

DOWNTOWN AKRON SELF-GUIDED WALKING TOUR



APRIL 2021 TOUR: #DEVOTE

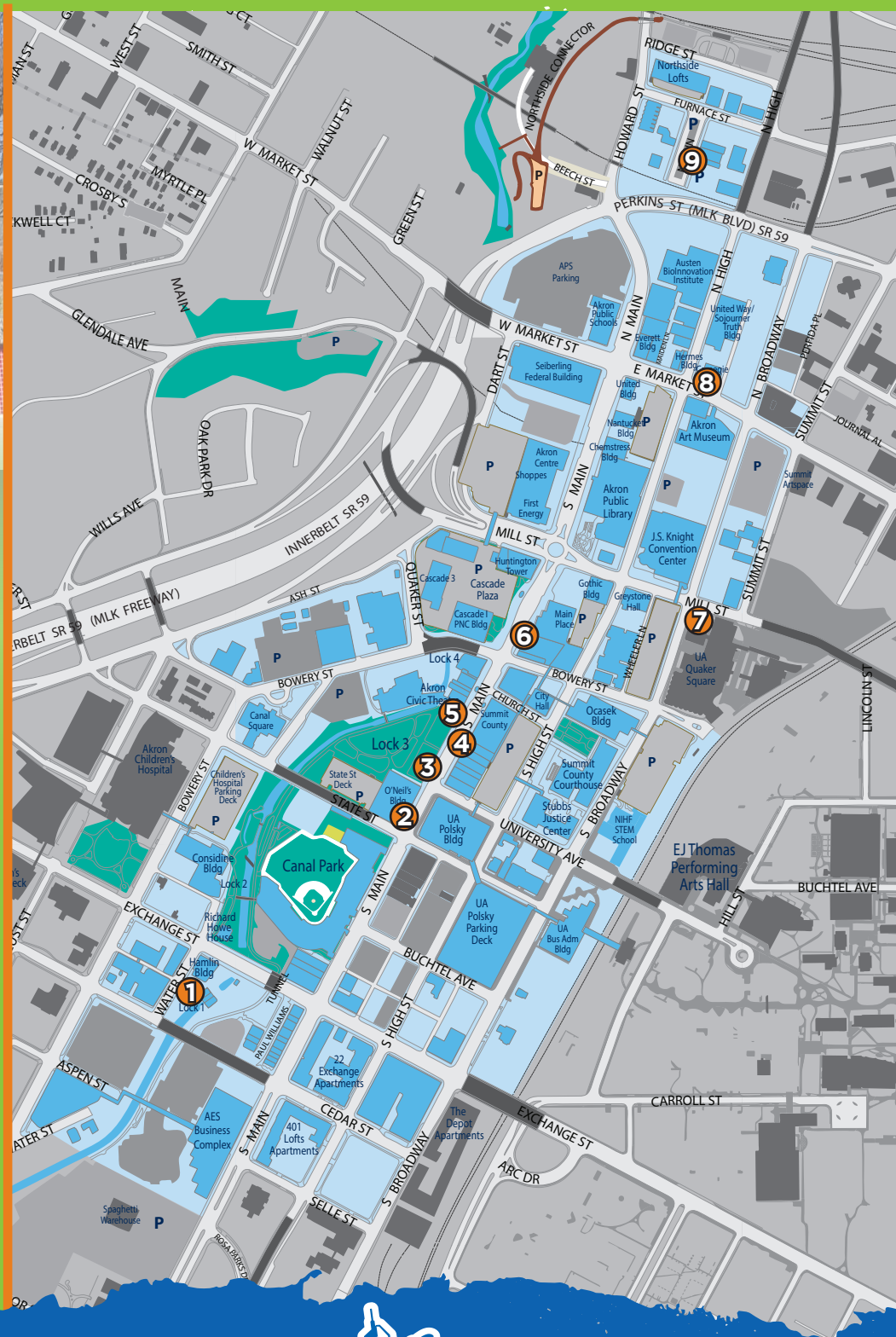
This month's tour gives an insider's perspective on the band's connection to, and memories of, downtown Akron.

A vote for Devo is a vote for Akron. Let's get the influential band from Akron into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame by voting at <http://vote.rockhall.com>.

For information on where to park and ways to extend your experience in downtown through dining, shopping and events, visit **DOWNTOWNAKRON.COM**.

MAP KEY

- TOUR STOPS
- P PARKING



THE
SUMMIT COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
OF AKRON, OHIO



Mark Mothersbaugh talked with Jeremy Jenkins, Artist in Residence at the Summit County Historical Society, in preparation for this tour. Mr. Mothersbaugh shared that his childhood in Akron played a large role in his musical career and art work. He also offered connections to other DEVO band members along with artists and friends involved in their early years in Akron. Segments in quotes are from these current conversations. Special thanks to Amy Mothersbaugh, local artist and Mark's sister, for helping to make this connection possible. Ed Barger and Chuck Statler also provided details about the band for inclusion in this month's tour. Enjoy!

1 BF Goodrich Complex

Location: While standing on the towpath in the newly restored Lock 1, look south toward the BF Goodrich smokestacks.

According to Mothersbaugh, one of the distinct smells growing up in Akron was that of rubber. Some described it as putrid while an early 20th century businessman said it was the sweet smell of money! The BF Goodrich Rubber Company, originally called Goodrich & Tew, was Akron's first rubber industry. From this location, you can see the smokestacks with the company name (well one of them as the other had to be partially demolished for safety purposes). Young rubber workers were some of the earliest and biggest fans of DEVO who often performed for these supporters near this area after their shift ended.

2 O'Neil's and Polsky Windows

Location: 222 S. Main Street at the corner of Main St. and State St.

In the 1950s, the whole Mothersbaugh family would pile into their family station wagon to gingerly drive back and forth on S. Main Street to look at the Christmas window displays that included motorized characters. According to Mark Mothersbaugh, "This was exciting to a young Mark." Akron would have been a bustling city at the time with a population of almost 300,000 with numerous businesses downtown and more than 500 manufacturing plants in the Summit County area.

3 Lock 3

Location: 200 S. Main Street - Walk into the park to find the iconic 1978 image of the band on Main St. in their yellow jumpsuits

The first DEVO 5K was held in 2017 with original band member and bassist Gerald Casale greeting participants from the downtown stage at this location where the run ended. Those completing the run were presented a medal with the following quote, "You can't run from de-evolution." Proceeds for the event were given to Miller South School for the Visual and Performing Arts, an arts magnet school in Akron.

4 The Peanut Shoppe

Location: 203 S. Main Street

Serving locals since the 1930s in locations on both sides of South Main Street, visiting the Peanut Shoppe is another fond memory for Mark Mothersbaugh. He and his family would have visited in the 50s and 60s, when the business was on the other side of the street. In a recent conversation with Jeremy Jenkins, Summit County Historical Society artist in residence, Mark shared the sensations associated with these stops from the smell of warm peanut butter being made to the sweet candies and the eye catching trinkets that he and his siblings would wish to own and then collect featured throughout the store.

5 Akron Civic Theatre

Location: 182 S. Main Street

It would have been with great pride that DEVO performed at their hometown Akron Civic Theatre on Halloween, October 31, 1978 and also on January 4, 1978. Surprisingly, these were not sold out shows like future events at home and around the world, including stops in Spain, Japan, England and Canada. On October 17, 2008, DEVO performed with fellow Akronites Pat Carney and Dan Auerbach of The Black Keys and Chrissie Hynde. This was a sold out show!

6 Strand Theatre

Location: 131-133 S. Main Street (site of the former Strand Theatre)

While no longer standing, the Strand Theatre was opened on September 2, 1915, showing "The Island of Regeneration." During World War II, Akron featured movies throughout the night and early morning hours to accommodate the three shifts of rubber workers aiding in the war effort. By the 1970s, the building was mostly, if not completely, vacant, making it a great location for DEVO to record "Satisfaction." Thank you to Chuck Statler for locating this special spot on the tour. This DEVO song would later be featured in the 1995 Martin Scorsese film "Casino."

7 Quaker Oats

Location: Quaker Square Courtyard at the corner of Broadway and Mill Street

Mark Mothersbaugh remembers two distinct smells growing up in Akron. One was that of the Quaker Oats plant which was so powerful that it permeated his dreams for years. "I dreamt that the Quaker plant was high upon a hill and had cracked open releasing a flood of oats that completely buried us. Our dad instructed that we would have to eat our way out! We chewed tunnels through the oats like an ant farm." Did you know that Quaker Oats started here in Akron with the consolidation of various mills? You can also learn more about the 'cereal king' Ferdinand Schumacher, who, while living in Akron, invented the machine to cut oats for human consumption, at the mill site off Howard Street by the Mustill Store.

8 Akron Art Museum (former location)

Location: 75 E. Market Street - one-time location of the Akron Art Museum

This Akron nonprofit has been showing art treasures and educating budding artists and the public since 1923. Both as youngsters, and then later when they performed here in 1975, Devo members would have visited the Akron Art Museum when it was located here in the building originally known as the Carnegie Library. This building is located across the street from the current Akron Art Museum, which had previously been the post office.

9 Luigi's

Location: 105 N. Main Street

A favorite hangout location for many, including DEVO. Luigi's is a history tour in itself, from signed photos at the entrance to walls painted with murals and the artistic pizza outside above the door! Not much has changed at this local joint that only accepts cash payment (there is an ATM in case you don't plan ahead). You can choose a table or a booth, and salad with cheese or not, plus it's open late. WKYC Channel 3 featured Luigi's in April as part of their "Save Our Sauce Campaign" in support of local Northeast Ohio restaurants.

BONUS LOCATIONS

It's like a city-wide scavenger hunt. There are 51 Devo-inspired Energy Domes created by Lock 3 in 51 different places in Akron. Have you been to them all? Visit downtownakron.com/explore/picture-yourself-on-main for a list of locations. Share your Energy Dome photos with #DeVote and vote (every day!) at <http://vote.rockhall.com>.

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