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## Super Bowl host Detroit unveils new image

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Associated Press  
Jan. 29, 2006 12:00 AM

DETROIT - NFL players said it all season: We want to go to Detroit.

Although the Motor City is destination No. 1 for professional football players, it probably is not among the top tourism destinations for most Americans.

But city officials and members of the Super Bowl host committee want out-of-towners to know that a new and improving Detroit awaits them.

The 40th edition of the Super Bowl hits Detroit's Ford Field next Sunday, and along with it will come tens of thousands of people, from players and fans to the media and celebrities.

What will they find? Everything from a winter carnival and casinos to world-renowned works of art and local history, including a tour of a Ford factory and a museum devoted to Motown.

Those who still think of Detroit as a blighted, dangerous industrial city in decline will be especially surprised by the new look of the downtown.

Abandoned buildings are being converted into loft apartments and office space along Woodward Avenue, the city's main thoroughfare.

The skyscrapers of the Renaissance Center - the most recognizable feature of the city skyline - have been overhauled along the redeveloped waterfront of the Detroit River, which separates the United States and Canada.

The largest tower has been decorated with a 24,000-plus-square-foot vinyl wrap celebrating the Super Bowl. The Wintergarden, a five-story glass atrium with sweeping views of the river on the south side of the RenCen, opened in 2001 and has several restaurants and Detroit-themed stores. It will house the Super Bowl's media center.

Software developer Compuware Corp. has moved downtown from the suburbs into a 15-story complex with a Hard Rock Cafe, Borders bookstore and a Ben & Jerry's ice-cream shop.

On the south side of the Compuware building sits Campus Martius Park, which opened in late 2004. In summer, a park fountain shoots jets of water more than 100 feet in the air, while a skating rink is the main winter attraction. During Super Bowl week, a winter carnival called Motown Winter Blast will be held there, with a 200-foot-long snow slide, sled dogs and ice skating. Heated tents will showcase musical entertainment and some of the city's best cuisine.

The park "has been an economic catalyst for the development of downtown Detroit, and we probably could say that many of the new buildings and the new things that are taking place in Detroit are there because of the fact that the park exists," said Edsel Ford II, chairman of the Detroit 300 Conservancy Board, a group involved in revitalizing downtown.

The NFL Experience, an annual interactive football theme park run by the league, will set up shop at nearby Cobo Center.

A different kind of game can be found at the four area casinos - three in Detroit and one in Windsor, Ontario. In all, the MGM Grand Detroit, MotorCity and Greektown casinos and Casino Windsor offer gamblers more than 10,000 slot machines and hundreds of tables.

Nighttime recreational opportunities will abound during Super Bowl week at nightclubs throughout the region, especially downtown and in the suburban communities of Ferndale, Royal Oak and Birmingham. A-listers from the worlds of entertainment and athletics also will converge on Detroit to see and be seen at a multitude of parties, many of them invitation-only.

The area also boasts many cultural attractions. The Detroit Institute of Arts is home to four works by Vincent van Gogh and Diego Rivera's *Detroit Industry* murals. The DIA also is the only American stop for an exhibition (running through Super Bowl Sunday) showcasing the story of French sculptors Camille Claudel and Auguste Rodin through their sculptures, drawings, photographs and love letters.

There are also museums devoted to Detroit's best-known creations - cars and music.

The Motown Historical Museum chronicles the music company that transformed artists from Detroit's housing projects into superstars.

The Henry Ford complex in nearby Dearborn includes the Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village and is home to the Ford Rouge Factory Tour.

At the museum, visitors can see the restored bus on which civil-rights pioneer Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat to a White passenger in 1955 in Montgomery, Ala. Greenfield Village includes an 1820 Georgia slave cabin, Thomas Edison's research laboratory and the Detroit workshop where Ford built his first car in 1896.

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