



Main Street Messenger

2012 volume three



one step at a time

Chariton, Jefferson, Lansing off to a Great Start...

In February 2012, Main Street Iowa welcomed Chariton, Jefferson and Lansing as the newest communities into the state's Main Street network. Now at a total of 48 programs across the state, the Main Street Iowa network has never been stronger or larger. The first year in the life of a Main Street program is critical and filled with multiple onsite visits with Main Street Iowa staff, organizational planning and development, creation of committees and that fine balance of capitalizing on the energy of the new designation and the reality of the necessary organizational steps to create a sustainable local downtown revitalization effort.

Now more than nine months later, each community has achieved so much and they are ready to tackle the first full year as a Main Street program. The line-up of services over this time has guided the local programs and volunteers through a community input process which assists local efforts to develop a mission statement, develop committee goals and objectives, action plans to support implementation, and the basics of nonprofit management and operation – plus board training and onsite technical visits to promote a local communications strategies, business improvement goals and design visions for the future.

A major milestone reached by a new Main Street community is the hiring of paid staff. Sarah Thompson joined Main Street Lansing prior to application and with past experience in the Main Street Iowa network. Shantel Dow continues her executive director role from the former chamber of commerce to the newly formed Chariton Area Chamber/Main Street. Shantel is joined by Kris Patrick who serves as Chariton's Main Street Coordinator. And in Jefferson, Alan Robinson recently joined Jefferson Matters: Main Street team as their program director.

Congratulations to each program for the work they have accomplished. Speaking those famous words: great job getting to this point, but now the work really begins!



Chariton



Lansing



Jefferson

volunteer hall of fame



During an Organization Committee meeting, information was shared about the volunteers who received the Spirit of Main Street award and a suggestion was made to include the winners on the "Volunteer Wall of Fame". Calls were made to the volunteers who assisted at the national convention to find a time that everyone could gather. After several unsuccessful attempts to set a date, staff decided to create a collage to commemorate the award. The design was developed and approved by the Organization Committee Chairperson. The Organization Committee hosted a chamber coffee in August to recognize the work of volunteers and showcased the 2011 volunteer winner. The winner's photo was unveiled and as a special tribute the Spirit of Main Street Collage honoring individuals who shared their time and talent at the 2011 National Main Street Conference was also unveiled. The collage now hangs on Main Street Corning's "Wall of Fame".

Main Street Iowa communities market their assets at the 2012 Iowa State Fair

The communities of Charles City, Colfax, Corning, Elkader, Fort Madison, Mount Vernon, Osceola, Spencer, Story City and Woodbine took it upon themselves to have a presence at the 2012 Iowa State Fair. Volunteers manned the booth for the 11 days of the fair to showcase businesses, tourism attractions, events and celebrations in their communities. This partnership was well received by state fair attendees and volunteers.



Iowa communities continue to invest in the Main Street Districts!

Despite national economic uncertainties, fiscal year 2012 was another excellent year of private sector investment into Iowa's 48 Main Street districts. During the just concluded fiscal year, which ended on June 30, 2012, Main Street Iowa districts reported:

\$94.3 million of private sector investment into Main Street district building rehabilitation, new construction and acquisition. They reported a net gain of 235 more businesses employing an additional 388 people full time in their districts. On top of those great statistics, Main Street Iowa districts also reported that 178,632 volunteer hours were invested one hour at a time to support the work of their local Main Street organizations! According to the Independent Sector, every volunteer hour in Iowa is valued at \$17.22 – which means local volunteers donated over \$3 million worth of time to collectively help improve the economic, physical and social values of their districts.

The amazing thing about Main Street® is that it works in historic commercial districts in towns and cities of all sizes. From tiny Bonaparte (population 433) to large urban cities like Cedar Rapids (population 126,326) the Main Street Approach® is a strategy which, if embraced, can produce startling results.

The return on investment to the Iowa Legislature, which funds the state program through the Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) is also quite significant. For every dollar IEDA invested in operating the state program during FY 2012, the private sector invested \$108.25 into Main Street district buildings! In fact, since the inception of the state Main Street program in FY 1986, the leverage ratio now stands at \$81.29.

Main Street Iowa district organizations can be proud of their success. They have effectively taken responsibility for steering more positive futures for their historic commercial districts by increasing their value one dollar and one volunteer at a time. Next time you have the opportunity to be in one of these 48 Main Street Iowa districts, take a look around and experience the positive changes for yourself!

SAVE THE DATE!

The Iowa Economic Development Authority/Iowa Downtown Resource Center, Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs/State Historic Preservation Office and Preservation Iowa have joined forces to present the inaugural **Preserve Iowa Summit** to be held August 22 – 24, 2013, in Burlington, Iowa. This event will take the place of the Iowa Downtown Summit and Statewide Historic Preservation Conference. The Summit will be the only statewide annual conference for professionals and volunteers involved in historic preservation and historic commercial district revitalization in Iowa and will kickoff with an informal pre-conference gathering. General sessions, concurrent breakouts, tours and a reception on Thursday evening will be included in the conference.

Preserve Iowa Summit

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renewing the power of downtown

Approximately 200 individuals from 80 Iowa communities attended the 26th Annual Iowa Downtown Summit held August 21-22, 2012, in Keokuk, Iowa. The conference, sponsored by the Iowa Economic Development Authority's Iowa Downtown Resource Center (IDRC), the Federal Home Loan Bank – Des Moines, the Iowa Farm Bureau Federation and Iowa Finance Authority is the only statewide conference focused on historic commercial district revitalization.

Prominent and knowledgeable downtown and commercial development experts from Iowa and across the United States provided educational content focused on best practices. Participants received valuable insight, advice and training to help enhance the local efforts of addressing historic commercial district vibrancy and competitiveness relevant to rural, mid-sized and urban communities.



"This annual statewide conference provides fresh ideas and information about the latest trends and strategies in use today in successful downtowns," said Debi Durham, Iowa Economic Development Authority director. "It's just one of the many services our agency offers to help community leaders preserve and revitalize Iowa's magnificent historic commercial districts."

Featured speakers were Governor Parris Glendening (President, Governors' Institute on Community Design and President, Smart Growth America's Leadership Institute), Margie Johnson (Shop Talk), Hilary Greenberg (Greenberg Development Services) and Jane Seaton (former Main Street Iowa State Coordinator). Educational opportunities included trends impacting present and future viability, business recruitment, branding, historic tax credits, display merchandising, economics of historic preservation, historic preservation programs and services,

Community Development Block Grant master façade plans, Main Street Iowa program, design guidelines, technological connectivity and Self Supporting Municipal Improvement Districts.

The local conference coordinating staff and volunteers of Main Street Keokuk, along with their sponsors, provided a number of special activities. Attendees enjoyed the ambiance of the recently restored Hotel Iowa and toured the national award-winning Municipal Waterworks plant and the Hydroelectric Power Plant / Lock and Dam 19.

The Keokuk hosts offered guided bike/walk/run tours, yoga classes, geode hunts and evening cruises and fireworks on the Mississippi. The community of Keokuk demonstrated full support during the conference through the involvement of city staff and employees, 100 plus volunteers (including 23 students and 10 couples who offered boat rides), as well as 17 local sponsors.



The IDRC administers the Main Street Iowa program, provides fee-based services to all Iowa communities and has an extensive resource library containing downtown revitalization tools and techniques. For more information, visit iowaeconomicdevelopment.com/community, send e-mails to downtown@iowa.gov or call 515.725.3058.

program director spotlight



Lisa Oetken has been the program director in Mount Pleasant for seven years and has been a Certified Main Street Manager since 2009. She was born in Burlington and spent her first nine years in Morning Sun. Her family then moved to Olds, 11 miles north of Mount Pleasant, graduating from WACO High School in 1983.

Lisa did more than think about leaving for the “big city”, she moved to the big city of Chicago after receiving an Associate of Arts degree in retail. She worked as an assistant manager for Lady Foot Locker while in Chicago. After a year, she moved back to Iowa to attend the University of Iowa and receive a bachelor's degree in Business Administration.

When asked about her passion for Main Street, Lisa reflected back to Mike McKim, one of Main Street Mount Pleasant's board presidents who shared a quote by William James, “Act as if what you do makes a difference. It does.” How true is that statement? This quote was the attitude that ten forward-thinking citizens had more than ten years ago. This attitude confirmed their belief that downtown Mount Pleasant was vital to the success of the community and added to their desire to see Mount Pleasant continue to grow and prosper well into the 21st century. The expression of this belief was the creation of Main Street Mount Pleasant. This core group evolved into an organization dedicated solely to the revitalization of the heart of the community — their historic downtown. Lisa shared “My passion is to work with the business and building owners as well as the city to see it continue to grow and prosper. I love our downtown and the people that work and live there.”

Lisa loves working with the retailers and planning special events to promote downtown Mount Pleasant. Her background is in retail, and she enjoys helping them market their stores.

Mount Pleasant became an Iowa Main Street community in 2002 and has seen a renewed interest in businesses relocating to downtown. Even with the economic downturn, Mount Pleasant has kept vacancies below five percent and experienced over 35 upper story units renovated. The city of Mount Pleasant has partnered with Main Street to improve streets and public spaces.

When asked about the future of downtown Mount Pleasant, Lisa began to talk about being in the middle of the largest project Main Street Mount Pleasant has ever been involved in — the purchase of the historic Union Block and raising the funds to renovate. Lisa said, “My vision for downtown Mount Pleasant is to see every building renovated and full of wonderful shops. I believe downtown Mount Pleasant can be an exciting place to live, shop and invest.”

Lisa also shared that she has “been married to a wonderful man, Dave, for the last 20 years and has three beautiful children. If I am not working, I am supporting them in their activities. I love spending time with my family, and I do occasionally take time for myself. I guess you could classify me as a junkaholic. I love to go to auctions and flea markets. It is my belief though that you must take time for yourself. If I do not take care of myself, I will not be able to help others and that is who I am and what I love doing.”

To learn more about downtown Mount Pleasant, contact Lisa Oetken at 319.385.3101, loetken@mountpleasantiowa.org or www.mountpleasantiowa.org

25th anniversary against the odds

Historic Valley Junction is a community of survivors! Forever perceived as the underdog, Valley Junction survives through the face of great adversity. Left as a ghost town when the Rock Island Railroad relocated during the Great Depression, Valley Junction survived, albeit, as a district filled with bars, saloons and houses of ill repute.



From the city's name change (to West Des Moines) in 1938 through the 1960s, the district was eclectic to say the least — filled with antique stores, flea markets and part-time businesses. A major blow was the opening of nearby Valley West Mall in the early 1970s coupled with rapid retail expansion surrounding the district. Following that, other challenges included the 1980s farm crisis, drastic changes in shopping habits, the devastating flood of 1993 and the opening, in 2004, of the state's largest shopping center just a few short miles away.

Since becoming a Main Street community, the face of Valley Junction has changed from antique stores and part-time hobby businesses to the largest number of specialty stores in the metro area and a premier arts, entertainment and cultural district.



When faced with such challenges, many districts would dissipate and fade away. Valley Junction's independent, entrepreneurial community has faced these challenges head-on, determined to survive and thrive. In the current economic climate, the district continues to be creative, determined and focused on the future. Retailers and events bring thousands of people to this district, and Valley Junction remains a Great American Main Street.

25 years of making the mark in Cedar Falls



The Cedar Falls' Downtown District is a special neighborhood within the Cedar Valley. As the restored center of the city, the downtown district is a vibrant community for living, working, shopping, dining, entertainment and exploring the past. Throughout the historic neighborhood, lovingly rehabilitated buildings provide a "community DNA" that serves to connect the collective past with contemporary lives. Situated in a bend of the Cedar River, Cedar Falls' history is a classic example of how midwestern towns emerged on the prairie in the mid-1800s. Flanked on two sides by the river, the revived downtown provides a present-day context for commerce, finance and a

social gathering place everyday and during the many town festivals. As one of the earlier towns involved with the Main Street Iowa program, the district is a classic success story for the national Main Street revitalization program. From an economically depressed area in the 80s, to a sought after business location today, the district hums with activity nearly around the clock. A certified Main Street for the past 24 years, Cedar Falls was a recipient of the Great American Main Street national award in 2002, one of only 84 communities in the country. In 2010, the district received the national honor of being named one of the "2010 Dozen Distinctive Destinations" in the country. Additionally, the district is certified by the State of Iowa as an Arts and Cultural District. The Cedar Falls Historical Society is an active partner in the downtown district managing five museums in the neighborhood and conducting an active program of education. The combined community efforts to deliberately incorporate the past with the future make Cedar Falls Downtown an excellent destination within the Cedar Valley.



Spencer Main Street Company celebrating 25 years

On April 19, 2012, Spencer Main Street Company celebrated its 25th anniversary. Of the many outstanding accomplishments of the organization, the following are the most noteworthy and are best described in the context of the four points of the Main Street Program.

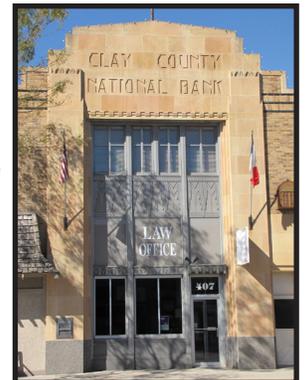
ORGANIZATION: The establishment of the SSMID (Self-Supported Municipal Improvement District) in 1988 assured a reliable and stable funding source for the support of the program. Work with the community of Spencer in the successful establishment of a Cultural & Entertainment District which is made up of all of the downtown and portions of adjoining territory, and joining a community effort in the successful quest in becoming a Blue Zones demonstration community.

DESIGN: Taking the initiative in developing the Fina Project which converted a vacant service station into 35 parking spaces and a green space area. Providing valuable input into the four million plus streetscape for our downtown. Being the driving force behind the establishment of a Historic Preservation commission for the city of Spencer and the resulting listing of a three block area on the National Register. Providing the design knowledge and guidance for the "Storefront Initiative," a project of our local municipal utility which provided financial assistance for façade improvements for commercial buildings. This project supported the renovation of 69 downtown buildings with over one million in grants and a similar amount in 10-year repayable no interest loans. The committee was also actively involved in the Spencer Housing Investment Corporation, the group that assisted the development of upper floor housing. This group helped a building owner convert a vacant second floor into two 2400 square foot apartments.

PROMOTION: Ongoing promotions that bring thousands of customers and visitors to our downtown such as Grand Meander and Thanks With Franks, two promotions that have been held all 25 years or more. New and innovated promotions such as Main Street Market, Downtown Wine Stroll, Gingerbread Kingdom, Grand Meander/Tuba Christmas and Moonlight Madness fill out a very busy promotion calendar.

BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT: This committee has been involved in the development of the Spencer Housing Investment Corporation, the group that assisted the development of upper floor housing. They also were the driving force behind the organization of the Rose Retail Revolving Loan Fund, a fund designed to assist retail starts or expansions with a no interest loan of up to \$15,000.00 that will assist a business in meeting the requirements needed to access larger loans and assistance programs.

In the past twenty five years Spencer Main Street Company has provided the leadership and direction to downtown development which has resulted in a less than five percent vacancy of commercial properties, over twenty million dollars invested in redevelopment of properties and businesses, a National Register District, a Cultural and Entertainment District, a Blue Zones designation and many other outstanding accomplishments. This has been made possible by outstanding public and private support, dedicated board and committee members and thousands of hours of volunteer involvement. We look forward to a bright future for Main Street Spencer.



cornices

Main Street Iowa technotes

The uppermost decorative trim on a building, the cornice can be one of the most character defining elements of the façade. The cornice is a visual “cap” to the façade that helps define the building and unifies the entire composition.

Cornices can be made from a number of materials and come in a wide variety of styles. One usually relates the term cornice with the ornate decorative metal cornices common on turn-of-the-century historic commercial buildings. But actually cornices are constructed from a number of materials in many different styles.



The earliest downtown buildings were often made of wood and incorporated a decorative cornice band. The cornice had brackets made by layering wood pieces cut in decorative patterns. Atop the brackets is a flat projecting panel faced with a molding or trim. While wood buildings in downtown are becoming scarce, wood cornice brackets are still commonly seen on turn-of-the-century

homes. Wood cornices face deterioration from moisture and rotting if they are not kept adequately painted. Repairs are straightforward; either fabricate a new matching piece or repair small areas of deterioration with wood epoxies.

Brick, terra cotta and stone are also common cornice materials. Bricks can be a portion of a larger composition or be a cornice by themselves. Brick corbels, where the individual bricks stair step out from the façade is one technique. A soldier course, where the brick is stood on end is another method. Soldier bricks are sometimes angled to create a “saw tooth” effect. Brick cornices are more common on buildings constructed after 1900 as designs and detailing became more simplified.

Terra cotta can be molded into limitless shapes and colored with shiny glaze. Individual pieces are anchored to the façade with metal ties and mortared together. Glazed terra cotta often experiences spalling where a piece of the glaze breaks off, usually do to freeze-thaw cycles. Another common maintenance problem with terra cotta is that the metal anchors rust and swell causing the pieces to break or come loose.



The common metal cornice is actually constructed from a number of individual pieces. Decorative trims including dentil molding, egg and dart moldings, scrollwork and floral designs, and even lion's heads and gargoyles are common. Typically a cornice will also have a series of regularly spaced brackets. Additional decoration can include finials or freestanding urns atop the cornice.

Commonly, the cornice would incorporate the construction date of the building and it might also include the name of the original owner/builder.

Metal cornices are reinforced and often attached to the façade with wood framing. If water is allowed to penetrate into the cornice, the framing can deteriorate and the lightweight metal can easily rust through. Once a hole is made in the cornice it



The cornice is a visual “cap” to the façade that helps define the building and unifies the entire composition.

becomes a favorite location for all types of birds since the interior is basically hollow. For this reason, it is important to keep a metal cornice well maintained.

One of the most important, and easiest, maintenance procedures for a cornice is to keep it painted. Painting a metal cornice in a scheme that coordinates with the overall façade (whether a single color or a highly detailed scheme) helps to unify the entire building.

Any small cracks or holes should be patched and sealed when painting the cornice. This can be as simple as caulking a seam. Also, soldering a loose piece of a bracket or installing a small sheet metal patch can help maintain the integrity of the cornice. Keeping the cornice watertight includes maintaining the top flashing so that it sheds water to keep the cornice from rusting.

The only solution for extremely deteriorated or missing pieces of a metal cornice is to replace them. Trims, brackets and ornamentation are still available from specialty suppliers. The most widely known supplier of cornice materials and decorative metal work is W.F. Norman Corp. of Nevada, MO. They have a broad inventory of components, or they can custom manufacture pieces if needed.

If the entire cornice is missing, a new replacement can be constructed. The basic structure can be made by a sheet metal contractor and the trim pieces attached. Historic photos and any physical evidence on the building should be used to design a true duplicate cornice.



Contemporary materials are also available for constructing decorative cornices. Synthetic resins and plastics, like fiberglass, are becoming more and more prevalent as replacement materials for a variety of architectural ornamentation. These materials are lightweight and durable.

One caution on replacement cornice designs: the new cornice should be an exact replica of the original design. If documentation is not available for the original design of the cornice, its design should be simplified and not over decorated. Just because the details and ornamentation are available does not mean they should be used!

With regular care, upkeep and occasional repairs as needed, a decorative cornice can continue to grace the upper portion of any turn-of-the-century commercial building for all to enjoy for many years to come.

getting the community involved in downtown

With election season upon us and the concept of citizen driven government receiving renewed attention, it's a good time for Main Street organizations and the public sector in general to assess how to involve the people as we conduct the people's business. How do we engage the public in the business of downtown? How do we engage the public to assist in our business improvement approaches? How do we infuse public vision and support for our downtown promotions? How do we capture the public's will in guiding and enhancing the design of downtowns? How do we capitalize on the public as the tremendous, valuable volunteer resource they are for communities and Main Street organizations?

Recent years have brought many new opportunities to improve the overall quality and quantity of citizen engagement. The various means of encouraging public participation can be grouped into two broad categories — high touch and high tech.

High touch approaches bring the public face-to-face with your organization and project organizers. This face-to-face interaction can take place in a variety of places and manners. One of the most effective approaches to high touch public engagement is meeting the public where they are — the coffee shop, local farmers' market, community festivals, schools, churches, senior centers, employers, etc. So what are some examples of high touch approaches to public engagement and what are some effective ways to improve the quantity and quality of public input when we go to where they are or ask them to come to us?

Examples of high touch public engagement approaches include the following:

- Facilitated public meetings
- Public open houses
- Community walkabouts
- Design workshops / charrettes
- Exhibits at community events
- Door-to-door surveying
- Place games
- Photo contests / visual preference surveys



High touch approaches can be effective but by themselves often do not result in the amount, quality and diversity input desired. One of the keys to success with these approaches is to engage a diverse number of people in small and large groups in an atmosphere that is comfortable and encourages creativity, sharing and listening to all. Other keys to success include having gatherings in places that are accessible (providing transportation if needed), offering a meal or some other type of incentive, offering gatherings at different times and days of the week, making child care available or better yet including children in the process. High touch approaches are

a good way to start, but combining high touch with high tech can greatly improve public participation.

Examples of high tech public engagement approaches include the following:

- Online surveys
- Mind mapping
- Audience response systems
- Websites
- Mobile participation tools and applications
- Virtual town halls
- Digital placemaking
- Visual preference surveys

The use of high tech approaches often times can bring into the community engagement process segments of the population that may not attend or are unable to attend more public settings. While previously there have been concerns about high tech approaches excluding many segments of the population, such as lower income and older citizens, newer data suggests that the digital divide is growing smaller. Consider these figures from a 2012 study by Leichtman Research Group.



Annual Household Income	Use a Computer at Home	Internet at Home	Broadband at Home
Under \$30,000	59%	52%	47%
\$30,000-\$50,000	84%	78%	68%
Over \$50,000	97%	97%	91%

A Pew Research Center survey conducted in July and August 2011 found 88% of American adults have a cell phone, 57% have a laptop, 19% own an e-book reader and 19% have a tablet computer; with about six in ten adults (63%) going online wirelessly with one of those devices.

To assist communities in their efforts to improve public participation, the Iowa Economic Development Authority conducted public participation training sessions around Iowa in 2011. These trainings resulted in development of the www.planiowa.com website full of tools to aid you and your community in its citizen engagement efforts. On www.planiowa.com, you will find the presentations from these trainings along with a series of eight short videos defining and describing high touch and high tech approaches to public participation.

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Main Street Messenger

Main Street Iowa has gone "GREEN!" We will use more and more electronic communication, slowly phasing out most printed materials. Our first step was to move to electronic distribution of the Main Street Messenger.

Visit iowaeconomicdevelopment.com and register to receive electronic updates from any of the teams at Iowa Economic Development Authority.



First Place

Congratulations to the winners of the 2012 Iowa State Fair 73rd Annual Photography Salon competition in the Downtown Places and Faces Category sponsored by Main Street Iowa!

Carrie Johnson
Indianola, Iowa



Second Place

Kevin Barber
Des Moines, Iowa



Third Place

Krista Long
Des Moines (Beaverdale), Iowa