

RINK

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'Do it twice as big next year'

"On the Sunday it first opened, we had the best Sunday we've had in a long time," Harris said, "but after that we had the snow. Then it was hard to tell what business was because of snow and what was because of the rink."

Overstreet's Jewelry owner Don Overstreet thinks the rink has been wonderful for downtown Bentonville.

"We extended our hours because of it," he said. "We've had more customers this year, and hopefully that's because of (the rink)."

"It's the best Christmas we've ever had," said Debbie Matteri, owner of In Season women's clothing boutique. "The rink is

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Matteri said business is not the only good thing she sees about having the rink in town for the holiday. Her family has benefited, and the atmosphere of the town has changed.

"It's great to see people walking around at night," she said. "It's so Norman Rockwell, and that's a good thing."

Overstreet said the rink is a positive influence he wants to see repeated.

"Do it twice as big next year!" he said.

Businesses rave about skating rink

By Stacey Roberts

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BENTONVILLE — Some downtown businesses think the temporary ice skating rink is the hottest thing in town.

The temporary rink was sponsored by the Bentonville Advertising and Promotions Commission with the Main Street Bentonville program to attract people — and business — to the downtown area during December.

And it's working, according to several local retail and restaurant establishments.

"It's great. Yesterday we were jam-packed," The Station Café manager Mistie Vandiver said Thursday. "We've really seen a big bump."

The popular lunch eatery extended its hours last year, she said, but did not see a big crowd for the supper schedule.

"It has been kind of slow," Vandiver said, "but since this Christmas thing, they've been coming in."

Harp's Food Store, which shares a parking lot with the rink in the Midtown Shopping Center, saw a measurable increase in business early in the month, store manager Don Harris said.

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