



Firms join to form Eighth St. Design District

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DOWNTOWN - Take a cruise down East Eighth Street downtown, near Broadway and Sycamore streets, and you may notice a familiar theme.

Side by side, a host of Cincinnati's top design and creative firms have set up shop in century-old storefronts where the rent has been arguably cheaper and the buildings a bit more funky compared to traditional downtown office spaces.

"It's a happy accident that we're all here really," says Ken Neiheisel, chief creative officer at Marsh Inc., an Eighth Street design agency focused on consumer-packaged goods, retail and restaurant clients.

Earlier this year, Neiheisel says he and his neighbors "began looking around and realized that this area is rich with people and businesses that are passionate about their creative product."

Recently, the firms - whose services range from design, to architecture, music and other talents - began working to reinvigorate their oft-forgotten corner of downtown by launching the Eighth Street Design District.

"There is strength in numbers and we felt that as a group, we could have an impact not only on each other, but on the creative class and economic development in downtown," said Neiheisel, who has been tapped as the official spokesperson for the new district.

Other agencies involved include East Eighth Street firms GBBN Architects, Brandstetter Carroll, Inc., Glaserworks, KGB Advertising and

KZF Design at 700 Broadway.

To get the word out, organizers plan to host a mini-concert series this month, starting Friday from noon to 1:30 p.m. at the corner of Eighth and Broadway. Concerts will also be held on Sept. 17 and 24, and feature local artists including the Faux Frenchman.

Going forward, organizers plan to launch a branding campaign for the Design District and host regular networking events.

"The main idea is, you'll be able to walk into the Eighth Street Design District and visually you know you're there," Neiheisel said. "We all have grand plans for how this can take hold."

Longer term, the goal is for the new district to become a vehicle for business retention and attraction.

"As this grows and establishes a foundation, hopefully we'll have people either inside the city or outside who see the Design District as a vibrant place to work and want to a part of it," Neiheisel said.

For more information on the Eighth Street Design District, contact Neiheisel at 513-386-6101.

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