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Fort Thomas businesses roll out the red carpet

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FORT THOMAS - Twenty Fort Thomas businesses are rolling out the red carpet - literally. On Tuesday, Feb. 6, the businesses will lay out a red carpet to announce they are open late and offering special promotions. They plan to repeat the event the first Tuesday of each month.

The initiative is part of the city's Downtown Renaissance initiative.

"Our merchants want to roll out the red carpet and show shoppers a great time," said Debbie Buckley, Downtown Renaissance manager. "Even though we have wonderful restaurants, there were no other businesses to piggy-back shopper's trips. We decided that if businesses would stay open until at least 7 p.m., people would have time to get home from work, run out to a store, and eat dinner in an evening."

Ken Bowman, the Renaissance Committee chairman, is the owner of Bowman's Framing.

"We hope to make it known that they have that option," said Bowman. "For those people who can't get to the businesses before 5 p.m. at least once a month we'll cater to their needs."

Bowman, whose shop has been located across Fort Thomas Avenue from the Towne Center for the last 18 years, is usually open Monday through Friday 9-5 p.m. and until 2 p.m. on Saturdays.

"I've always offered to work by appointment for people who can't get their regular hours. I'm just trying to cater to the clientele," he said.

He'll offer a 15 percent discount on any custom framing or artwork.

"We're trying to drive more business to the local businesses - bring people from out of town and have people that are in town to stick around and support local business," said David Dalton, owner of Gallerie Zaum.

For their promotion, Gallerie Zaum will have a certified art appraiser on hand during Red Carpet Tuesday to assess any suspected treasures that patrons want to bring in.

The Renaissance program, recently renamed Renaissance on Main, started in 1996 as an alliance of state and private agencies to help preserve historical downtown areas across the Commonwealth. In 2005 Gov. Ernie Fletcher combined some agencies and extended the focus of Renaissance to downtown economic development.

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