

## *More Green Lights Shining GO for Sustainability*

The State of Iowa's commitment to going green is bringing more transformative opportunities for Main Street communities. Sustainability is being incrementally woven into the activities of the Main Street program, local communities and daily lifestyle choices. With increased expectations of designated communities and downtown businesses, the Iowa Department of Economic Development (IDED) is creating the tools to help communities go to a new level for sustainability.

Training services in the Main Street Iowa program are getting a green boost through a grant from the USDA Rural Development program. Main Street organizations will be able to utilize these funds for additional training, which will include discussing sustainable community practices, including energy efficiency. This grant supports additional IDED staff time, expert consultants, workshops and community pilot projects. The towns of West Union and Woodbine are evolving as pilot projects, introducing new sustainable practices into downtown revitalization. Successful practices implemented in these towns will be replicable, becoming models for other communities.

These services, available through the Main Street Iowa program, will enable downtowns to become more resilient in these times of rising energy costs and economic uncertainty. With a solid commitment from local Main Street programs, positive environmental and economic results can be achieved for the well-being of the entire community.

# Urban Neighborhood Program Moving Forward

The Main Street Iowa program has excelled for nearly 25 years in the traditional downtowns of designated communities. In 2007, the Iowa Department of Economic Development recognized that urban neighborhoods have significant commercial development and revitalization needs that could benefit from the program. Through support from the Culver-Judge administration, funding for the Iowa Downtown Resource Center was increased, allowing for the creation of the Main Street Iowa Urban Neighborhood District Program.

Research of urban programs in other states was conducted; and regional forums were held to determine interest and collect input. The Beaverville Neighborhood Commercial District was accepted as a pilot for the new initiative before the tumultuous weather changed many priorities for everyone.

Terry Poe Buschkamp joined the staff at Main Street Iowa as the Urban Neighborhood Consultant on October 31, 2008. Buschkamp served as the Main Street Waterloo Executive Director for the past nine years. A dialogue was held via the Iowa Communications Network (ICN) on December 16 to familiarize potential neighborhood districts with the program. The application was made available in January 2009, with letters of intent due on February 18, 2009.

It is anticipated that there will be up



Terry Poe Buschkamp was hired in October as the MSI Urban Neighborhood Consultant. Does she look familiar? She should. Terry was profiled in a previous issue of the Main Street Messenger as the Executive Director of Main Street Waterloo.

to four additional urban neighborhoods accepted into the program this year. The plan is for these urban neighborhoods to use the same community-driven, comprehensive Four Point Approach™ that is used to revitalize older, traditional business districts throughout the United States.

Urban commercial districts have unique characteristics and may not fit the "traditional" Main Street model, but the same principles and practices can be utilized to develop a program of value to these districts.



# FLOODING DOESN'T SPARE MAIN STREET IOWA COMMUNITIES

The floods of 2008 have affected many communities throughout the state and Mother Nature did not spare her wrath in many of Iowa's Main Street communities. Eleven of Iowa's 40 Main Street communities were directly impacted by the floods. While most flooding was concentrated in residential districts, the cities of Charles City, Waverly, Waterloo, Elkader, and Burlington all received extensive flooding in their historic downtown commercial districts.

In all communities, stories of survival, volunteerism, recovery and loss started to be told as soon as the waters began to recede. Like Cedar Falls, where hundreds of volunteers descended to the downtown levees to save the historic downtown core as waters began to rise to the top of the existing levee system. Or, in Bonaparte where, with help from the National Guard, the city constructed a temporary limestone and sandbag levee around their historic downtown.

In Waverly, the Cedar River raged out of its banks and engulfed nearly the entire

downtown Main Street district. Water levels filled basements and in most buildings reached 18-24 inches on the first floor.

**"In all communities, stories of survival, volunteerism, recovery and loss started to be told as soon as the waters began to recede."**

Charles City was dealt a hard loss with the Cedar River claiming the city's National Register listed suspension bridge. Known as the "Swinging Bridge," this 270-foot pedestrian bridge had been a part of Charles City's landscape since 1906 and was a major pedestrian link from the other side of the river to the downtown.

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Downtown Waverly flooded by Cedar River. (Photo courtesy of Waverly Democrat)



## *Where Are They Now?*

Here's a look at the recovery progress made in three Main Street communities severely impacted by the summer floods:

**Elkader:** Elkader is moving forward, and has seen at least two business start-ups or expansions in buildings that flooded earlier this year. Elkader, in partnership with two other local communities, will be applying to become designated as an Iowa Great Place this year. The community would also like to position itself to become northeast Iowa's White Water destination.

**Burlington:** Since experiencing the record Mississippi flooding last summer, Burlington's affected buildings and businesses have undergone substantial repairs. The primary Iowa Welcome Center in the Port of Burlington reopened in October. The National Register listed CB&Q Depot was cleaned, and approximately \$200,000 was spent renovating the Memorial Auditorium located near the riverfront. In December, tenants of Burlington Apartments, the former Hotel Burlington building, were able to move back into the building. Big Muddy's, a riverside restaurant located in a historic freight depot suffering the most severe flood damage, also reopened in December after five months of remodeling. Having learned from this disaster, Burlington is exploring options for keeping the floodwaters at bay in the future, while Alliant Energy's revamped substation should minimize the risk of power outages caused by submerged equipment.

**Charles City:** Charles City has made great strides getting back on track following the summer flooding. Volunteers were out in full force cleaning up after waters receded to make the town presentable for summer festivals and special events. Charles City even hosted the 2008 Iowa

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# Design Tech Notes: Navigating the Green Streets Criteria

During 2008, the Iowa Department of Economic Development (IDED) unveiled the Iowa Green Streets Criteria as part of the department's efforts to help create a more sustainable Iowa. The criteria is influenced by a compilation of a number of existing green building standards including the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards, the Enterprise Green Communities Criteria and other green building standards that other states have already implemented.

The Iowa Green Streets Criteria provides a wealth of sustainable strategies that can be incorporated into new construction as well as building rehabilitation projects to create a more environmentally responsible end product. While the criteria is voluntary for any project in the state that is not receiving funds through IDIED, meeting the criteria is mandatory when apply-

ing for funds through the IDIED Housing Fund, Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program, Community Facilities and Service Fund and the Main Street Iowa Challenge Grant program.

So, how does this criteria relate to the typical Iowa downtown rehabilitation project? After navigating through the checklist, you will begin to notice that many of the criterion need nothing more than a check off as "a rehab" or "Main Street" project to satisfy the criteria. This relates to the fact that the majority of downtown projects are inherently sustainable as they reuse existing buildings and the city's existing infrastructure, and are located in an existing dense, walkable environment.

As the criteria have been used more frequently, there have been a number of questions that have arisen that can be answered:

## *What is a green development plan?*

The green development plan is a description of the process that will be used to select and implement green building strategies, systems and materials into the project. Completed by the project's green development team during the design phase. It is a written commitment to communicate the projects' goals and objectives to incorporate green building strategies and building operations.



## *What is a green development team?*

A green development team is made up of the participants during the project design process (designer, architect, engineer, contractor, plumbers, HVAC contractor, owners, tenants, etc.). By working together during the design phase, a more efficient design, implementation and final product can be created.

*If I am not involving an architect or professional designer, who can certify my green development plan and checklist?*

If your project is of a smaller scale that does not necessitate an architect or professional designer, your general contrac-

tor or project supervisor can certify that all green strategies laid out in the plan will be implemented as designed.

*My project just involves a facade renovation; do I need to address all aspects of my building to make it greener to meet the criteria?*

No, if your project includes only exterior renovations you will not be mandated to address all criterion in Section 5 "Energy Efficiency" or Section 7 "Healthy Indoor Environment." While not mandatory, it is recommended that all projects go through the criteria and address the easily implementable sustainable measures discussed in the plan. This will not only help create a more environmentally friendly project, it can also lead to cost savings in heating/cooling, lighting and overall energy usage.

*Why do I need to create an occupant/building maintenance manual?*

When purchasing a car or DVD player, the owner's manual provides information for operating, cleaning, maintaining and troubleshooting the product to ensure your purchase operates and lasts as long as possible. In the same vein, the occupant/building maintenance manual should provide information for maintaining and operating your building efficiently in order to get the most out of your building systems and life of the materials

used. The manual can be as basic as having the owner's manuals for the materials used in the project together in a three-ring binder or folder for easy accessibility. Additional information could include material maintenance schedules and seasonal tasks (i.e. cleaning awning fabrics, water heater care, HVAC filters, cleaning and maintaining roofing materials) as well as contact information for service providers for each system in case repair or inspection is needed.

*How do I know I am addressing all of the Green Streets Criteria?*

To help navigate the criteria, a checklist has been developed that isolates each criterion and provides drop down menus so property owners and developers can select the response that best suits their project. In addition, there is also a sample outline of a green development plan document. This checklist and green development plan outline is available on IDIED's Community Development Web site at: [www.iowalifechanging.com/community/](http://www.iowalifechanging.com/community/)

*If I have a question about the Iowa Green Streets Criteria, who can I contact?*

Jeff Geerts is the department's lead for the development and implementation of the Iowa Green Streets Criteria. He can be contacted at 515.242.5907 or [greenstreets@iowa-lifechanging.com](mailto:greenstreets@iowa-lifechanging.com)

# MAIN STREET MANAGER SPOTLIGHT

Each issue of the Messenger features an article about one of Main Street Iowa's program managers. This time around we have the opportunity to get to know Laura Zimmerman from Sac City a little better.

Enthusiastic, lively and energetic are just a few words that describe her. Laura was born and raised in Sac City and attended Buena Vista University earning a degree in Business Management/Entrepreneurship. Although she's thought about leaving town for a big city, she believes Sac City is a great place to raise her children; Sarah (9), and Sam (7).

Laura has been involved with the Sac City Main Street program since its inception in 1996. As a college student, Laura served on the design committee and also participated in the community's application presentation to Main Street Iowa. Previous work experiences include retail management, marketing, customer service and real estate sales. In 2000, Laura accepted the position as Sac City's program director. Since joining the Main Street Iowa program, Sac City has experienced a net gain of 18 new business start-ups, relocations, or expansions, gained 62 new jobs, and rehabilitated or renovated 30 downtown buildings. Over the years 43,271 volunteer hours have been invested in the revitalization efforts.

Laura has seen a dramatic increase over the years in the number of people shopping in downtown Sac City, especially with several recent business start-ups in the community. Although she'd really like to see a few available buildings full, Laura and the Sac City community are very proud of the variety of goods and services available in their downtown.

Contributing to the community and directly impacting businesses provides a very rewarding experience for Laura. "Working with the local entrepreneurs and seeing their passion for their business inspires me to do what I can for our downtown," said Zimmerman. As a veteran Main Street Director,

Laura has been able to see first-hand what Main Street can do for communities, and looks forward to preserving historic buildings and seeing business thrive. As with all Main Street programs Laura admits the work is never done, and there is always someone on Main Street in need of a helping hand.



Laura Zimmerman, Program Director of Sac City Chamber-Main Street.

Outside of work Laura enjoys cooking of all kinds including grilling, smoking, and baking. She's always looking for a new recipe, and loves to get the family around the table for a great meal. Another popular pastime for Laura is bike riding, and you might find her riding across Iowa each year as a dedicated participant of RAGBRAI. "It is a fun way to enjoy the scenery here in Iowa and enjoy the people along the way," said Zimmerman. "The communities that host RAGBRAI are a great example of hospitality in our state."

"Our future is bright for Sac City. Our downtown is full of activity both day and night," Zimmerman said. "We have a great group of volunteers working to make downtown Sac City a great place to live, work, and play!"

If you would like to learn more about Sac City Main Street contact Laura Zimmerman at the Sac City Chamber-Main Street office, 712.662.7316, or visit Sac City's Web site at [www.saccity.org](http://www.saccity.org).

## Downtown Resource Center and Main Street Iowa 2008 Update

Have you been wondering what we've been up to? Here's a list of our accomplishments and successes for fiscal year 2008 (July 1, 2007 - June 30, 2008).

### FY 2008 ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Provided services such as training, on-site technical assistance, presentations, or information to representatives from approximately 200 Iowa communities
- Made presentations to approximately 2,500 Iowans at community meetings
- Provided immediate on-site technical assistance and support to numerous flood damaged Main Street Iowa communities
- Attracted over 260 people from approximately 80 Iowa communities to the 2007 Iowa Downtown Summit held in Council Bluffs
- Awarded Main Street Challenge grants totaling approximately \$800K to 14 renovation projects in Main Street Iowa communities
- Selected four new Main Street communities – Belle Plaine, Mount Vernon, Washington and Woodbine
- Held Main Street Awards celebrating the best in downtown revitalization. Approximately 370 Iowans attended to recognize award winners
- Worked within IDIED to develop Green Streets criteria for all Main Street, CDBG, and HOME funded projects
- Main Street Iowa communities of West Union and Woodbine selected as green pilot communities

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# Going Green: Green Practices for Office Meetings

Whether you are hosting a statewide conference, presiding over a city council meeting or convening a working lunch with three employees, there are numerous ways we all can reduce our impact on the environment when we gather in groups.

You have the power to make a difference. Just start by adopting a few common sense policies that will likely enhance the experience of attendees and save you money in the process. Below is a list of suggestions to encourage more sustainable practices in the way that people plan and conduct meetings. This list is largely based on Internal Sustainable Practices of the Iowa Department of Economic Development available at [www.iowalifechanging.com/community/green-ided.html](http://www.iowalifechanging.com/community/green-ided.html).

## GREEN MEETINGS GUIDELINES:

- Conserve paper used in programs and handouts by including only pertinent information and by printing on both sides.
- Limit hard copy handouts and provide as much information as possible through e-mail and the Web instead of on paper.
- Encourage speakers to use PowerPoint presentations and to post their reference materials online instead of using paper handouts.
- Plan workshops and meetings in centrally located areas, accessible by public transportation and within walking distances when possible; encourage car-pooling and/or provide shuttles.
- Before planning even begins for larger meetings, everyone involved with an event, including the planning committee, attendees, caterers and organizers should determine and be aware of the green/sustainability goals of an event.
- For regional conferences, research possible event locations and hotels and try to choose one that already uses sustainable energy, water and waste practices.
- Before making travel arrangements for speakers or attendees, see if those who would need to travel can participate through teleconferencing instead.
- In addition to regular notice provisions, notice of public meetings and agendas packets for meetings can be circulated on the Web and through e-mail, which will reduce the need for printed copies of these full documents at the meeting.

## FOOD SERVICE AT MEETINGS:

- Use re-usable plates, silverware and cups as well as cloth tablecloths and napkins.
- Avoid packaged, single-serving items like bottled beverages and condiment packets, as well as disposable items like straws and coffee stirrers.
- Find a caterer who is willing to use locally grown food when possible.
- Make sure that recycling bins for plastic, glass, metal and paper are readily available.

## INTER-OFFICE MEETINGS:

- Use e-mail, phones and the Web for meeting related correspondence instead of paper whenever possible.
- Printing and copying should be done on 100 percent post-consumer, recycled-content paper.
- Recycling bins for bottles and cans should be placed in employee break rooms and where beverages are sold.
- Recycling bins for paper should be placed in meeting locations or directly at staff workstations.

Many of these suggestions may not be right for every particular situation; the key is to think about how our long held practices may need to shift to become more sustainable. These tips are just a starting place, but the impact of even a few of these changes can have a rather dramatic impact on our environment and your bottom line.

# MAIN STREET IOWA ECONOMIC IMPACT FY 2008

Private sector dollars . . . . .	\$90,803,497
invested into MSI	
downtown buildings	
Building rehabilitation projects . . .	337
Building purchases . . . . .	140
Net gain of new & . . . . .	110
expanded businesses	
in MSI downtowns	
Net gain of full time . . . . .	643
jobs in MSI downtown	
businesses	
Volunteer hours invested . . . . .	136,806
into MSI organizations	
Value of volunteer hours . . .	\$2,132,805
(@\$15.59 per hour)	
Leverage Ratio of state . . . .	\$98.72 to \$1
appropriation to	
private investment	
Leverage Ratio FY1986 . . . .	\$69.35 to \$1
through FY2008	

## Where Are They Now?

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Downtown Summit in August with over 260 attendees. Rebuilding of businesses and homes has taken a little longer than expected, but as of December 18, 2008 all impacted businesses are back in operation in either new locations or improved facilities. Several projects remain ongoing including the historic suspension bridge. Charles City is working to create a design for a new bridge to fill the void left by the Swinging Bridge that was destroyed in the flood. A cable-staid bridge has been proposed, and if plans remain on schedule, a new bridge could be in place as soon as October 2009.

# BITS & PIECES

## 2009 National Main Street Conference

### A GREAT OPPORTUNITY IN A DOWN ECONOMY

The 2009 National Main Street Conference will be held in Chicago, Illinois March 1-4 at the Palmer House Hilton Hotel. This year's theme will be "A Great Opportunity in a Down Economy," and will focus on integrating technological solutions into the Main Street Four Point Approach™. More than 60 sessions and technology tutorials will be offered in addition to 19 mobile workshops. The learning sessions offered will help answer questions such as "Can technology improve your fundraising response rate?" and "Can software solutions really make a difference on your bottom line?" Please join us to learn exciting new tools and strategies to make your community or business more competitive during these rough economic times.

- Register online at [www.mainstreet.org](http://www.mainstreet.org) or by calling 1.877.865.5321.
- Registration fees are \$425 for members and \$555 for nonmembers.

### MAIN STREET AWARDS

We hope you plan to attend the annual Main Street Awards banquet at the Downtown Des Moines Marriott on Friday, April 17. **DEADLINE TO REGISTER IS APRIL 8!** Contact Darlene Strachan at the Main Street Iowa office at [darlene.strachan@iowalifechanging.com](mailto:darlene.strachan@iowalifechanging.com) or 515.242.4857 if you have questions or would like to attend.

### GREEN UPDATES

The Iowa Department of Economic Development has a range of green initiatives sprouting into existence. The best way to keep up to date on the range of activities and available resources is to sign up for the GreeNetwork, a monthly electronic newsletter. An easy sign-up form for this and other electronic publications, including the Main Street Messenger, can be found at: [www.iowalifechanging.com/subscriptions/subscription\\_free.asp](http://www.iowalifechanging.com/subscriptions/subscription_free.asp). You can also contact IDED's new Special Projects Coordinator, Stephanie Weisenbach, to help you sign up at [stephanie.weisenbach@iowalifechanging.com](mailto:stephanie.weisenbach@iowalifechanging.com) or 515.725.3000.

## VISUAL MERCHANDISING ASSISTANCE OFFERED TO MAIN STREET IOWA COMMUNITIES

Main Street Iowa recently hired Anna Buhmeyer as an intern to assist downtown retailers with window displays and interior merchandising. Anna, a recent graduate of Iowa State University, has traveled to all four corners of the state working one-on-one with business owners since May 2008. To date, Anna has visited 30 of the 40 Main Street communities and has impacted more than 90 businesses.

Each participating business is able to learn visual strategies specific to their product category and store design. The service is intended to increase store competitiveness by providing expertise related to effective displays and visual elements. "It is amazing what simple changes can do for visual merchandising," said Jane Seaton, State Coordinator for Main Street Iowa.

The response from both downtown retailers and Main Street Directors has been positive. "Having Anna work in our district has been a great benefit as a Main Street Iowa community," said Jim Miller, Executive Director of the Historic Valley Junction Foundation. "The businesses in Historic Valley Junction have enjoyed working with Anna, her visual merchandising skills, artistic eye and creativity to bring their display windows alive. Their windows look great - and I thank Anna for her dedication!"

During each visit participating businesses agree to provide up to \$50 for supplies, and one staff person to work with Anna for the duration of her visit. Sometimes Main Street Directors and local volunteers are also available to help. Anna works closely with store staff to develop display ideas using largely what the store already has or is available to purchase in the community. "Anna was very helpful and informative," said Jane Tremel of Main Street Cakes and Gifts in Dunlap. "We hope she will be able to come back again soon."

If you are interested in having Anna visit your community or business, arrangements can be made through your local Main Street office. This service is being offered until the end of March 2009.



Anna Buhmeyer works on a window and interior display at Kitchen Essentials in Downtown Cedar Falls.

# How Does Main Street Iowa Compare?

Take a look . . . the Main Street Iowa program leads the nation in many categories in comparison to other state or coordinating Main Street programs. Iowa has:

- A 50 percent retention rate of Main Street communities who have participated for twenty or more years. The national average is 10 percent.
- Seven Great American Main Street Award winning communities: Dubuque (1995), Bonaparte (1996), Corning (1998), Keokuk (2000), Elkader (2001), Cedar Falls (2002), Burlington (2004).
- 28 Nationally Certified Main Street Managers (CMSM) as designated by the National Trust for Historic Preservation
- The largest number of communities with populations under 5,000 participating in the Rural Main Street program with 24; ranging in size from Bonaparte, population 458 to Osceola, population 4,659.
- Received five HUD Grants totaling \$2.8 million to support IDED's Main Street Iowa program. These grants leveraged an additional \$19.2 million investment into 41 downtown building projects.
- Experienced a net gain of 3,076 downtown businesses employing 8,802 Iowans full time in Main Street communities
- Realized private sector investment into downtown buildings in Main Street communities totaling \$712 million Since FY1986.
- Seen a \$69 return in private sector investment for every public dollar expended to operate the Main Street program since its inception in FY 1986.
- Recorded almost 1.6 million volunteer hours invested in Main Street Iowa communities since 1990.
- Documented completion of 7,090 downtown building improvement projects since 1986.

## Downtown Resource Center and Main Street Iowa 2008 Update

*Continued from page 4*

- Conducted intensive downtown assessment visits in six Iowa communities
- Worked with ISU to conduct Main Street Makeover Marathon with 4 local businesses in Oskaloosa
- Provided conceptual drawings for 323 potential building projects in Main Street communities
- Provided more than 220 on-site technical assistance visits to Main Street Iowa communities on design, business improvement, interior design, minority outreach, fundraising, board training, promotions, and visioning
- Held dialogues with Iowa's largest communities to gain input into formulating new Urban Neighborhood Main Street Program

## FLOODING DOESN'T SPARE MAIN STREET IOWA COMMUNITIES

*Continued from page 2*

The Turkey River spilled into the community of Elkader, a northeast Iowa community of 1,465, and flooded much of the southern portion of their Main Street district. The community's only grocery store was extensively damaged after receiving more than five feet of water. The owners, with the assistance of many community volunteers, worked to re-open the store less than ten days after the waters receded in order to serve the community during its recovery period.

The recovery process began within days after the water receded and will take many years to fully recover from the destruction and economic loss caused by the rising waters of Iowa's rivers. Main Street Iowa staff and volunteers assisted with local recovery efforts with everything from removing water logged debris from basements, removing sandbags, surveying historic downtown districts and assessing flood impacted buildings and businesses.

Main Street Iowa has partnered with the Iowa Historic Preservation Alliance, the National Trust for Historic Preservation and many other national and state-wide organizations to provide technical assistance, education and communication to further Iowa's flood recovery process.

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