

He was the main decision-maker for the first few years of Oktoberfest

Former La Crosse Chamber of Commerce boss D-J Petruccelli was 81 when he died in Florida last week. Petruccelli had just begun working at the La Crosse Chamber in 1960 when brewery workers came to him with the idea for a fall festival. Duane Moore worked in local radio and TV at the time, and he remembers Don Petruccelli getting really big names to appear at Oktoberfest, including Louis Armstrong and Guy Lombardo. Petruccelli also brought speakers such as Ann Landers and Ronald Reagan to the Chamber's annual dinner. Moore remembers the Chamber boss as a guy who liked 'extravaganzas.'