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New app maps arena parking, restaurants

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The Wichita Downtown Development Corp. and the city have rolled out the latest in a series of moves to connect Intrust Bank Arena customers with parking and entertainment: a mobile application mapping available parking lots and nearby restaurants for specific arena events.

The application offers maps with the parking lots and restaurants on www.parkdowntown.org, the WDDC's Web site, which has been adapted for any touch-screen phone, said Jamil Malone, the organization's director of special projects.

The application was developed in conjunction with Howerton & White, Mandy Pankratz, the city's parking coordinator, and Wichita Transit officials.

The launch is the first step in the development of a mobile real-time downtown parking and entertainment application, Malone said. Next up is the addition of traffic capacity updates and real-time reports on the parking lots filling up the fastest.

Currently, Twitter is used to convey that information on event nights, said Jeff Fluhr, the WDDC president.

The parking application grew out of the city's Google-based mapping of the downtown arena neighborhood, Fluhr said.

The parking site is driving a huge increase in traffic to the WDDC Web site, Fluhr said.

"What we've seen since we launched the new Web site in June, we had 3,800 page visits and we're already approaching 31,000 visits for January," Fluhr said.

There's no timeline, Malone said, for the real-time parking and traffic updates.

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