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Madalyn Ruggiero / Special to The Detroit News

Daune Smith, 47, of Detroit sets up her booth Friday for the Jazzin' on Jefferson festival, which runs from 1-10 p.m. today.

## Far east side revels in its revitalization

Jazzin' on Jefferson celebrates a year of neighborhood upgrades.

**Santiago Esparza / The Detroit News**

**DETROIT** -- The Jefferson East Business Association normally is quiet about its work revitalizing the city's far east side.

But once a year, the association hosts Jazzin' on Jefferson, a celebration of what the association calls success stories.

The two-day, \$100,000 celebration highlights new developments, partnerships and achievements. It runs from noon-10 p.m. today. "We do not want to tackle something unless we can help solve it," association Executive Director Chris Garland said. "We wouldn't feel comfortable to point at successes unless we helped to make them happen."

There is a lot to celebrate, Garland said. The 10-year-old association has a new park, a \$5 million streetscape improvement project and a \$250,000 renovation of the association offices to make them more accessible to community groups and businesses.

"JEBA is a dynamic community organization," said James Canning, spokesman for Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick. "They are always prepared. They are a model business and community organization."

Association officials said they try to come to City Hall with solutions rather than just complaints. One example is the newly created Fox Creek Park. The park at Ashland and Jefferson was a blighted Detroit Water and Sewerage Department storage yard two years ago.

The association came up with \$4,000 and convinced donors to give \$26,000 in materials and free services for the pocket park, which was installed last year.

## Making progress

From noon-11 p.m. today, the Jefferson East Business Association will celebrate revitalization projects. Here are some of the projects members call success stories and will highlight during the fourth annual Jazzin' on Jefferson.

- **The Saverine** : Formerly the Winston Place apartments. It is under construction to become a mixed-use retail and residential property at Jefferson and Lennox.
- **Platte Warehouse**: A three-story industrial warehouse is under renovation to become a site for art and special events at Ashland and Jefferson.
- **The Chalmers Building**: A three-story building will become a mixed-use retail and residential property at Jefferson and Chalmers.
- **Jefferson Square**: A senior citizen housing development is being renovated and expanded at Jefferson and Lennox.
- **New Far Eastside Fox Creek Homes**: The first phase of a project that calls for 300 homes in the area is under way.

"In terms of beautifying the neighborhood, you have to do something creative," said Sheila Jackson, director of the association's Clean & Safe program. "We are trying to make a seamless-looking transition coming from Grosse Pointe to Detroit."

The association has a budget of about \$500,000, Garland said. It helps members find sites for new businesses and expansions, write business plans and secure money for renovations and training.

There were about a dozen businesses, residents and activists involved at the beginning. Now there are more than 200, Garland said.

"We provide all of our services regardless of if someone is a paid member or not," Garland said. "We consider ourselves part of the neighborhood."

The Creekside Community Development Corp. is building 10 homes that will sell for about \$112,000 off Jefferson and on Kitchener. The nonprofit is a member of the association.

Karen Brown, Creekside's executive director, said the business association's efforts make it easier for her group to attract funding and home buyers. "(Association officials) are very focused on creating and maintaining a clean and safe business environment here," Brown said. "It definitely spills over into the residential area. An attractive business strip is appealing to prospective homeowners."

For information, go to [www.jazzinonjefferson.com](http://www.jazzinonjefferson.com).

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