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Wellness coalition is taking it to the streets

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The **Ottawa County Wellness Coalition** is teaming up with local businesses to promote a healthy lifestyle by introducing a new walking route through downtown Grand Haven next spring.

Starting in **April 2007**, the **Golden Shoe Initiative** will encourage walkers of all ages to head to the streets of downtown Grand Haven and participate in a nearly two-mile walking route throughout the business district. Though the route has not been announced, downtown businesses along that path can expect to see a few new faces in their store fronts.

The initiative not only has the potential to bring in new customers, but also encourages local businesses to boost their work-site wellness, **Lisa Uganski** said. Uganski is a registered dietitian and health educator for Ottawa County.

Coalition officials say the health benefits aren't the only reward for participating in the wellness initiative. Each time a person walks the route they will be eligible to register for a "wellness basket" that includes items donated by local businesses to encourage healthy eating and an active lifestyle.

What may be even more enticing for health nuts and couch potatoes alike is a bi-weekly contest for a new pair of shoes. Every two weeks a gold-painted shoe will be hidden along the walking route, with walkers encouraged to find the shoe for a special prize - a new pair of walking shoes, valued at \$80.

"We're really excited to get our message out to local businesses and get them involved in this," said Uganski.

"We'll encourage businesses to take an extra lunch break on they day we begin the program. We want schools on board. We want businesses on board," she said.

The Golden Shoe Initiative will officially run **April through October 2007** with similar walking routes through downtown Holland and Zeeland.