



Main Street Messenger

2014 volume two



Main Street Iowa Recognizes Outstanding Achievements

Award Winning Projects and Volunteers Honored

The 27th annual Main Street Iowa Awards celebration was held on Friday, May 2 at the Community Choice Credit Union Convention Center in downtown Des Moines. The event was attended by almost 500 individuals representing communities across the state.

Seventy seven project nominations were received in 18 competitive categories, 19 of those were selected for winner recognition and 2 received honorable mention. Fifty eight individuals representing 51 programs received recognition for their outstanding dedication and volunteer contributions to the local Main Street initiatives. The Honorable Governor Terry E. Branstad, Lieutenant Governor Kim Reynolds, and Debi Durham, Director of the Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) presented the honors to this year's Main Street Iowa recipients.

Early in the evening, Governor Branstad, Lieutenant Governor Reynolds, special guest U.S. Senator Tom Harkin and IEDA Director Debi Durham shared their perspectives regarding the statewide impact of the Main Street program. "In my 1985 State of the State address to the Iowa Legislature, I proposed finding the funds to create Main Street Iowa," stated Governor Branstad. "We knew from the very beginning that Main Street was not a big-fix, quick-fix solution, but rather an incremental approach to fostering positive change. In my travels across the state, I have seen the program at work in small towns, mid-size cities, urban centers, and neighborhood commercial districts. It has had far greater impact than we ever could have imagined in 1985."

In its 28-year history, Main Street Iowa has tracked over \$1.3 billion in private investment in the purchase, construction and rehabilitation of property in participating commercial districts as of

January 2014, significantly increasing the state's job and business base. In addition, over 2.5 million hours of volunteer time have been logged collectively by local main street organizations.

Private investments in the purchase and revitalization of properties within each of Iowa's designated commercial Main Street districts are tracked on a monthly basis. At the end of the calendar year cumulative totals are tallied for each district since their respective program's inception. Twelve communities were recognized for reaching significant million dollar milestones in 2013. Collectively, these 12 communities represent over 100 million dollars of private investment within their districts. Chariton and Colfax were recognized for reaching the \$1 million benchmark. Jefferson, West Branch and West Union were honored for \$2 million in local investment. Belle Plaine received recognition for achieving the \$3 million benchmark. Hamilton County, Ottumwa and Washington surpassed the \$5 million investment level and both Bloomfield and Conrad were recognized for reaching the \$10 million benchmark. Cedar Falls joined the ranks of those programs who have documented over \$50 million in private investment since their program began in 1987.

"We must all appreciate the fact that healthy historic commercial districts are a key deciding factor for industrial and business recruitment. In order for us to create 200,000 new jobs, we need healthy Main Streets" commented director Durham. "Main Street Iowa was created to bring jobs, investment and new businesses to our downtowns and historic commercial neighborhoods, and taxpayers are certainly getting their money's worth. Since 1986, for every dollar the state of Iowa has invested in operating the state Main Street program, the private sector in those communities has invested \$87.99 into building improvements and acquisitions."



Jefferson, Play Me Pleez
Winner in the Promotion Image Category



Dubuque, 18th & Washington Intersection Mural Project
Winner in the Design Public Improvement Category

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Woodbine, Iowa Honored with 2014 Great American Main Street Award

National Main Street Center Praises Excellence in Revitalization at Annual Conference

The National Main Street Center announced that Woodbine, Iowa was chosen as a 2014 Great American Main Street Awards® (GAMSA) winner. Bestowed by the National Main Street Center, a subsidiary of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the GAMSA is the nation's premier accolade for downtown revitalization achievement. Woodbine Main Street received the award at the 2014 National Main Streets Conference held in Detroit.

Founded in 2008, the Woodbine Main Street program has made great strides in a few short years. With a mission of promoting historic preservation, championing hometown vitality, and building community partnerships, Woodbine Main Street has distinguished itself in all areas. A fire in 2013 was met with a careful, preservation-first response, and the rural charm that defines this town of 1,500 is kept at the forefront of all downtown development decisions.

"Despite its small size, Woodbine offers communities of all sizes valuable lessons in achieving sustainability and historic preservation goals," says Patrice Frey, president and CEO of the National Main Street Center. "With its investment in water and energy conservation measures, a flurry of downtown rehabs and a carefully restored stretch of the historic Lincoln Highway, Woodbine Main Street is balancing appreciation for the past with an eye to the future."

Through strong ties to local government and other stakeholders, Main Street Woodbine has generated \$8 million in revitalization projects over six years, and has brought energy efficiency and façade improvements to nearly every building downtown. The result is a vibrant, walkable, and renewed Main Street which locals and visitors alike enjoy.

The other two 2014 winners are Milledgeville, Ga. and Harrisonburg, Va. Winners were selected by a national jury composed of former award winners, community development professionals, and governmental agency representatives who are active in community revitalization and historic preservation. Criteria for winning include: strength of the Main Street in creating an exciting place to live, work, play and visit; commitment to historic preservation; implementation of model partnerships, and demonstrated success of the Main Street Four-Point Approach®

To learn about previous GAMSA winners, visit <http://www.preservationnation.org/main-street/awards/gamsa/>.

The Main Street Four-Point Approach® is a proven methodology for historic preservation-based community revitalization. It was developed by the National Trust for Historic Preservation more than 30 years ago and has been implemented by more than 2,000 communities throughout the U.S.

About the National Main Street Center

Established in 1980 as a program of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the National Main Street Center works with a nationwide network of communities to encourage preservation-based economic revitalization that utilizes the Main Street Four-Point Approach®. The Center participated in the renewal of more than 2,000 older commercial districts during its 30-year history. Now a subsidiary of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the National Main Street Center provides information, offers technical assistance, holds conferences and workshops, and conducts research and advocacy on critical revitalization issues.





2014

PRESERVE IOWA

SUMMIT

AUGUST 21-23

CEDAR RAPIDS

Make plans to attend the Preserve Iowa Summit, which will be held August 21 – 23 in Cedar Rapids. The Summit is the only statewide conference for professionals and volunteers involved in historic preservation and commercial district revitalization in Iowa!

Network with people who recognize the importance of downtown revitalization and historic preservation at a pre-conference gathering, then learn how historic preservation can give you the tools to discover, retain, and enhance your community's sense of place with general sessions, concurrent breakout sessions, tour options and additional networking opportunities that will be held throughout the day Thursday, Friday and Saturday.

Who Should Attend?

- Preservation professionals, consultants & enthusiasts
- Downtown development advocates
- Planning professionals
- Local government officials
- Community leaders & civic organizations
- Real estate developers
- Architects (Learning Units are available)
- Citizens interested in their community's quality of life
- Historic preservation commission members
- Main Street volunteers and staff

Session Highlights

- Financial & planning tools to revitalize neighborhoods and downtowns
- Economic benefits of preservation at the local level
- How preservation can help sustain a sense of place in all communities

Education sessions presented by historic preservation and commercial district development experts from Iowa and across the United States will offer valuable insight, advice and training with topics ranging from "The Future of Historic Preservation" to "Creating Livable Cities". Featured speakers will include internationally renowned economist Donovan Rypkema, originator of the Better Block Project Jason Roberts, President of the National Trust for Historic Preservation Stephanie Meeks, Iowa State Senator Liz Mathis and preservation consultant John Speweik. Honors for "Preservation at its Best" and "Preservation Projects of Merit" will be presented and success stories will be featured.

The conference will also include several opportunities to network with people who recognize the importance of downtown revitalization and historic preservation and an exhibit hall. There are still a limited number of spaces available in the exhibit hall. For an application to exhibit at the conference, click Exhibitor Information.

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 AIA Iowa, Preservation Iowa, Cedar Rapids Historic Preservation Commission, Czech Village New Bohemia Main Street District and the community of Cedar Rapids.

The Preserve Iowa Summit is funded in part with Federal funds from a Community Development Block Grant and the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior; and sponsored by Federal Home Loan Bank, Iowa Farm Bureau and JSA Development LLC. Local sponsors include: Cedar Rapids Area Convention & Visitors Bureau, Cedar Rapids Metro Economic Alliance, Simmons Perrine Moyer Bergman PLC, Shuttleworth & Ingersoll, Save CR Heritage and Costco. To learn how your organization can sponsor the Preserve Iowa Summit, call 515.725.3075 or e-mail terry.buschkamp@iowa.gov.

The registration website is available at regonline.com/14iowasummit or for additional information visit iowaeconomicdevelopment.com/preserveiowa.



Downtown Forums...

Great Networking Opportunity



Downtown and community leaders across the state of Iowa are invited to attend a Downtown Forum in Storm Lake on July 8 or Oelwein on July 9. Sessions were previously held in June in Knoxville and Atlantic. The forums presented by the Iowa Economic Development Authority's Downtown Resource Center give communities the opportunity to talk to each other about their downtown ideas, successes and challenges. You may even want to steal an idea or two. Iowa Downtown Resource Center staff will facilitate discussions related to downtown business development and downtown appearances. Participants are encouraged to come ready to share examples from their communities. Upon RSVP, participants will receive a list of questions to consider in preparation for the day's discussion. The Iowa Downtown Resource Center assists communities around the state in revitalizing their downtowns or traditional commercial districts. The Downtown Forums are hosted by the Chambers of Commerce in each host community and are FREE to attend. E-mail Jim Engle at james.engle@iowa.gov for registration information.

Tuesday, July 8, 2014, Lake Avenue Lodge, 617 Lake Avenue, Storm Lake, IA 50588

Wednesday, July 9, 2014, Oelwein Community Center, 25 W. Charles, Oelwein, IA 50662

Agenda

9:30 -10:45 am	Discussion Group: Improving Your Downtown Appearance
11:00am – Noon	Listening Session: What are your Downtown Issues/Challenges? Learn About IEDA Programs for Your Downtown
Noon - 12:30 pm	Tour of Host Downtown
12:30 – 2:00 pm	Lunch on your own, experiencing the host downtown
2:00 – 3:30 pm	Discussion Group: Creating a Great Downtown Business Environment

Program Director Spotlight



For almost eight years, Certified Main Street Manager Jim Miller has been directing the efforts of Historic Valley Junction in West Des Moines. This district which is nearing 30 years in the world of Main Street has experienced floods, fires, malls, more malls and more competition in the metro than ever expected since that time. With 150 businesses, about twice as many as 30 years ago, they, like many districts have strong-willed and independent business and property owners. It is these people who have made it possible for Valley Junction to receive awards and designations such as a Cultural and Entertainment District, an Iowa Great Place and a 2012 Great American Main Street Award (GAMSA) winner.

Jim grew up in Cedar Rapids, later living in Omaha and moving to West Des Moines in 2006. In his pre-Main Street years Miller was a downtown retailer, costume designer and theatre director. He describes his passion for Main Street as "Quite simply, Main Street works – very well – and I am proud to play my part. All around the country people have a warm memory or two of their downtown districts, a business, a restaurant, a theater, a park. We aren't trying to recreate the 1950s or Disneyland; we are trying to make

new memories in the place that people love. Someone told me this – a community's downtown is its heart, the people its soul, and the memories its spirit. Heart, soul and spirit = Main Street."

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National Main Streets Conference



Iowa was well represented at the 2014 National Main Streets Conference in May. The event, which brought together more than 1,300 downtown development professionals, volunteers and thinkers from throughout the country, included nearly 50 Iowans. Main Street Iowa was pleased to provide scholarships for 29 individuals from designated Main Street communities to attend the nation's premier downtown and historic district revitalization conference.

The conference, which was hosted by Des Moines in 2011, was held May 18 through 20 in Detroit, Michigan. Detroit was an especially apt location for this year's event themed "Works in Progress." The conference offered important lessons on resilience, innovation and hard work, all of which exemplify the Main Street movement across the country and could be seen first-hand in a city that is actively building on its cultural and heritage assets to overcome economic challenges. Detroit was a great example of, not only revitalization, but the fact that it can be done without losing the historical integrity of a downtown. The

folks from Michigan did an amazing job of making Iowans feel welcome and sharing their passion and commitment.

A highlight of the event was the announcement of the Great American Main Street Award® (GAMSA) winners at the opening plenary session. GAMSA is the nation's premier accolade for downtown revitalization achievement which is bestowed by the National Main Street Center. The Woodbine Main Street program was honored with this national recognition, and joins ranks with Bonaparte, Burlington, Cedar Falls, Corning, Dubuque, Elkader, Keokuk and Valley Junction as Iowa's ninth GAMSA winner!

The conference also included the announcement of the reinvestment statistics. Over the last 30 years, the National Main Street Center has tracked \$59.6 billion in reinvestment in physical improvements from both public and private sources in their communities, with a net gain of 115,381 businesses and 502,728

jobs. In 2013, every dollar invested in Main Street communities resulted in \$33.28 of economic impact, making it the most effective downtown revitalization effort in the country --and our Iowa communities contributed to those great statistics!

The National Main Streets Conference offered opportunities for a wide variety of interests. Over 60 educational sessions and 15 mobile workshops included important lessons on creativity, innovation and hard work. There were also a number of great opportunities for networking, including a "Team Iowa" dinner at Cliff Bell's, a famous local eatery and Detroit landmark.

Conference attendees saw things that gave them hope and renewed their fire for community re-investment, innovation and gritty determination. Iowans are bringing that knowledge and experience back to the benefit of their local communities. And... folks are already looking forward to the 2015 National Main Streets Conference, which will be held March 30 through April 2 in Atlanta!

Main Street Awards, continued

Patrice Frey, President and C.E.O. of the National Main Street Center, was also in attendance. In addition to providing an update regarding the newly reorganized National Main Street Center, Frey spoke about the significance of the Great American Main Street Award (GAMSA) and Woodbine's selection as a semi-finalist. In May at the National Main Streets Conference in Detroit, Woodbine was announced as a GAMSA winner.

The governor recognized the communities of Bedford and Dunlap on their 20 years of participation in the Main Street Iowa program and congratulated the newly designated programs in Avoca, Guthrie Center and Newton. The total of active Main Street programs in the state of Iowa is now 52.

One of the highlights of the evening was the "Signature Project of the Year", which honors a project that rises above the traditional competitive award categories in regard to impact and significance. The City of West Union and project partners received this special recognition for their innovative and comprehensive approach in the implementation of their multi-faceted, multi-million dollar Green Pilot Streetscape Project. They have received national attention for the renovation of 6 downtown blocks with new water, storm water and sanitary sewer infrastructure. Innovative features include permeable pavers, bioretention cells, district wide geothermal heating, LED street lights, a new civic plaza and other amenities. This innovative project leveraged resources from many local, state and federal partners, including the Iowa Economic Development Authority's Community Development Block Grant program.

Photographs and the awards' listing are posted at <http://www.iowaeconomicdevelopment.com/IDRC/MainStreetIowa>.



*West Union, Green Pilot Streetscape Project
Winner of the Signature Project of the Year*

Volunteer Recruitment and Retention Basics

Basic Building Blocks for Stronger Organizations

The longevity and sustainability of a revitalization organization is contingent upon developing a sound foundation of operation. Traditionally in the Main Street Four Point Approach® model, the Organization Committee focuses on building strong, broad based support in garnering human and financial resources. Efforts in volunteer recruitment, grooming partnerships, solidifying funding sources and developing effective communications and program image-building strategies are critical to the success of all aspects of the revitalization initiative.

Basic organizational building blocks for a successful program include:

1. Developing a sound organizational structure with a vision, clear mission, goals and objectives.
2. Establishing a dependable base of financial support.
3. Creating a communication strategy to reach varied audiences.
4. Building and strengthening public and private partnerships with a variety of entities.
5. Creating a sense of excitement and establishing name recognition.
6. Building organizational credibility by tracking progress.
7. Instilling ownership through participation and empowerment.
8. Recognizing volunteer involvement and celebrate successes.
9. Ensuring there is a balanced focus of activities within the committee structure of the program.
10. Gaining trust and credibility through actions – team work, pride, passion, relationship building and involvement.

Basic Strategies for Volunteer Reliant Organizations

Because Main Street is a grassroots, volunteer driven revitalization initiative, ultimately the success and sustainability of a program's efforts is dependent upon effective volunteer recruitment, retention and recognition strategies.

In conversations with participating Main Street communities, Main Street Iowa staff hears a wide range of comments about volunteerism. Some directors say they have no problem at all getting people involved and engaged. Others say they have a difficult time recruiting or "keeping" volunteers. Main Street Iowa believes those who are the most successful with recruitment and retention are the ones that ask personally and ask often. It sounds too simple, but the personal approach is,

and will always be, the most effective method of recruiting and thanking those people who give their time, energy and creativity to the revitalization initiative.

When developing a volunteer recruitment and retention plan, you need to identify the short and long term volunteer needs and create a database with input from all of the committees. This list should include the leadership positions, such as the board and committee chair positions, to the more project, task specific volunteer needs. If there are specific skill sets required, that information should also be included in the listing. You need to be clear about the level of responsibilities the volunteer position entails and be realistic about time commitments.

Based upon your volunteer recruitment needs, determine if there are public or private sector entities you can approach that share a particular interest. Oftentimes, an existing group like the Kiwanis, youth group or the classic car club would be the perfect fit and receptive to partnering on a particular task, project or event. It is so very important to form relationships with potential partners and build capacity within those partnerships.

Set a goal of how many volunteers need to be recruited. Based upon the number of board and committee members that are expected to actively recruit volunteers, determine how many people each should personally contact in order to reach that goal. The more persons you have involved in making contacts, the quicker you can double or triple your volunteer pool.

Keep in mind when identifying potential recruits, the ideal composition of the board and committees should be representative of the community's population demographics and the initiative's stakeholder groups. Diverse representation will provide a broader range of perspectives and experiences, knowledge base and access to more resources and connections. Both the public and private sectors have a stake in the vibrancy and future of the district and should be represented in leadership positions.

Approach has a lot to do with the success of recruitment. The attitude of the person making the contact is extremely important. People will be much more responsive to someone who serves as an example themselves and exhibits enthusiasm and passion. Remind those who are making the personal contacts not to approach this as if they were begging. You are providing the opportunity for others to make a difference and engage in meaningful participation.

Contact local entities and extend invitations to present at youth, senior citizens and special interest group meetings. This is an opportunity to explain the importance of the initiative's mission and have a dialogue with them about how they might contribute their time, talents and resources for the cause. All have a stake in the viability of the district but they do not always understand that connection unless you help "connect the dots."



volunteers participating in the Belle Plaine mural project



Dubuque, 2014 MSI Award winning public improvement project, 18th and Washington Intersection Mural Project

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Volunteer Recruitment and Retention Basics, continued

Go ahead and publicize your list of the volunteer positions you need filled in your various modes of communications and on your website. This is a passive and less effective approach to recruiting, but nonetheless, it is important to continue to remind people of the volunteer opportunities available to them.

If individuals involved in short term roles on the committee level have meaningful and fulfilling experiences, they become more receptive when asked to consider filling the volunteer positions requiring more responsibility and time commitment. Grooming volunteers for active, leadership roles should always be part of your overall volunteer development strategy.

When committees are in pre-planning discussions regarding new and existing projects and events, you should be identifying who it is you want to attract. If the youth, young professionals or seniors are the primary or secondary markets, then representatives of those groups should be identified and asked to participate in the planning from the onset and the implementation of the activity.

Volunteer recruitment and retention are multi-faceted and this article addresses just the first steps you should consider when developing a comprehensive volunteer development plan. Methodologies and approaches vary, but a key component to a successful plan is remembering the volunteers are your most valuable asset. You need to provide them with meaningful, rewarding and memorable volunteer experiences and let them know they are very priceless. If you have questions, contact Debi Flanders at 515.725.3055 or debi.flanders@iowa.gov.

City Energy Management Program: A Regional Energy Manager Approach

To help cities around Iowa set energy reduction goals and implement energy efficiency projects, the Iowa Economic Development Authority's (IEDA) Energy Office has created the City Energy Management Program. Under a grant from the Department of Energy, IEDA has created a pilot program to create a Regional Energy Manager (REM) program in the State of Iowa. Through the shared use of a Regional Energy Manager (REM), participating municipalities will receive one-on-one customized assistance to assist them in achieving energy efficiency and savings.

Through the City Energy Management Program, professional energy managers will directly work with up to 20 municipalities in Iowa to help identify opportunities to reduce energy costs in city-owned buildings, exterior lighting, and water/wastewater facilities. This assistance will be provided to the selected municipalities who will provide an in-kind match to achieve energy efficiency within their community. The Regional Energy Manager will work as a shared resource among several communities.

The selected municipalities will receive one-on-one customized assistance from the experienced Regional Energy Manager. The REM will provide assistance to enroll city-owned buildings into the Iowa Public Building Benchmarking Program. Benchmarking is a tool to identify potential energy savings by comparing the current buildings' energy use to an energy code compliant building. This valuable tool increases awareness and helps building

managers obtain information about the status and trend of Iowa's building energy use compared to their building(s). By making energy performance measureable and visible, organizations can take actions to improve the efficiency of buildings by identifying where the buildings' weaknesses lie and allocating dollars to those projects.

Benchmarking is the first step in a three-step process to use energy efficiency to save money for public buildings. The first step is to track energy usage. Then the energy usage data is reviewed and finally projects are implemented to achieve energy efficiency and financial savings. To date, over 1800 buildings in Iowa have been enrolled in the Iowa Public Benchmarking Project. Visit <https://ia.b3benchmarking.com/Default.aspx> for more information and details about Iowa's benchmarking program.

The Regional Energy Managers will also assist in developing energy efficient procurement guidelines, set energy reduction goals for each participating municipality and identify cost-effective projects to reduce energy use and costs. This includes participating in "walk throughs" of local facilities to identify opportunities for efficiency projects and identify opportunities for more in depth energy audits.

Each community will create a City Energy Advisory Team (CEAT) and develop and a City Energy action plan. These elements are critical components to the success of the local initiatives. The City Energy

Advisory Team is made up of local individuals with knowledge and interest in energy efficiency programs and are also involved in the management of city operations and facilities. Potential participants on the City Energy Advisory Team include the city manager/administrator, municipal facilities manager, public works director, city clerk and local utility representatives. The CEAT becomes the primary point of contact for working with the Regional Energy Manager and has primary responsibility for creating and implementing the local energy action plan.

Although implementation funds are not available through this opportunity, fifty percent of the selected communities will need to put into practice at least one energy efficiency project identified as part of this technical assistance grant. Projects will be identified through the work of the Regional Energy Manager in each community. The projects identified should achieve significant energy savings, resulting in significant financial savings for the municipality. Each project will be brought before City Council for review and approval before being submitted for the appropriate bidding process.

IEDA will select participating communities in June 2014. The Regional Energy Manager will begin work immediately after the initial meetings with the selected municipalities take place in July. The program will be carried out from July 1, 2014 through December 31, 2015.

For more information on this program, contact Carrie Weber at carrie.weber@iowa.gov or via phone at 515-725-2033.

Main Street University Hosted in Greenfield

Representatives from seven Main Street Iowa communities participated in the latest class of Main Street University held on April 9-10 at the historic Warren Cultural Center in Greenfield.

Main Street University is a two-day, intensive training on the Main Street Four Point Approach®. The purpose of this comprehensive training is to provide an overview of the Main Street program for Board Members, Committee Chairs, volunteers and staff in the areas of Organization, Promotion, Design, and Economic Restructuring. "Main Street University is an immersion program into the Main Street Approach® and utilizes a train the trainer method that provides a foundation for local programs to develop and train local leaders", commented Michael Wagler, Main Street Iowa State Coordinator.

Participants also had an opportunity to see Main Street at work at the community level by interacting with the Greenfield Main Street board and volunteers and a tour of downtown rehabilitation projects.

Main Street University is a key educational tool in the startup services for newly designated Main Street communities as well as an opportunity for continued professional development for existing Main Street Iowa programs.



IDRC Director Jim Engle



It is good to be home! After spending more than twenty years managing the Wisconsin Main Street Program I now get the opportunity to do statewide downtown development in my home state of Iowa. The strength and national reputation of Main Street Iowa is no secret....and I look forward to contributing to that in the future. Since starting my new position in January I have visited 43 of Iowa's 52 Main Street

communities and have been thoroughly impressed by each one of them.

But, we have even more opportunity. Main Street is the feature program of the Iowa Downtown Resource Center (IDRC). Communities that apply and are accepted into the program have placed a priority on organizing, funding and implementing this comprehensive approach to downtown revitalization.

But, the IDRC is a resource for all Iowa downtowns. I am working with the staff to create new opportunities for communities that may be two or more years away from the Main Street Program or perhaps those that will never apply. I am eager to talk to Iowa communities about their respective downtowns, what their needs are and how we can help. Benefits of the IDRC to communities include the following:

- In June and July we, the Iowa Economic Development Authority, will be holding four regional Downtown Forums (see article) to talk about downtown issues in your communities.
- Check out downtown publications in the IDRC lending library
- Consider a 2 ½ day Downtown Assessment Visit led by two downtown development professionals. This fee for service visit (\$2,500) provides a community with observations and recommendations for its downtown development efforts, including topics such as organizational development, fund raising, downtown design, promotional calendars and business development.
- I am currently developing partnerships with Iowa's colleges and universities to incorporate real life downtown needs into curriculums in the form of student projects.
- We are in the early stages of the development of downtown walk-arounds. Teams of two (IDRC staff) will walk your downtown with community leaders and end the visit with a brief meeting to give you our thoughts and ideas.
- We will continue to get the word out across the state about downtown development incentive programs (both existing and new) that potentially will assist communities with opportunities such as façade rehabilitation and upper story housing development.

I love new ideas. If you have one (or even if you don't), feel free to give me a call (515.725.3058) or drop me an email (james.engle@iowa.gov). And, finally, congratulations to Woodbine, our newest Great American Main Street Award Winner!

Main Street Iowa Business Innovation Challenge Grant

Designated Main Street Iowa communities were eligible to apply for a Main Street Iowa Business Innovation Challenge Grant to help support local downtown business retention, expansion and recruitment efforts.

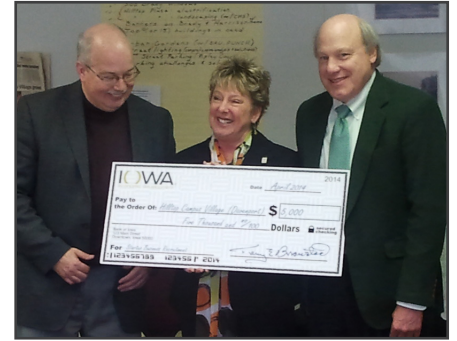
IEDA received 15 competitive applications. Funded 8 totaling \$100,000.



West Branch



Oskaloosa



Davenport

Community Name	Project Description	Grant Award	Match	Total Project Cost
Cedar Falls	Development of a downtown business incubator space that will provide commercial space and amenities for approximately 20 downtown businesses.	\$20,000	\$29,000	\$49,000
Cedar Rapids	Development of a revolving loan funded targeted specifically for the Main Street district. This loan program has been created through partnerships with local financial institutions, regional planning agency and other district partnerships.	\$15,000	\$70,851	\$85,851
Davenport	Improvement and marketing of underutilized office space and office support equipment to attract and serve startup businesses and not-for-profit organizations.	\$5,000	\$6,500	\$11,500
Dubuque	Creation of a targeted recruitment and downtown marketing campaign through the use of web based and mobile technologies. This application demonstrated the use of innovative technologies, local partnerships, and the ability to demonstrate a direct benefit to the Main Street district.	\$12,500	\$22,050	\$34,550
Manning	Manning will hire a restaurant consultant to work with five downtown eating establishments in order to strengthen each restaurant as well as the district's restaurant image. The grant also included matching implementation dollars based on consultant recommendations.	\$17,500	\$22,096	\$39,596
Osceola	Development of a web tool to connect available downtown property with potential pop-up or short-term retailing ventures. The goal is to fill vacant properties with retail opportunities missing from their market.	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$10,000
Oskaloosa	Oskaloosa will hire a consultant to assist in the creation of a downtown marketing plan and brand identity. This application demonstrated strong local partnerships, local investment, and a local desire to create a unified goal image for downtown.	\$20,000	\$73,500	\$93,500
West Branch	West Branch will create a smart phone application and accompanying marketing materials to support downtown businesses retention, recruitment, and draw people to downtown West Branch and the adjacent National Park.	\$5,000.00	\$7,000.00	\$12,000.00

Director Spotlight, continued

Promotions, followed by business improvement, are where his love lies. “As far as business improvement, there is nothing like seeing someone give birth to a business concept, try it, grow it and make it succeed. It’s nice to offer some assistance and advice along the way. The biggest lie in Main Street is that promotions are easy and any gorilla can do them – I say promotions are NOT at all easy and any gorilla can do bad promotions. It is much more than party planning – it’s the mix, the layout, the performers, the vibe, and the excitement – if done well, they are incredible.”

When asked what is your vision for the future of downtown Valley Junction, Jim’s answer was, “Construction in and around the immediate district is continuing at a solid pace. Upper story and alternative housing in the district is finally gaining traction and I truly feel the district is in a good place. We aren’t perfect, we don’t hold hands and sing campfire songs, but we do have a collective mass that do their part to make things happen. Our partnership with the City of West Des Moines is second to none, and the Historic Valley Junction Foundation staff is truly an exceptional team. My coworkers are a key to our district success, while our board guides the organization and allows staff to do our jobs.”

Like many Main Street directors, work hours are sometimes overwhelming and there is never a lack of things to tackle. When Jim does leave work, he enjoys a good book, good food/wine and the performing arts, as an audience member and sometimes as a director. For several years he has used his down time as a school theatre director; while not quiet, working with 100+ little angels has required a whole different mindset than a business district. Jim and his wife, Elaine Watkins, have a 15 year old son Noah who also makes life never dull and always unexpected. “My favorite females: Elaine, Dolly Parton and Dairy Queen – usually in that order.”

To find more about Historic Valley Junction go to www.valleyjunction.com



staff listing

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