



I Love FDL

A communal project.
Real Stories. Real People. Real Impact.

February 15th 2026



Fondly
"Six Pack"
Weekly
SERIES

I LOVE FDL

Weekly news, inspiration, updates and happenings

The Fondy Frontline

With authentic recipes, generous portions, and flavors that go far beyond typical Tex-Mex, El Patron delivers a true Mexican dining experience from the first chips and salsa to the last bite of carne asada. Add in family-owned hospitality and a welcoming atmosphere, and it's the kind of place that turns dinner into a full fiesta. 🍊🍹

Faces Of Our Future

Fond du Lac just welcomed a pediatric dental office that truly puts kids first. After building their website and visiting Dr. GJ in person, I was genuinely impressed by the heart behind the practice and the way they're already pouring into families in our community, creating a space where kids feel safe, supported, and excited to smile.

Finding Balance

ADVOCAP has partnered with Collaborative Wellness to bring licensed mental health counseling services directly to downtown Fond du Lac, helping reduce barriers to care for local residents. The new in-person and virtual options aim to address one of the community's most identified needs, making support more accessible for individuals and families.

Hometown Heroes

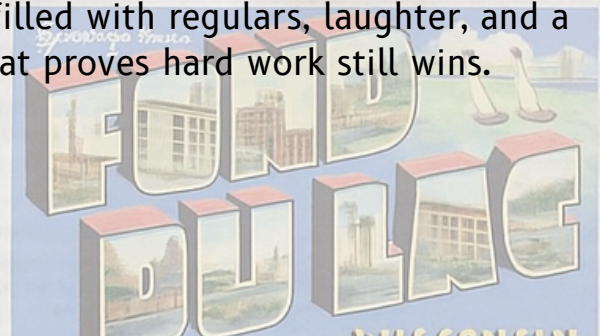
Veterans and current military members are invited to attend the Military Appreciation Game free of charge on February 28th at 8:00 pm at the Blue Line Family Ice Center, where the Fond du Lac Bears will hit the ice for a powerful night of hockey, honor, and community as we come together to recognize and celebrate the men and women who have served our country. 🇺🇸🏒

Creative Corner

From the beautiful window paintings in local storefronts to massive murals across the city, Chloe Tschudy of Oddball Arts LLC has been adding bold color and creativity throughout Fond du Lac, earning Best Painter in Fond du Lac County three years in a row and transforming every space she touches into something unforgettable.

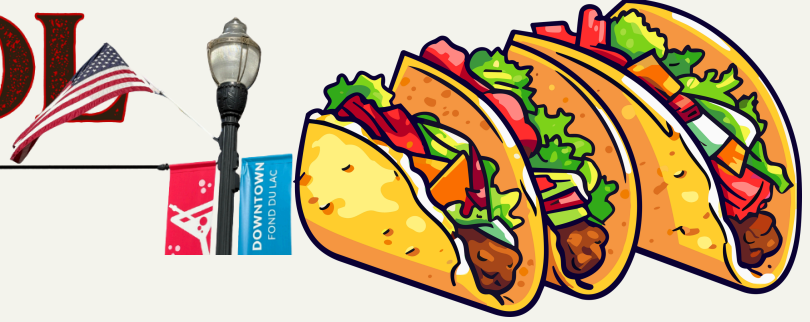
Play Explore Repeat

Three years ago, Sandy Ritchie took a leap of faith and rebuilt her life behind the grill at The Diner. Today, that little Main Street spot is filled with regulars, laughter, and a story that proves hard work still wins.



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THE FONDY FRONTLINE



El Patron Mexican Bar & Grill – A Taste of Mexico in the Heart of Fond du Lac

Tucked along 4th Street Way in Fond du Lac sits a restaurant that has quietly become a local favorite for bold flavors, warm hospitality, and a true family-style dining experience. El Patron Mexican Bar & Grill isn't just another stop for tacos – it's a place where tradition, culture, and community meet on the plate.

My Family has been coming here since it was Mazatlan Mexican Restaurant on Main Street- and we are happy nothing has Changed!

From the moment you walk in, the atmosphere sets the tone: colorful décor, upbeat energy, and the unmistakable aroma of freshly prepared Mexican cuisine. It feels less like a chain restaurant and more like stepping into someone's home kitchen – which makes sense, because the restaurant is operated by a local family dedicated to sharing their heritage through food.

Authentic Mexican Flavor – Made the Right Way

The kitchen focuses on traditional recipes prepared with fresh ingredients and classic techniques. Guests are welcomed with complimentary crunchy chips and zesty house salsa, a small detail that immediately signals authenticity and care.

The menu goes far beyond standard Tex-Mex fare. You'll find dishes rooted in genuine Mexican cooking – hearty, seasoned, and generously portioned.

Standout favorites include:

- **Macho Burrito** - a massive flour tortilla covered in homemade burrito sauce and topped with tomatoes, green onions, guacamole, and sour cream- My personal favorite!
- **Enchiladas Suizas** - chicken-filled enchiladas with homemade green sauce that brings a flavorful kick
- **Carnitas, Chile Verde & Carne Asada plates** - traditional entrées served with rice and beans
- A wide selection of tacos, burritos, seafood dishes, and classic Mexican specialties

Pair your meal with a margarita, Mexican beer, or specialty cocktail from the full bar and the experience turns into a full fiesta.

Written by: Darren Goodpaster

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THE FONDY FRONTLINE



El Patron Mexican Bar & Grill – A Taste of Mexico in the Heart of Fond du Lac - CONTINUE

Family-Owned Hospitality You Can Feel

What truly separates El Patron from typical dining spots is its personal touch. The restaurant was opened and operated by a local family, and that influence shows in everything – attentive service, generous portions, and a welcoming atmosphere that encourages conversation and lingering meals.

Guests often describe it as the kind of place where staff remember your order and treat you like a regular after only a visit or two. Instead of rushed service, you get genuine hospitality – a hallmark of family-run Mexican restaurants.

A Community Favorite

Since opening its Fond du Lac location, El Patron has become a go-to for casual dinners, celebrations, and family nights out. Its combination of authentic cooking and friendly environment makes it ideal whether you're grabbing a quick lunch or settling in for a full evening meal.

In a city filled with familiar chain options, El Patron stands out by offering something more meaningful: food with heritage behind it.

Final Bite

If you're craving real Mexican cuisine – not just tacos, but tradition – El Patron delivers. Authentic recipes, a welcoming family atmosphere, and consistently satisfying dishes make it one of Fond du Lac's most enjoyable dining experiences.

In short:

Good food fills you up.

Family-made food brings you back.



Written by: Darren Goodpaster

I ^{Love} FDL Faces of our future

MORE THAN A DENTAL OFFICE. A PLACE BUILT FOR KIDS IN FOND DU LAC.

When I first connected with Dr. GJ to build the website for Blue Lake Smiles Pediatric Dental, I knew it was going to be special. But after actually visiting the office in person, I was blown away. This isn't your typical dental clinic. It's bright, welcoming, and built completely around making kids feel comfortable. You can feel the thought and care that went into every detail the second you walk in.

Dr. GJ brings serious credentials and specialized pediatric training to the table, but what impressed me most wasn't just what's on paper. It's how he interacts with kids. He's calm, patient, and genuinely excited about helping them build healthy habits early. He believes in starting dental visits around a child's first birthday and focuses heavily on prevention, education, and creating positive first experiences that stick with kids for life.

What really stood out to me is how much they care about being part of this community. This isn't just a business that opened its doors. They want to serve families here. They want to give kids confidence. They want parents to feel supported and informed. That heart shows up in every conversation and every appointment.



I'm proud that Simply Fast Websites got to build their online home, but even more proud that Fond du Lac has a pediatric dental office like this. Blue Lake Smiles isn't just cleaning teeth. They're building trust, confidence, and healthier futures for our kids. And that's something our community truly benefits from.





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Honoring Our Heroes: Military Appreciation Night Returns to the Blue Line 🇺🇸🏒

The community is invited to come together for a special evening of honor and hockey at the Military Appreciation Game on February 28th at 8:00 pm at the Blue Line Family Ice Center. This meaningful event celebrates the men and women who have served and continue to serve our country. All current military members and veterans are welcome to attend free of charge as a small thank you for their dedication and sacrifice.

Fans will have the chance to cheer on the Fond du Lac Bears while also connecting with organizations that support our military community. Recruiters will be present for anyone interested in learning more about joining the armed forces. Representatives from Salute the Troops and the Fond du Lac County Veterans Service Office will also be on hand with information about veteran benefits and available resources.

This year marks the fifth annual Military Appreciation Game, led by U.S. Army veteran David Allen. His leadership and passion for honoring fellow service members have helped grow this event into a strong community tradition. It continues to bring together veterans, active-duty personnel, families, and local residents in a show of gratitude and unity.

The event is proudly presented by American Legion Trier-Puddy Post #75, an organization deeply committed to supporting veterans and strengthening the local community. Organizers hope to see a packed house, plenty of red, white, and blue, and a loud crowd cheering both for the Bears and for the heroes who have served our country.



Author: Shane Michael





Oddball Arts: Helping Fond du Lac Shops Stand Out.

Have you ever seen those beautiful window paintings throughout local businesses? Have you seen the bold, colorful murals in Fond du Lac and surrounding areas? Chloe Tschudy, owner of Oddball Arts is the one painting the city, adding splashes of color throughout Fond du Lac. Chloe has won Best Painter in Fond du Lac County for 3 years running!

No project is too big or small for Chloe. She has completed projects small and large throughout Fond du Lac and surrounding areas. To date, Chloe's largest mural was 840 feet for the Downtown Fond du Lac partnership project. Chloe also recently created a personalized jacket for Carbliss co-founder Amanda.



If you're looking to transform your windows, or virtually any space- contact Chloe. I have personally had her paint a mural that is absolutely beautiful, and 2 years later still looks as beautiful as it did on day one. It changes the entire atmosphere of your entire space with Chloe's creative eye.

Check out her site at www.oddballartsllc.com or her FB page Oddball Arts LLC. You won't be disappointed.



PLAY. EXPLORE. REPEAT.



Three Years Strong: How Sandy Ritchie Built More Than Just a Diner on Main Street

This past week marked three years since Sandy Ritchie took over The Diner in downtown Fond du Lac, and if you know even a little of her story, you know that's a big deal. Not a small milestone. Not a "nice little anniversary." A big one. Three years ago she stepped into something completely new after spending 35 years in a totally different career. I actually worked with Sandy at her former workplace, long before The Diner was even part of the conversation. So I've seen her work ethic up close. When she commits to something, she's all in.

Watching her jump from managing a pizza franchise to the sit down restaurant world from scratch was wild. She didn't pretend to know everything. She learned it. Flat top cooking, running a kitchen, managing a team, building a customer base from the ground up. No free money. No shortcuts. Just early mornings, long days, and a stubborn refusal to quit. There were doubters. There were struggles. But there was also heart. And that's the part that sticks.

Now, three years in, you can feel the difference when you walk through the door. My wife Jaci and I love going in for breakfast. It's one of our favorite little downtown spots. Sandy remembers orders. She checks in. She moves behind that grill like she's been doing it her whole life. And then there's Anna. If you've been in, you know exactly who I'm talking about. She brings such a warm, upbeat energy to the place. The kind of server who makes you feel like you're not just another table. She smiles, she hustles, she keeps things moving, and she genuinely cares. That kind of team makes all the difference.

Three years might sound simple on paper. But when you know what it took to get there, it means everything. Sandy didn't just keep the lights on. She built something of her own. And with people like Anna alongside her, it's easy to see why the place keeps buzzing. As someone who knew Sandy before this chapter even started, I can honestly say it's pretty special to watch. Here's to many more early mornings, packed booths, and that little diner buzz that keeps people talking.

Author: Shane Michael



New Local Partnership Expands Mental Health Care Access in Fond du Lac

A new community partnership is bringing increased mental health support directly to residents in Fond du Lac. Local nonprofit ADVOCAP has teamed up with Collaborative Wellness – a regional mental health provider – to offer counseling services at ADVOCAP’s office at 19 W. 1st Street. Licensed therapists are providing confidential, in-person sessions in addition to virtual appointment options for individuals, couples, and families, with many providers accepting Medicaid and other insurance plans. This initiative is designed to reduce barriers to mental health care that residents have long identified as a top unmet need.

The collaboration was sparked by findings from ADVOCAP’s 2025 Community Needs Assessment, which highlighted access to mental health care as a key challenge for many individuals in the region. ADVOCAP, a community action agency serving Fond du Lac and surrounding counties since 1966, is providing the office space as part of its broader mission to support housing stability, wellness, and self-sufficiency. Although the therapists are independent providers, the convenient downtown location and expanded availability aim to make counseling more accessible for those navigating life stressors, trauma, or family challenges.

For more information about scheduling or available providers, residents are encouraged to contact the participating therapists directly, as appointments are set up between clients and providers rather than through ADVOCAP itself.

This week is **PACKED** with awesome deals from some of Fond du Lac's favorite small businesses! 🌟🛒 If you've been needing a sign to shop local... this is it. 🤝❤️ Dive into the specials below, show love to the shops that make our city feel like home, and have an amazing week, Fondy! 🥰🌟

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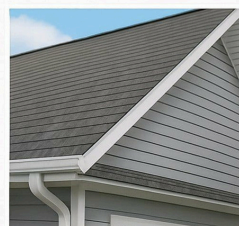
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