would like to welcome Famous Creations to downtown Fairfield.

Another big opening story downtown is the expansion of longtime merchant, Pieces of Time.

Pieces of Time has opened a 4,000-square-foot showroom at 735 Texas St. Margaret Manzo, executive director of Fairfield Main Street Association, says the vintage and specialty decorative goods and furnishings will be a catalyst to attract browsers to downtown Fairfield. She noted that Pieces of Time has fans from all over the Bay Area, and that on opening day, more than 700 visitors toured the showroom.

With a theme of "reclaiming yesterday's cherished articles for today," owner Kristi Kuel offers specialized restoration and repair services and can even organize weddings and events around vintage themes.

On the residential development side of things (more residents means more customers for local businesses), we are also seeing several new homes in the pipeline.

Joe Delija is in the building permit process for a four-plex on Broadway Street near the county Government Center. Local contractor Steve Hanley has broken ground on Broadway for a new custom home. Habitat for Humanity is moving forward with its plans to construct three single-family homes at the corner of Missouri and Taylor streets, south of Texas Street.

City staff has also received multiple recent inquiries about development potential on downtown lots. As part of the specific plan process, the city will be developing standards and incentives to encourage appropriate residential infill downtown.

Our new downtown merchants have arrived on the scene at an excellent time: Yes, once again it is Tomato Festival season.

The Fairfield Tomato Festival has taken place every August for the past 23 years. As always, the festival features rides, petting zoos, crafts, food booths, special events by downtown merchants and, of course, Tomato Alley, where local growers display a bewildering (and mouthwatering) array of specialty and heirloom tomatoes.

Economic Notes spoke with Manzo about what goes into preparing for a Tomato Festival. She noted that each Tomato Festival requires months of planning and more than 100 volunteers.

Returning this year is the popular booth from Fuddrucker's Hamburgers. Local favorite Blue Frog Brewing Company will be the exclusive beer provider and is donating a substantial stock of their popular brews. A VIP wine and food pairing takes place from 3 to 6 p.m. Saturday in the downtown theater courtyard. This event will benefit Meals on Wheels.

We asked Manzo about whether she had any favorite tomato varieties. She confessed a particular liking for the green zebra variety, which is both meaty and salty at the same time.

The Tomato Festival is scheduled Saturday and Aug. 17 in downtown Fairfield. We hope to see you there. Meanwhile, check out our new merchants on Texas Street.

Economic Notes is an update from Fairfield City Hall written by Brian Miller and Karl Dumas of the Fairfield Planning and Development Department. Reach them at 428-7461 or email at kdumas@fairfield.ca.gov or bkmiller@fairfield.ca.gov.