

Emmaus' 250th anniversary emphasizes business district

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Emmaus residents past and present, as well as downtown businesses, will celebrate 250 years of borough history with dozens of activities Friday through Sunday, Aug. 14 to 16.

"This is going to be a huge draw for many current and former Emmaus residents," said Mike Waddell, chairman of the 2009 Anniversary Celebration Committee.

A parade, fireworks and the opening of a time capsule dating back to 1959 are some of the many activities on tap. Borough-based East Penn Bank is helping to sponsor the celebration and bank employees will be volunteering to help with the festivities.

The celebration will kick off at 7 p.m. Friday with opening ceremonies. Downtown merchants plan to be open until the beginning of the opening ceremonies to accommodate shoppers, and many of the businesses will have special sales or offer discounts, said Nancy O'Keefe of LaBelle Cuisine-Fine Cookware and a member of the Shops of Emmaus business organization.

The Triangle, which is the grassy center of the borough's business district, has undergone a major transformation and will be getting a lot of attention during the festivities this weekend. The Triangle, which once had a large tree

and little else to draw attention to the central business district, now features a large fountain surrounded by brick and benches and is a hot spot for wireless Internet access. The fountain and "Triangle Park," as it will now be known, will be dedicated at 9:30 a.m. Saturday, Aug. 15.

"I'm hoping that visitors to Emmaus will park their cars, walk wherever they need to go, and take a break at the fountain," O'Keefe said. "The area lends itself well to this. For me personally, I'll be happy henceforth to describe the shopping area of Emmaus as the 'fountain area.' A lot of my customers who don't know Emmaus are often confused when I'd direct them to the 'Triangle.'"

Waddell said he thinks borough businesses will benefit from the Triangle improvements.

"It will draw people downtown," Waddell said. "You will see people sitting on the benches. There's no doubt in my mind that we will see more people downtown."

Also planned for Saturday are a parade starting at 10:30 a.m. and the opening of the time capsule at 5 p.m. in the Community Park. The festivities will wrap up Sunday with closing ceremonies at 8:30 p.m., followed by fireworks at the Emmaus High School football field. To find out more, visit www.2009emmaus.org.