

'We can have ... better'

40-70 ■ Downtown group takes to cleaning streets



For a video, visit
GrandForksHerald.com.

By John Hageman
Herald Staff Writer

Andrea Laraway was surprised to discover how many cigarette butts were lodged in the cracks of downtown Grand Forks sidewalks.

Wearing plastic gloves and carrying a garbage bag, the city employee was among those helping the Grand Forks Downtown Development Association with its cleanup event Friday morning. Part of that project involved dispersing almost two dozen plastic cigarette disposals downtown.

"Most of us are downtown business owners or employees, so we see it firsthand," said Jonathan Holth, owner of the Toasted Frog restaurant and bar. "One time I saw six people put their cigarette butt out on the sidewalk at the same time. So it's like, we can have something better here."

Friday's event was one of the DDA's first initiatives after coming together about six months ago, he said. Holth said he hopes to make the cleanup a regular event.

Haley Thorson, tobacco prevention coordinator at

the Grand Forks Public Health Department, was also on hand to make sure the disposals' placement was in compliance with the city's smoking ordinance. Business owners and employees placing the tower-shaped receptacles were armed with tape measurers to make sure they were at least 20 feet from a business's doorway.

"If we can direct people who smoke to where they can be compliant with the law ... it's also going to help decrease the litter," she said. "So it's kind of two birds with one stone."

Call Hageman at (701) 780-1244; (800) 477-6572, ext. 1244



► Arron Hendricks, co-owner of Rhombus Guys, carries two cigarette receptacles Friday. The plastic disposals were placed throughout downtown in an effort to deter littering and encourage compliance with the city's smoking ordinance.



John Hageman, Grand Forks Herald



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▲ Andrew Jodock, of the Grand Forks Housing Authority, cleans the town square fountain during the Downtown Development Association's cleaning event Friday morning.

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