



## Three New Main Street Iowa Communities Announced Avoca, Guthrie Center and Newton Join the Main Street Iowa Program

At a special ceremony at the Iowa State Capitol on February 6, Governor Terry Branstad announced that three Iowa communities were selected to join the Main Street Iowa program: Avoca, Guthrie Center and Newton. The addition of these new communities brings the total number of Main Street communities in Iowa to 52.

"Iowa's historic main streets are the heart and soul of our communities," said Governor Branstad. "We will continue to do whatever we can to keep Iowa's downtowns strong and vibrant for business owners, workers, residents and visitors. I am pleased to welcome each of these communities into the Main Street family and wish them much success in the future."

Main Street Iowa communities are investing in their city centers by preserving rich architecture, restoring historic properties, and promoting its unique assets through festivals and special events that invite all ages to experience the best of community. They strive to strengthen the economic climate for growing the business base downtown.

For more than 27 years, the Main Street Iowa program and its communities have been looked upon as the "best of the best" in a national effort to revitalize downtowns across the country.

"In their applications and presentations, the selected communities demonstrated strong

partnerships, a high level of volunteerism and a commitment to the revitalization of their downtown districts. We are confident that these three cities will thrive and grow for many years to come," said Debi Durham, director of the Iowa Economic Development Authority.

Main Street is a long-term development strategy. It requires a community to invest a significant amount of time educating the community and building broad-based support in order to lay a solid foundation for the program. It is critical that a community develop the capacity for long-term downtown revitalization success.

The Iowa Economic Development Authority remains committed to growing the number of Main Street communities in our state and in providing the best training and technical assistance possible to improve the economic, physical and social health of their Main Street districts. Between 2009 and 2013, eleven new programs were added.

Through the application and presentation process, the communities selected have demonstrated strong partnerships, a high level of volunteerism and a commitment to the revitalization of their Main Street districts.

We are confident that these communities' programs will thrive and grow for many years to come, and we are pleased to welcome Avoca, Guthrie Center and Newton into the Main Street family.



**Avoca** is a western Iowa community located in Pottawattamie County with a population of 1,503. In the past several

years, Avoca has seen a growth in new downtown business, comprehensive streetscape improvements, locally supported façade rehabilitations and residential development throughout the community.

As a result of this commitment to community development, Avoca was recognized in 2012 by the Iowa League of Cities as an All-Star Community. With broad based community support and a city committed to downtown revitalization, Avoca is steadfast in its goals to build on their accomplishments to strengthen their community.



**Guthrie Center**, with a population of 1,538, is the county seat of Guthrie County. On the heels of a recently completed downtown development plan,

Guthrie Center implemented a series of streetscape improvements ranging from new sidewalks and streetlights to benches and trash cans. Just last year, the community was awarded a Community Development Block Grant, Downtown Revitalization Fund award of \$500,000 to assist with the rehabilitation of 22 downtown façades.

With this designation and façade construction slated to be in full swing this summer, Guthrie Center is truly demonstrating a community who is rolling up its sleeves, getting things done and helping to create a brighter future in Guthrie Center for the next generation.



The county seat of Jasper County, **Newton** has a population of 15,254. The community has been actively preparing for the submission of

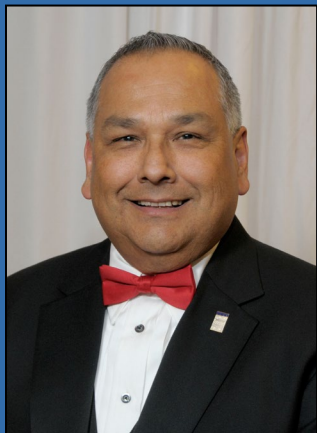
their Main Street Iowa application since 2005. During this time frame, Newton has experienced many dramatic changes, impacting the local economy, the community's priorities and visions for the future. Most notably the loss of a key, landmark industry and the construction of the Iowa Speedway.

In 2012, following a year-long, intensive public input process, the city of Newton adopted "Newton's Future", a comprehensive plan providing a vision for Newton and setting the stage for a renewed focus on downtown revitalization. Newton has taken many, methodical steps to provide a firm foundation for its local Main Street efforts.



# Guzman Retires After More Than 25 Years

*A letter from Jane Seaton, Retired State Coordinator, Main Street Iowa*



In January, 1988, a young Californian arrived in Iowa to jumpstart the state's fledgling Main Street program. Recruited by Kennedy Smith, then director of the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Main Street Center, he planned to stay just five years and now, more than twenty-five years later an older and wiser Thom Guzman is off to his next adventure...because, "if you always do, what you've always done, you'll always get what you've always got!"

Thom's commitment to the Main Street movement is legendary. He is regarded as a mentor, counselor, trainer and friend to downtown revitalization program's in Iowa cities large and small as well as state and county programs across the nation. His "get over it or die" approach speaks to his belief that there is no challenge too great or problem so complex that it can't be fixed with hard work and ingenuity.

Through the years, Main Street Iowa has grown at a steady pace, never compromising the integrity of programming and services to existing cities for the benefit of inflating the number of communities assisted. Thom's direct, albeit conservative approach, to slow and steady program growth has proven to be successful even during uncertain economic times.

Knowing that the strength and ultimate success or failure of a program is reliant upon the commitment of the individuals who implement it each day, Thom has been diligent in assembling a staff that appreciates the value of team work. He leaves the Main Street Iowa program in their capable hands knowing that they will continue to build upon past successes while adapting to meet the needs of the future. It's more than just a job with this team; it's a commitment to excellence.

He and the amazing professionals of the Iowa Downtown Resource Center have built one of the most highly regarded Main Street programs in the country. During his tenure, the Main Street Iowa program grew from five to forty-nine participating communities. Eight Main Street Iowa cities have been recognized with Great American Main Street Awards, the most of any state in the nation. And, working closely with state and federal legislators, he and his team have attracted grant dollars totaling more than twenty million for training, research and brick and mortar projects benefitting Iowa's communities.

A tireless and vocal advocate for upholding the basic principles of this tried and true program, Thom is known across the country as the "godfather" of Main Street, a leader who always speaks his mind, even when his opinion may not be the most popular.

His will be BIG shoes to fill for he leaves a legacy that will benefit Iowans for years to come. We will be forever grateful for his dedication, his vision and his leadership.

Farewell dear Thom, you will forever be an Iowan!

## Main Street Awards

Main Street Iowa will host the annual Main Street Awards celebration to recognize outstanding local Main Street projects, activities and volunteers. The 27th annual Main Street Iowa Awards Ceremony will be held Friday, May 2, 2014, at the Community Choice Credit Union Convention Center (Iowa Events Center). Local Main Street programs were encouraged to submit nominations in eighteen competitive categories within five main areas of design, economic restructuring, organization, promotion and overall program. In addition to the competitive nominations, each program's non-competitive Volunteer of the Year submission will be recognized during the awards ceremony.

If you have questions, please contact Debi Flanders, 515.725.3055 or [debi.flanders@iowa.gov](mailto:debi.flanders@iowa.gov)



*2013 Committee of the Year Award,  
State Center Promotion Committee  
Photo of Farmers Market*



*2013 Main Street Iowa Awards Reception,  
Community Choice Credit Union Convention Center*



*2013 Main Street Iowa Awards,  
Community Choice Credit Union Convention Center*

# Interview with Jim Engle, Director of the Iowa Downtown Resource Center

**Welcome Jim! You started in your new role as director of the Iowa Economic Development Authority's Iowa Downtown Resource Center on January 17?**



*Yes. I'm really excited to be here. I'm looking forward to meeting everyone and seeing all of the great things everyone is doing in their communities.*

**We know you are originally from Sigourney, Iowa. What's it like to be back in your home state?**

*I've been gone for 23 years, but I always knew I'd end up back in Iowa. This is where my family and my wife's family are located. Plus, the people in Iowa are great!*

**And you brought family with you?**

*Yes, my wife LuAnn and daughter Faith will be moving to Iowa as soon as we sell our house in Madison. My son, Evan, decided he wanted to stay in Wisconsin. That's his home.*

**What in your education do you think prepared you to work in the downtown revitalization movement?**

*I graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Business Management from Central College in Pella, and my first job was in Admissions for Upper Iowa University. I saw an ad for a Downtown Project Manager and was intrigued. At that time, the value of downtown was underrated, but I thought about my hometown and took the job. It was a whole new field for me, but everything I'd learned, especially about business development and managing people, prepared me.*

**Your initial downtown development experience was as the Program Manager of Main Street Oskaloosa. What do you remember about your experience?**

*I was in Oskaloosa for 4½ years. During that time, downtown experienced business growth, many restoration projects and greater cohesiveness in the business community. But, my favorite memories are the restoration of the historic bandstand and the lighted holiday parade. People thought we were out of our minds to have an event outside in the cold. But it's still going on – and I'm proud of that!*

**Then, you moved to Wisconsin in 1990 to lead their downtown development efforts?**

*I started as the Assistant State Coordinator for the Main Street program at the Wisconsin Department of Commerce and learned a lot working under another Iowan, Alicia Goehring, who was the first manager of Burlington's Main Street program. My career in Wisconsin changed over the 20+ years I was there. For the last 2½ years, I was manager of the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation. I'm proud of the fact that Wisconsin has a reputation of being one of the stronger Main Street programs in the country.*

**Are there others who have influenced you in your career?**

*When I was a new Main Street manager, Kennedy Smith from the National Main Street Center spent a lot of time working in Oskaloosa. She is brilliant and was my mentor. And also from Oskaloosa, Chuck and Emily Russell taught me everything I know about volunteerism.*

**How do you think peers you worked with would describe you?**

*I like to work in teams and empower people to do their jobs. I like to speak publicly. I love to be on the road working in communities and helping them.*

**What trends do you see in downtown revitalization?**

*The entire movement is just as strong as it ever was and hasn't diminished one bit since 1986. Downtowns are doing well. The problems of 10 years ago – the influence of the big box stores – seem to be diminishing. Entrepreneurial businesses have found their niche in downtown.*

**What inspires you about the Main Street movement?**

*It's amazing what a small group of people can do. The program has something for all kinds of people – whatever their occupation or personality type. With the four points – there's something that excites everyone.*

**Which of the Four Points is your favorite?**

*Economic Restructuring – even though the fruits of the labor come later, I like the business development work. And, I've always been a strong proponent of the Organization point – it's such a foundation. Promotion is really important – it's not just fluff, but real economic development to bring people to downtown. But, I can't forget Design. Nothing is more important than the physical improvements. I guess I like them all!*

**What do you do when you aren't working?**

*I like trivia. I'm always reading a book. I like baseball and still play on an old men's team. And, I love to be outdoors.*

**What's ahead for the Iowa Downtown Resource Center?**

*I've spent the first few days getting lots of information from Thom Guzman and the great Iowa Downtown Resource Center staff. The projects and activities that this group is doing is mind boggling. Main Street is the signature program of the Iowa Downtown Resource Center, and Iowa is at least one of the premier Main Street programs in the country. I'm looking forward to continuing that great work and to raising the profile of the Iowa Downtown Resource Center.*

## Main Street Mondays

Main Street Iowa is now involved with the exciting opportunity of bringing Main Street Iowa to the Iowa Economic Development Authority's (IEDA) existing audiences on social media. "Main Street Mondays" provide a new social media presence and provides an outlet for the Main Street Iowa network to share stories with a broader economic development audience.



Every Monday, Main Street Iowa is featured on IEDA's Facebook and Twitter. Posts pertain to Main Street Iowa communities, district activities, awards, events – anything and everything Main Street.

Please "like" the Iowa Economic Development Authority's Facebook page and follow @businessiowa on Twitter. This will certainly enhance local social media efforts and provide additional opportunities to tag and connect with a larger audience with daily communications (not just on Mondays).

# Main Street Iowa Challenge Grants Announced

Main Street Iowa announced the recipients of the latest round of bricks and mortar Challenge Grant projects on January 7. Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) Director Debi Durham presented fourteen projects with awards ranging from \$45,000 to \$75,000. A total of \$951,000 was distributed to the various projects leveraging an additional \$2,729,018 in local project match. Representatives from the Iowa Economic Development Authority's Main Street Iowa program welcomed representatives from each of the communities during a special check presentation ceremony held at the Des Moines Botanical Garden. Approximately 100 people were in attendance. Main Street Iowa State Coordinator Michael Wagler hosted the event and announced the awards.

The bricks and mortar projects range in scope from multiple façade improvement projects to total rehabilitation of significant historic buildings. This year, the Challenge Grant program will be funded through an appropriation from the Iowa Legislature. Previous Challenge Grants were funded through a federal appropriation. Since the first federal appropriation in 2002, approximately \$4.9 million in grants leveraged over \$36 million in private reinvestment in 83 projects throughout 41 Main Street Iowa districts. The grants will benefit local rehabilitation projects such as façade improvement and restoration, stabilizing buildings devastated by fire, upper floor rehabilitation and stabilizing and rehabilitating severely deteriorated buildings.

Three communities received challenge grants for the very first time: Belle Plaine, Osceola and Marion. Others have been awarded these grants numerous times; State Center received their seventh Challenge Grant, Dubuque their eighth. "These challenge grants have proven to be catalysts for the revitalization of Iowa's historic Main Streets," said Durham. "Reinvesting in our traditional commercial districts is good business. It's good for our economy and good for our state. These projects will bring new businesses and new residents to our downtown districts."



Representatives from Cedar Falls accept their check for \$75,000 for the rehabilitation of the historic Cedar Falls Post Office at 217 Washington Street. The grant will help stabilize and repair the historic structure as well as restore much of the original lobby in preparation for commercial adaptive use.

## Congratulations to the Main Street Iowa Challenge Grant recipients!

Community Name	Project Name	Grant Award	Match	Total Project Cost
Belle Plaine	Hansen Bldg	\$60,000.00	\$102,282.77	\$162,282.77
Burlington	JC Penney Building Rehab	\$75,000.00	\$566,292.00	\$641,292.00
Cedar Falls	Historic Post Office	\$75,000.00	\$110,000.00	\$185,000.00
Charles City	Multiple Properties	\$66,000.00	\$67,854.56	\$133,854.56
Des Moines	Cornerstone Historical Project	\$75,000.00	\$340,482.00	\$415,482.00
Dubuque	Central Avenue Façade Improvements	\$65,000.00	\$264,050.00	\$329,050.00
Dunlap	Dunlap Legion Hall Bldg	\$75,000.00	\$314,700.00	\$389,700.00
Elkader	Reimer & Dittmer Bldgs	\$75,000.00	\$120,593.00	\$195,593.00
Manning	Cliff's Place Interior Renovation	\$45,000.00	\$46,242.18	\$91,242.18
Marion	Memorial Hall Restoration Project	\$75,000.00	\$99,324.00	\$174,324.00
Osceola	Garner-Howe Hotel Restoration	\$65,000.00	\$101,980.00	\$166,980.00
State Center	Benson Bldg	\$75,000.00	\$75,000.00	\$150,000.00
Waterloo	Bride's Corner / 620 Commercial St	\$50,000.00	\$169,967.11	\$219,967.11
Woodbine	413 & 415 Walker Street	\$75,000.00	\$350,250.00	\$425,250.00



## Parking Analysis, continued

High quality graphics that orient all users to services and amenities and also enhance the image of the downtown should always be a goal of a downtown revitalization program. Signs for public parking areas are a key component. Be certain that all lots in the community are clearly marked along major streets so that a first time visitor can easily find any available parking. Also, be sure that each individual lot is clearly marked with any restrictions and fees listed.

With a good solid understanding of the town's current parking situation, a clearly defined parking strategy can be developed that will more effectively meet the needs of downtown shoppers, workers and residents.

Parking comes in many sizes, shapes and forms: on-street parking; off street surface parking and parking structures; parallel parking; angle parking; head-in (or 90°) parking; and one-way aisles and two-way aisles. With all these options, sometimes it's hard to determine what design is right in each situation.

### On-Street Parking

First, let's consider on-street parking. On-street parking does many important things in a downtown. The on-street parking is typically the easiest to access and its convenience and use by customers is critical for a viable downtown district. On-street parking also acts as a buffer between the traffic and the pedestrian sidewalk. Creating a safer, more inviting environment.

On-street parking is quite often parallel because angled parking has been shown to dramatically increase the rate of accidents — especially on major arterials or highways, where angled parking is commonly not allowed, nor is it probably a good idea.

This is not to say that angled parking cannot be used. Angled parking is more efficient than parallel parking and easier to use. Angled parking can be effective if the street is a local street, especially with a strong pedestrian orientation. A street with high density of buildings built to the lot line, intense retail activity and street amenities like trees or bump out crosswalks, creates a strong pedestrian orientation. (Like most traditional downtowns!) Angled parking must have a fairly wide street to accommodate the necessary depth for the stalls.

### Additional Reading

#### *The Parking Handbook for Small Communities*

John D. Edwards, National Trust for Historic Preservation and The Institute of Transportation Engineers. 1994

#### *Parking for Downtown's Spenders*

Hyatt-Palma Publications. 1995

## Program Director Spotlight



Robin Bostrom is certainly not new to the world of Main Street; she has been the program director in West Union since 2006. While orchestrating the revitalization of old buildings, she is visualizing

the continuation of new development that brings more retail business to the downtown district and hoping that they can have more events that bring the community back downtown as a gathering spot for community festivals and family fun!

Robin grew up in Hawkeye, Iowa, with a population of only 528. After attending college in a larger city, she and her husband had the opportunity to purchase the family business in West Union, Bostrom's Supervalu. They became the third generation owner of the family's grocery store. In 2006, West Union was accepted into Iowa's Main Street program and Robin was accepted as their first local program director. Not only is her educational background and

business experience reasons that she has remained a strong director, it is likely that her passion keeps her in this key position within the community. As she said, "Main Street work can be challenging, but I love a good challenge and really have a desire to leave the place I live better than it was before I got there. It was instilled in me growing up that it is important to give back at whatever level you can. Sometimes the gift of your time is the best way you can contribute. There were lots of people who gave to me growing up in this same community, and I have a duty to give back for the next generation as well."

One of Robin's favorite things is helping communities gain confidence to do things they think they can't do because they are "just a small town". She believes you should not shy away from a project because you haven't done that before or don't know how. Robin's philosophy is that you have to dream big and then go after it in small steps.

West Union has indeed followed a big dream which is demonstrated in their Green Pilot Streetscape project. Robin stated, "We are so grateful for all the technical support provided to

our community through the Main Street program and from the Iowa Economic Development Authority on this project. We were able to build capacity and confidence on the local level to take on such a large project. And, we continue to work on improvements including the Façade Master Plan and Multi-Family Housing projects and a district-wide geothermal heating and cooling system. The more you learn, the more confidence you gain to tackle even more projects."

While Robin works many, many hours on the job she does find some time for fun. She recently became a quilter and now can't stay away from a good quilt shop. She also enjoys boating and spending time with her family. And, if that isn't enough Robin even coaches the high school dance team at North Fayette Valley High School. With always wanting to be a Rockette... this is the closest she's ever gotten to that dream!

To find out more about downtown West Union, contact Robin at [mainstreetwu@gmail.com](mailto:mainstreetwu@gmail.com) or visit the city of West Union website at [www.westunion.com](http://www.westunion.com).

# 100 Years. 100 Wishes.

Le Mars, Iowa (one of Iowa's 52 Main Street Communities) – A birthday is an occasion to celebrate, a day to make special wishes come true. Each year marks an important milestone and a reason to celebrate. It's time for Wells Enterprises, Inc., makers of Blue Bunny ice cream to blow out the candles. Wells has been making everyday moments and special celebrations a little sweeter since 1913. To celebrate, they have aligned with Make-A-Wish® to ensure Wells' 100th birthday wish comes true – that 100 kids with life-threatening medical conditions have their wishes granted.

Although Wells has expanded from its humble start as a regional dairy producer, the nation's largest privately held, family-owned ice cream company has not forgotten the importance of giving back to local communities that have supported Wells and Blue Bunny over the last 100 years. By teaming up with Make-A-Wish® – an organization that is all about making life better – Wells is marking this special occasion with a gesture of gratitude toward the fans that have welcomed Blue Bunny into their family moments over the years.

"Wells and Make-A-Wish® have a unique connection and alignment in values. Simply put, we both work to bring more joy and smiles to families," said Mike Wells, president and CEO of Wells Enterprises, Inc. "We believe that the best wish isn't just the one you make, it's the one you give. I've been fortunate to see first-hand the power and impact a wish has on Make-A-Wish® kids and how a wish-come-true can make life better for everyone involved."

From Washington to Georgia and Texas to Chicago, Wells' employees have been busy traveling across the country to host wish-granting parties, scoop ice cream and share smiles. So far through 2014, Wells helped grant wishes like having a superstar shopping spree, being a train conductor and meeting five-time NASCAR Sprint Cup Series Champion driver Jimmie Johnson. Each of these special celebrations brings hope, strength and joy not only to the wish kids and their families but to the Blue Bunny family as well.



The first of Wells' 100 wishes took place in Fargo, North Dakota, where Kajj's wish of becoming a "cop officer" came true. This wish, reminiscent of the first wish ever granted by Make-A-Wish® in 1980, required a little help from the West Fargo Police Department. After being sworn in and decked out in an official uniform, the four-year-old battling a life-threatening tumor helped with typical police duties, including handcuffing "bad guys," working with a

canine officer, Disco, and helping out on helicopter patrol. To top off an action-packed day of crime fighting, Kajj, the newest official member of the police force, and his family celebrated with a 100 year old tradition: a Blue Bunny ice cream social with his new "colleagues."



Another recent 100 Years, 100 Wishes celebration took place north of Sioux City in Rock Valley, Iowa. During this event, Blue Bunny employees surprised Autumn, a seven-year-old battling a life-threatening genetic disorder and her family with a backyard playset perfect for outdoor activities. After being greeted by 160 fans, family and friends, Autumn was ready to test the newest addition to her yard – making sure the gang plank and slide were ready for countless summer nights. In a fun-filled evening, Autumn and her friends explored the playset, jumped on a bouncy house and had a water-balloon fight followed by a backyard barbecue, and, of course, plenty of Blue Bunny ice cream. "The day was perfect," said Nickkie, Autumn's mother. "I am amazed by the Blue Bunny employees and their willingness to help. Autumn's wish couldn't have been better."

## *100 Years. 100 Wishes.*

Although it's easy to see the joy brought to kids and their families by making these wishes come true, David Williams, Make-A-Wish® America president and chief executive officer, knows their potential impact. "Wishes are more than a nice thing – they can be life-changing experiences for wish kids, their families, friends, communities, and the supporters and sponsors, like Wells, that help make those wishes possible," said Williams. "Through the 100 Years, 100 Wishes program, Wells is transforming ice cream into more than just a favorite treat. We are thrilled to join Wells in celebrating its 100th birthday and granting 100 wishes together for kids with life-threatening medical conditions."



# SAVE THE DATE!

The second annual Preserve Iowa Summit will be held August 21 – 23, 2014, in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

The Summit is the only statewide annual conference for professionals and volunteers involved in historic preservation and historic commercial district revitalization in Iowa.

The Summit will include thirty education sessions with featured speakers to include Governor Terry Branstad, Donovan Rypkema and Stephanie Meeks. The “Preservation at its Best” and “Preservation Projects of Merit” awards will be presented, and “Three Minute Success Stories” will be featured.

Tours of historic preservation successes and progress, architecture, Brucemore, the Paramount Theatre and Main Street districts will also be offered; as well as an exhibit hall and a number of networking activities.

The Summit is a coordinated effort of the Iowa Economic Development Authority’s Iowa Downtown Resource Center and the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs’ State Historic Preservation Office in partnership with Preservation Iowa, AIA Iowa and the city of Cedar Rapids.

The online registration site will be available in June.

Questions? 515.725.3075

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# 2014

PRESERVE IOWA  
SUMMIT  
AUGUST 21-23  
CEDAR RAPIDS

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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 an electronic distribution of the Main Street Messenger.

Visit [iowaeconomicdevelopment.com](http://iowaeconomicdevelopment.com) and register to receive electronic updates from any of the teams at the Iowa Economic Development Authority.