

Anyone can dance at Boom Town

An all-ages dance club with a huge floor and sophisticated equipment has opened in Springfield

By Jesse Stephenson
Entertainment Reporter

The largest dance floor in Lane County, a 10,000 watt sound system and an alcohol-free atmosphere have combined to create a new all-ages dance club in Springfield.

Boom Town opened its doors to the public Nov. 22, welcoming patrons of all ages to a safe and fun environment. While the club is geared toward a younger crowd, college students looking for a relaxed and alcohol-free place to have a good time may find what they are looking for at Boom Town.

"Basically, this is a place for someone to go without having to worry about someone being drunk. There is no other place

like that for those 14 and over," said Richard Welch, a co-founder of the club. He added that those under 21 have been supportive of Boom Town.

Boom Town has more room than any other local dance club — its 4,500 square foot dance floor is the largest in the county.

In addition to offering a hip-hop and techno music mix, Boom Town also has something that can't be found at any other dance club in the area: a movie screen that shows *The Jetsons* as well as old movies and commercials. In addition, Boom Town will soon feature a light show that Welch said will

be "spectacular."

"It is obvious that our dance floor is an advantage over other clubs, both alcoholic and non-alcoholic," said Welch. "But I think that our other features are going to be just as popular as well."

Welch said he is aware that even in an alcohol-free atmosphere there could be safety problems, but Boom Town is trying to avoid such problems.

"Anytime someone steps out of the house they are taking a risk," Welch said. "We've taken steps by hiring and training our own security group, but we can't guarantee that nothing will happen. If something does happen, both sides are out, no questions asked."

"We're trying to create a fun atmosphere here. If you show up at the door with an attitude, you probably aren't going to get in."

Admission is \$5 at the door. Hours are from 9 p.m. to 1 a.m. every Friday and Saturday.

BOOM TOWN

■ **WHAT:** An all-ages dance club

■ **WHEN:** 9 p.m.-1 a.m. every Friday and Saturday

■ **WHERE:** 630 Main St., Springfield

■ **COST:** \$5

Band: Several members to depart Body & Soul

Continued from Page 7

Jensen said. Watkins, who has been a member of Body & Soul for seven years, will leave the band in January to pursue an individual career.

"New Year's Eve will be my last gig with the band after seven years," she said.

Watkins joined Body & Soul in 1989 when she was hired as a background singer. She continued to sing background vocals until Hornbuckle decided to leave the band to pursue a separate career.

"I stepped in and started doing lead vocals," Watkins said. "I sort of rolled into the lead singer role." Watkins shares the role with the band's other lead vocalist, Alex Lopez, who also plays percussion.

Other members of Body & Soul include Jeannie Wiggins, vocals; Stephanie Schniderman, vocals; Fred Stickley, keyboards; Gary Fountaine, bass;

Clint McFadden, guitar; Craig Mullen, drums; Mark Shervin, trumpet; Dave Chambers, trombone and Ron Regan, saxophone.

After New Year's Eve, however, the band's membership will change forever. Like Watkins, Schniderman and Wiggins will also part from the band, leaving it minus three "really talented singers," according to Jensen.

Watkins said although she has enjoyed being a member of Body & Soul, she is ready to move on.

"It's been an amazing seven years," she said. "I've grown a lot and learned a lot. But I want to branch out on my own."

Jensen estimated the New Year's Eve party will draw a crowd of nearly 1500, and Watkins said she is looking forward to a huge send-off.

"I wouldn't want to go out any other way," she said.

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