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## Historic Vernor's store re-opens in downtown Pontiac

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PONTIAC — The Pontiac of bygone days will come alive again soon in downtown Pontiac with the re-opening of the historic Vernor's store, a tour of the Lafayette Grande and the opening of the Saginaw Street Gallery Walk.

The events begin at 11 a.m. Saturday, July 23 and are part of a series of happenings being held for the Pontiac Sesquicentennial celebration this year.

For this special day, Vernor's ice cream treats will be served again in the original Vernor's store building, which is now part of the Crofoot on the corner of Saginaw and Pike streets, said Richard Thibodeau, who is on the planning committee.

The former Vernor's building will be refurbished with all kinds of artifacts and memorabilia, and talks will be given by nationally recognized Vernor's collector and historian Keith Wunderlich.

Wunderlich said The Vernor's Club will present the largest display of Vernor's dispensers ever assembled.

All of the proceeds from sales of the treats will go toward scholarships for Pontiac graduates. Volunteers from the Pontiac Alumni Association will be servers.

"This should put a smile on (the) faces of lots of seniors and their families," who remember going to Vernor's when they were young, Thibodeau said.

Visitors to downtown Pontiac that day can tour the Lafayette Grande at 1 Lafayette at Saginaw from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The Grande was constructed in 1923 as the Masonic Temple Lodge No. 21. In 1967, the city of Pontiac traded the city's airport to Oakland County for the building. Now, the privately operated Lafayette Grande Banquet Facility and Traveling Chef catering specializes in weddings and special events.

To further take visitors and residents through memory lane, all the storefront windows downtown will be filled with large photos of Pontiac's history to create the Saginaw Street Gallery Walk.

The photos will remain in the windows downtown through the end of August.

"This event may be a super way to bring people down to Saginaw to see that the street is in super shape with nice benches, flower plantings and sidewalks," Thibodeau said.

"It just might get some more people doing their walking stints on Saginaw Street," and bring new businesses to downtown Pontiac, he suggested.

For more information, contact Dawnaree Demrose, chairwoman of the Sesquicentennial Marketing and Events Committee at 248-622-8247 or [Demrose@comcast.net](mailto:Demrose@comcast.net).

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