

# MAINSTREET NEWSCAST

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Angie Starks, city council member, and her daughter joined MCMA President Roger Potratz as volunteers at the Chili Cook-Off. The event is sponsored by the Mayor's Campaign Against Cancer; all proceeds benefited the Susan B. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation.



Todd & Maxwell Unger, Ethan and Michael Payne, and Jayden Soller join Cookie Monster during the Mainstreet Associations' annual Snowflake Parade on Franklin Street.

No one melted in the rain.

Volume 3, Issue 1

January 2008

## MICHIGAN CITY MAINSTREET ASSOCIATION

## Economic Impact: Tourism is Crucial to Indiana's Economy

- ▶ Indiana tourism is a \$9 billion industry.
- ▶ Tourism annually attracts 59 million leisure visitors—people who drive 50 miles or more one way to visit one or more attractions. This does not include the hundreds of thousands of people who travel as part of conventions or on business.

Tourism brings in billions of dollars to the state each year in visitor spending; the tourism industry's reach is broad and strong. Indiana has 264,960 jobs directly related to tourism, which translates to \$5.83 billion in payroll.

- ▶ Jobs both full-time and part-time 264,960
- ▶ Payroll \$5.83 billion
- ▶ State government tax receipts \$308.2 million
- ▶ Local government tax receipts \$120.8 million

(Travel Industry Association of America, 2004)  
For every dollar invested in tourism marketing by the state and its partners, travelers spend \$612 in Indiana.

The state also realized \$33 in sales tax revenues for every dollar invested in destination advertising (Source: Strategic Marketing and Research, Ad Effectiveness Study, 2006).

The value of tourism goes beyond the jobs it creates and the dollars that visitors spend staying in Indiana hotels, dining in restaurants, and visiting attractions. It has a direct impact on the quality of life for Hoosiers by creating stronger communities and offering unique experiences. The driving motivators that influence visitor travel are often the same factors considered by Indiana residents and potential residents when choosing where to live.

### The Indiana Visitor

The typical Indiana visitor is 42 years old with a household income of \$62K who travels with one or two other visitors. Indiana is a getaway destination for visitors seeking a trip close to home. They drive between 101 and 200 miles to visit friends and relatives, where they appreciate Indiana's scenic landscape, eat at a unique restaurant, and shop.

(Source: Strategic marketing and Research 2005)

- ▶ Average trip: 2.32 days
- ▶ 83% drive to Indiana
- ▶ 43% are in-state visitors who drive more than 50 miles.



## Message from Mainstreet President

Looking out the window at the snow coming down, it's hard to believe that Spring isn't really very far away. And with Spring comes the Farmer's Market and the annual Historic Downtown Treasure Hunt.

The Farmer's Market, held every Saturday between May and October from 8am—Noon CST, is located on the corner of Washington Street (1 block west of Franklin Street) and 8th Street. The early months of the Market's season usually brings herbs, flowers, fresh peas and other early veggies, and the delicious offerings of Chef Didier....breads, pastries, cheeses, patés, soups, and casseroles. On many Saturdays, you'll find artists, crafters, or entertainers amongst the throng of local farmers. We'll look for you there.

On Saturday, May 17th, pirates and wenches will once again roam freely throughout the historic downtown area of Michigan City. You can win some great prizes while learning about downtown businesses you may have never before visited. Participate in the Jazzercise Expo in the 500 block of Franklin Street! Enjoy some pirate grub and grog...and watch a free Pirates of the Caribbean movie at the Michigan City Public Library. The entire event is free to the public...so dress yourself and your kids up as pirates and join the Michigan City Mainstreet Association members in the fun! If you're a business in the north End of Michigan City and would like to participate, please contact us at [info@mcmainstreet.com](mailto:info@mcmainstreet.com) or via phone at 219/363-1407.

See you downtown!

Roger Potratz, Mainstreet Association President; owner of dh2w architectural firm

## Mayor's Memo to Mainstreet

Spring is just around the corner, and most of us are eager to see the last of the cold winds and snowstorms that are normal for our area during the winter months. One of the harbingers of spring in Michigan City is the planning process that is taking place all over the community for the America In Bloom project. Intended to build pride in a community, the national project will bring natural beauty and unique artwork to Michigan City. If you haven't already become involved with the project, please visit [www.mc-americaninbloom.com](http://www.mc-americaninbloom.com), the website for our local program...and [www.americaninbloom.org](http://www.americaninbloom.org), the national program website. You'll find many ways in which you, your company, neighborhood, church, school, or family can become involved on a local basis.

With Spring comes the opening of the American Zoological Association-approved Washington Park Zoo. If you haven't visited the Little Zoo on the Lake in a while, this season is one you don't want to miss. New exhibits that allow you to safely get close to the animals, new residents at the zoo, and great events are all waiting there for you.

The Mayor's Campaign Against Cancer will present its annual Cruis'n For A Cure on Sunday, May 25th. This 27-mile cruise begins at the LaPorte County Fairgrounds, comes through LaPorte, into Michigan City, and down Franklin Street to Washington Park. The cruise is followed by a dance where food and libations are available. Visit [www.emichigancity.com](http://www.emichigancity.com) for more information on this event. If you'd like to participate in the cruise or donate a prize, please contact us at [marketing@emichigancity.com](mailto:marketing@emichigancity.com).

Remember that you can report pot holes, graffiti and other problems at the Mayor's Action Center at [www.emichigancity.com](http://www.emichigancity.com) (on the left side of the screen.)

Wave to us during the St. Patrick's Day parade on Saturday, March 15th on north Franklin Street!

*Mayor Chuck Oberlie*

[mayorchucko@emichigancity.com](mailto:mayorchucko@emichigancity.com)

## U.S. Conference of Mayors Includes Arts & Tourism in 10-Point Plan

The U.S. Conference of Mayors has released the **2008 "Strong Cities, Strong Families for a Strong America"** which includes a 10-point plan for the nation's cities. One of the 10 points focuses on arts and tourism:

**Tourism:** Travel and tourism is a driving force for America's economy and diplomacy. Protecting our nation must remain paramount, but a better balance is needed between homeland security and economic vitality. Since 9/11, while the world tourism market rapidly expanded, the U.S. share of international travel declined 17 percent. Foreign visitors are increasingly deterred by America's unwelcoming visa and entry processes. Unless these problems are corrected, Chicago's bid for the 2016 Olympics may be adversely impacted. The nation's mayors call for travel and tourism to be a national policy priority. We must enhance national security, while at the same time, increasing international travel to the U.S. through visa reforms, entry improvements and promotion. There must be full participation of the federal government in Chicago's pursuit to win the 2016 Olympics.

**Arts:** The arts, humanities, and museums are critical to the quality of life and livability of America's cities. It has been shown that the nonprofit arts and culture industry generates over \$166 billion in economic activity annually, supports over 5.7 million full time jobs, and returns over \$12 billion in federal income taxes annually.

Governments which support the arts on average see a return on investment of over \$7 in taxes for every \$1 that the government appropriates. Furthermore, federal, state and local governments, private foundations, corporations and individuals provide access to artistic activities for peoples of all races, creeds, and income levels. Recognizing the importance that the arts play, many countries throughout the world have established national cabinet level positions for culture and tourism. The

nation's mayors urge the creation of a Cabinet level Secretary of Culture and Tourism charged with forming a national policy for arts, culture and tourism.

Federal resources must also be invested in nonprofit arts organizations through their local arts agencies with full funding of the federal arts and culture agencies.

Read the complete [10-Point Plan](http://usmayors.org/uscm/news/) at <http://usmayors.org/uscm/news/>

America's greatest resource has always been and will always be its people. Americans are innovative, bold and generous. And 85 percent of Americans now live in cities and metro areas.



### New Travel Website Offers Free Promotion for Historic Sites

**OnThisVerySpot.com** is a new way historical organizations can secure free advertising on the

Web. The site is designed to be a comprehensive travel guide to historical places throughout America and the world. [OnThis-VerySpot.com](http://OnThis-VerySpot.com) allows site users to cross-search their travel destination with their personal interests.

For example, a user can type in a city or state and a topic such as the Civil War, rock music, Native American history, literature, or they can type in the name of a famous person or event. A list of sites related to their interests, complete with maps, travel tips, and more will be provided.

[OnThisVerySpot.com](http://OnThisVerySpot.com) is free to users. Historic sites can add information at no charge and put a link to the historic site's website on every page you add. ([www.OnThisVerySpot.com](http://www.OnThisVerySpot.com))



# Farmer's Market

## Fresh Produce Going to Hospitals

While the Farmer's Market is closed for the winter, we'll provide some interesting recipes here that focus on fresh produce you can find at your local supermarket.

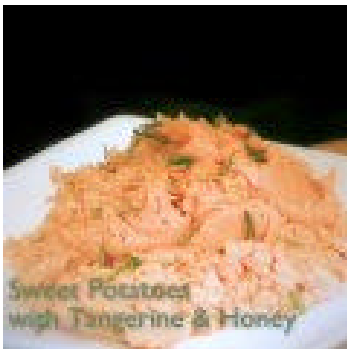
**I believe the true road to preeminent suc-**

### Mashed Sweet Potatoes with Honey & Tangerine Juice

Steam two sweet potatoes (peeled and cut into chunks) until fork-tender. Drain and place in large mixing bowl.

Add 2 tablespoons butter, 1 teaspoon local honey, and the juice of 1/2 of a tangerine. Add salt and ground pepper to taste.

Using Grandma's potato masher, blend the ingredients until the mix is



### Hospital jumps on the farm-fresh bandwagon

*Growing call seen for this type of food.*

Under a tent outside Children's Hospital in Seattle, employees and patients' families paw through fancy potato fingerlings, candy-striped beets and Purple Rain eggplant.

In June 2007, a Snoqualmie Valley farm began offering a tantalizing new market of organic, locally grown produce. At first, one woman had trouble rolling her baby's intravenous drip over the grass. So they moved the farmer's market closer to the cafeteria.

It's the kind of relationship-building exercise some hope can forge new links between local farms and institutional cafeterias.

Hospitals have several advantages over schools: budgets aren't as tight, and they operate during the productive summer farm season. But they still face many of the same barriers.

Walter Bronowitz, executive chef for Children's Hospital and Regional medical Center in Seattle, features special organic vegetables from Full Circle Farm on his menu on market days.

But to make orange-braised rainbow chard, he has to bring in an extra cook. His kitchen doesn't have the space to cut and prep farm-fresh produce every day.

A planned hospital expansion would make it possible for Bronowitz to use more local growers.

"Most of the time, I'm using precut vegetables because that's the only way I can survive," he said. "Right now, my cooks don't have time to do anything but open the bag."

Tom French, a chef who's worked on a similar partnership between farms and Island Hospital in Anacortes, WA, said a re-education process has to occur in institutional kitchens.

But hospitals see a future onslaught of baby boomer patients with sophisticated palates and an interest in healthy eating.

"When you look at hospital magazines, the whole thrust is wellness," French said. "It's not lost on us, and people in the industry absolutely recognize this will be a trend."

Farm-to-health care partnerships have focused largely on offering farmers markets and employee subscriptions for produce deliveries through community-supported agriculture (CSA) programs.

Full Circle Farm—which pulls from organic growers across Washington state—has worked with Blue Shield insurers and has a CSA pickup site at the Cancer Research Center.

Its goal, said owner Andrew Stout, is to bring "healthy, local food into your workplace, your community, your institution in any way, shape, or form."

#### Visit this link:

<http://seattlepi.nwsourc.com/specials/farmtoschool/>

to read special reports about farm-to-school programs.





## Main Street Winter Haven Uses YouTube to Promote Downtown

Visit [www.mainstreetwh.com](http://www.mainstreetwh.com) to see Main Street Winter Haven's new promotional video. The 3:38-minute-long video was created and produced by Executive Director Ronni Wood and Assistant Director Karen Thompson. It was filmed, directed, and edited by Xnext studios, a local recording studio and filming company located in downtown Winter Haven, Florida.

The video features Petula Clark's song "Downtown" with five main singing roles and 20

guest appearances of people saying the word "downtown." Thirteen of the 20 guests were Main Street Winter Haven benefactors, donors who agree to a two-year, \$10,000 commitment. The city manager and the commissioners also performed a guest appearance, leaving six spots that were divvied up among children, board members, downtown shoppers, and the producers.

Auditions for the five main singing roles were advertised in the paper. "It was a local version

of American Idol," says Karen Thompson. The singers' voices were recorded in a studio and live action shots were filmed later.

When choosing the film locations, the producers were careful not to pick merchants who might be in competition with other downtown merchants. For instance, there is only one paint-your-own pottery business in Winter Haven so it was deemed a safe location for filming. Everything was filmed in downtown Winter Haven.

"It was sooooo much fun filming it, but the best part is the popularity. It leaves everyone smiling and wanting to play it to their peers," says Wood. "It has also been received favorably by our benefactors who are definitely getting some bang for their bucks."

*To view the video, visit [www.mainstreetwh.com](http://www.mainstreetwh.com).*



Need to refresh your memory of the 4-steps for Mainstreet? Visit [www.in.gov](http://www.in.gov) and this → Department.



INDIANA OFFICE OF  
**Community & Rural Affairs**  
Working Together for Indiana's Rural Communities

## Are You A Mainstreet Member Yet?

If not, now is the time to join this dynamic organization which is devoted to:

- ▶ Creating a positive image for the district by promoting the downtown as an exciting place to live, work, play, and invest.
- ▶ Organizing and building consensus and cooperation among various stakeholders.
- ▶ Assisting in retaining businesses and recruiting compatible new businesses to the district.
- ▶ Conveying a positive visual message of the district.
- ▶ Informing citizens and members on topics of common interest and concerns to the district.

Join us in bringing positive change to Michigan City's Historic Downtown! Send email to [info@mcmainstreet.com](mailto:info@mcmainstreet.com) to receive a membership form...or go to our website—[www.mcmainstreet.com](http://www.mcmainstreet.com)—and you'll find the membership form there.

Questions? Call **219/363-1407** or email us.

According to Travel Industry Association of America, more than 65% of U.S. adults have visited small towns in past 7 years.





# FUNDING YOUR STREETSCAPE PROJECT

by DONNA DOW  
DURANT  
MAIN STREET

Many of our historic Main Streets have deteriorating sidewalks – especially those that were not designed to be ADA accessible. As revitalization professionals, our goal should be to construct safe, functional, and aesthetically pleasing walkways that accommodate pedestrians of all ages and physical abilities.

With the costs of sidewalk construction easily reaching \$100,000 per block, securing funding can be the most daunting challenge to streetscape improvements.

The traditional method of funding sidewalk renovation projects is to tap municipal budgets or bond programs. City officials can develop their own innovative financing, but most municipalities cannot, or will not, bear the entire cost of installing new sidewalks. Fortunately, Main Street programs are in a unique position to find creative ways to fill the financing gap. An effective funding resource for sidewalk improvements is through the federally funded Transportation Enhancement Program.



## TRANSPORTATION ENHANCEMENTS FUNDING TIPS

The Transportation Enhancement (TE) program is administered for the Federal Highway Administration by state transportation departments. The program began in 1991 as part of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act, or ISTEA, and has been successfully reauthorized under subsequent highway legislations – TEA-21 (1998) and SAFETEA-LU (2005). Through the life of SAFETEA-LU, Congress will have authorized more than \$4 billion for projects under the TE program.

The TE program is not grant based; rather it is a reimbursement program. Thus, the project sponsor must provide the initial outlay and submit requests for repayment. Generally, the federal government pays 80 percent of the project cost, and the project sponsor, your municipality, pays the remainder.

For a detailed account of the program, see the National Transportation Enhancements Clearinghouse's booklet, *Enhancing America's Communities: A Guide to Transportation Enhancements*. Of the 12 eligible activities, sidewalk projects are often categorized under "Facilities for Pedestrians and Bicycles."

Additional information can also be obtained from <http://www.enhancements.org>, which lists each state's TE coordinator. You should first contact your state TE coordinator to determine the funding cycles and the specifics of the application requirements. It is best to invite the coordinator to visit your community and perhaps hold a public meeting so that everyone understands the process.

Your TE coordinator can provide application guidelines as well as answer specific questions. Getting answers early can increase your town's chances of putting together a successful application. Be sure to ask:

- What do you look for in a successful application?
- Do you offer any workshops or seminars to familiarize applicants with the process?
- What are the maximum and minimum amounts of funding (if any) that can be requested?
- What are your requirements for matching funds?
- Does your state have an advisory committee to assist with the selection process? If so, who sits on this committee?
- Do you have examples of successful applications and projects from previous cycles?
- Are there people who have completed successful projects with whom we could talk?

In addition, the Transportation Enhancements Clearinghouse states that a project has a better chance if it:

- Exceeds non-federal requirements;
- Demonstrates strong local support;
- Combines TE activities (12 from which to choose);
- Demonstrates compatibility with existing plans;
- Meets a need or provides a benefit; and
- Sets a realistic schedule and cost estimate.

According to the Oklahoma Department of Transportation's enhancements program coordinator, Durant's application was successful because it met the recommendations listed above and exhibited other strengths:

- The sponsor funding was overmatched – only 20 percent was required, but 30 percent was proposed, thereby exceeding the requirement.
- The project combined multiple transportation modes – bicycle route and pedestrian traffic.
- The concept was the cornerstone of the city's master plan.

- The proposed project enhanced the existing facility.
- The project estimate was detailed, complete, and realistic.
- The application contained new and innovative approaches – a bike route linked the city's historic downtown with the local university.
- The application projected an increase in visitors to the community.
- The occupancy rate of downtown was high, demonstrating a good use of funds.
- The city pledged extensive in-kind donations.
- There was significant public recognition and support from numerous regional and local affiliates, including partnerships with Main Street, the city, Southeastern Oklahoma State University, Three Valley Museum, and the Choctaw Nation.
- The sponsor demonstrated the ability to maintain the project.
- The sponsor had previous experience with TE funding and completion of projects in a timely manner.

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## INTERACTIVE LISTSERV DISCUSSION TOPIC:

### WHAT CREATIVE FUNDING METHODS HAVE YOU USED FOR YOUR PROJECT?

Access the Main Street Network Listserv by going to <http://www.mainstreet.org> and clicking on the Member's section. Members can click on the Listserv link and log in using their e-mail addresses.



*(continued from page 3)*

Before applying, you should develop a good working relationship with your state transportation department. Although the City of Durant felt capable of completing the application, we hired a consultant with TE experience to handle it in order to increase our chances of success. For example, using the information we provided, the consultant was better able to provide an accurate cost estimate. This estimate can be critical in the post-funding phase since the project would have to be scaled back if all items could not fit within the budget. The consultant also provided a conceptual

drawing and map that were instrumental in educating the community and raising funds.

The process isn't quick. Durant's application and subsequent design and construction process took three and a half years from conception to completion, and this project was considered to be on the fast track. Preparing the application took several months alone, and we didn't find out that it was accepted for another six months. Since the process is lengthy, you need to keep people informed of the project's progress by briefing them frequently on its status.

In submitting an application for TE funding, don't begin fund raising for your match until you receive an announcement of the award. People aren't likely to contribute to a project that may not happen; having federal funds in place

will increase their confidence in the project. However, your organization should be ready to start raising money as soon as your application is approved.

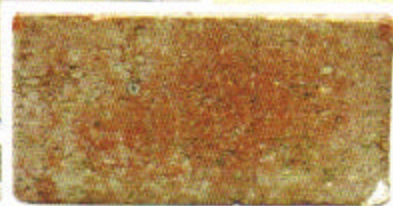
Having the city on our side was critical to the success of the streetscaping project, as it is with most Main Street initiatives. Since our program's inception, we have attended monthly city council meetings to cultivate that relationship and build our credibility by sharing reinvestment statistics. Because the city already understood the importance of the downtown to the local economy, it was ready to increase the local match for the streetscape project to 30 percent. Because the city provided various types of in-kind assistance, such as using the public works department to handle demolition, we were able to channel funds to construction and amenities.

## CREATIVE FUND RAISING

We offered original street bricks, engraved pavers, streetlamp banners, and street corner sponsorships to accommodate all ranges of income levels for broader community participation. Knowing that some opportunities were limited and available on a first-come, first-served basis, people were motivated to participate and able to choose their level of support.

Engraved bricks or pavers are not only a popular method of raising money; they also create public interest and involvement. Caution must be exercised, however, when doing this type of fund raising. Typically, donors don't understand how much time will lapse between design and construction and often become impatient when they do not quickly see their donated paver installed in the sidewalk.

Engraved paving bricks are not only a popular method of raising money for streetscape projects; they also create public interest and involvement. Be sure to inform buyers of the project's schedule, however, so they won't expect to see their bricks installed immediately.





This problem occurred in Durant because we opted to sell pavers during the pre-design phase. Often, circumstances such as obtaining project funding and putting other details in place dictate a delay in installation. You should work extremely hard to create a reasonable time frame and inform buyers of the time schedule.

In order to sell bricks, you need to know two things – the cost of the brick and the number of characters available for engraving. You can use this information to determine the pricing and the number of lines and characters that will fit on the pavers. If you have chosen a design consultant, you can select the paver early in the process.

Even though our donors were concerned about the time it took to see their bricks and pavers in place, getting their orders in before the bid documents were finalized made project management and pricing easier. Be sure to set a deadline for taking orders for engraved pavers before you start construction. This is essential because you must turn over a list of pavers and lettering for engravings to the contractor so he can order and install them.

Latecomers are inevitable – when people see the pavers being installed, they suddenly become interested in sponsoring one. Changing the number or location of the pavers once construction begins, however, is not cost effective. Because engraved pavers cost more than the plain ones, the cost of the project will increase; and with each latecomer's order, you will have to go through various channels of approval with the

city and process the payment. Selling engraved pavers before drawing up the contractor's final bid documents will prevent confusion and errors.

We also offered "bricks from the past." Old brick streets lay underneath the asphalt along the streetscape path. These bricks were pulled up during demolition and placed in a vacant lot along with other debris and asphalt. The community embraced the idea of celebrating Durant's heritage by using the original bricks in the new corner bump outs.

Selling the bricks served two purposes – raising money and calming the fears of citizens who didn't want to see the historic bricks destroyed. Community service workers sifted through the debris, pulled out the bricks, and then cleaned them. The Main Street program felt they could be sold as paper weights or conversation pieces for desks, but the dust needed to be contained. The workers painted a clear coating over the bricks (minimal cost), and we had engraved plates (approximately a dollar each) made and applied to the bricks with the message: "A part of our past to thank you for your help with the future – Durant Main Street, June 2006."

The bricks came with a short history of the community

and details about when the bricks were originally installed. Some were also handed out as awards and gifts by the program.

## CORNER SPONSORSHIPS

Donations from business and property owners and individuals can be obtained to supplement funding. These donations can come in many forms. The city can require or request that property owners make contributions, which can even be based on the frontage they have along the project area. A business improvement district (BID) is another option. (See the April 2007 issue of Main Street News for more information about creating a BID.)

In Durant, our Main Street program pledged to raise \$50,000 toward the project.

Durant Main Street Manager Donna Dow poses with one of the historic bricks removed from underneath the asphalt during construction of the streetscape. Workers painted them with a clear coating and put engraved plates on each to thank purchasers for contributing to the project.



This was a huge commitment as our annual operating budget is approximately \$60,000. The main sources of these contributions were "corner sponsorships" and the selling of streetlamp banners.

Durant generated corner sponsorships by estimating how much it would cost to complete a corner bump out, which included concrete, landscaping, and amenities. Sponsors paid \$2,500 for a corner, which featured a lamppost banner with their name on it and a 12x12-inch permanent paver also engraved with their name.

One important factor that contributed to the success of this idea was media support. The local newspaper introduced the effort and tracked progress. As corners were sold prior to construction, the paper placed articles in its Sunday editions, with photos of

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Durant Main Street pledged to raise \$50,000 for the streetscape project. One of the main sources of those contributions was the "corner sponsorship." Donors paid \$2,500 for a corner, which featured a lamppost banner and brick paver engraved with their name.



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the sponsors standing on their corners. This was all part of an effort to sell all 12 corners in the project area. The newspaper ran a map of all the corners and tracked the progress of sales. All sponsors were recognized at the groundbreaking and completion ceremonies.

## FUND-RAISING TASK FORCE

A task force was formed specifically to raise the matching funds. Volunteers put together a packet of information to give potential donors when asking for contributions. The packet contained a request letter; an executive summary of the project; fund-raising needs; a map of the project; an artist's rendering; and a well-designed, color brochure listing all of the funding options. These materials helped the volunteers

persuade business owners and philanthropic individuals who were interested in contributing or sponsoring some aspect of the project. The task force drew up a list of potential donors; and, when possible, a board or committee member who knew the prospect made personal visits to request sponsorships or funds.

## DON'T LET FUND RAISING BE DAUNTING!

No matter what resources you choose to fund your project, it is essential for the city to be committed to the future of your downtown or neighborhood commercial district. Once funding is secured, design can begin. Main Street programs are great at developing fund raisers, and any number of special efforts can

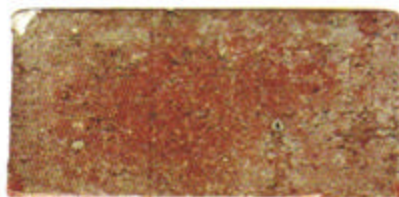
be utilized. Just keep people involved and informed and devise a variety of sponsorship options so everyone who is interested in supporting the project can participate.

*Donna Dow, the program manager of Durant Main Street, has been with the organization since it began in 1997. She received the Oklahoma Main Street Manager of the Year award in 2001 and became a Certified Main Street Manager in February 2002.*

*During her tenure, the downtown has been listed in the National Register of Historic Places, and the Main Street district was selected as one of*

*the top three in Oklahoma in a statewide poll in 2006.*

*Donna coordinated her first streetscape project for downtown Durant from July 2001 to December 2004. Phase I was three blocks along Main Street (a state highway). Phase II, which was completed in December 2006, encompassed service entrances and put electrical lines underground. Phases I and II cost \$1.5 million. Phase III should be completed in the summer of 2008.*







### When was the last time you took a leisurely stroll downtown?

It's easy to get so focused on your work that you forget to step outside and see what downtown is really like.

That's a mistake, because you can't serve downtown without understanding its needs and its key attributes.

Observe our accomplishments... and identify the work which still needs to be done.

### Victories and Challenges

National Main Street trends...what are the greatest victory in revitalization programs over the past year...and what are the greatest challenges facing Mainstreet districts?

The most recent survey by [www.mainstreet.org](http://www.mainstreet.org), the Mainstreet site from the National Trust for Historic Preservation, showed these responses most often cited:

- ▶ Securing planning and zoning changes that will make Main Street development easier
- ▶ Keeping government offices on Main Street and recruiting major new employers
- ▶ Increasing Main Street housing and improving streetscapes and sidewalks
- ▶ Approving historic preservation ordinances and National Register historic districts
- ▶ Renovating downtown theatres

Challenges most frequently mentioned:

- ▶ Dealing with increases in regional traffic and parking shortages
- ▶ Balancing the positive benefits with the sometimes negative impacts that national retailers bring to Main Streets
- ▶ Facing continued competition from big-box retailers outside commercial districts
- ▶ Maintaining momentum and sustaining volunteer momentum of revitalization programs
- ▶ Coping with absentee property owners, property speculation and a lack of retail space to rent

## The Business of Tourism

Mainstreet communities are all in the business of tourism...whether they recognize it or not.

Did you know that 60% of all travelers are visiting family and friends? If you are serving your local residents in a positive way, they will want to share that experience with their visitors. Though the "box" stores have some advantages, our downtown can provide a unique environment, unique products, product knowledge, and service that can make it everyone's destination.

The first topic to be addressed regarding tourism is customer service. There are four levels of service: rude, indifferent, expected, exceptional, and outrageous. The key for downtown businesses is "to move beyond the expected, providing service at the exceptional or outrageous levels according to the National Main Street Center.

The basic "expected" services for travelers should be:

1. Stores open
2. Hours posted
3. Directions to shopping/dining district, parking and public restrooms
4. Common courtesy.

These should also be expected for any customer.

Merchandising is another issue that should be addressed in regard to the business of tourism. The National Main Street Center says the following must be central to your business in order to be successful:

1. Be open to buy when your customers need your product and/or service
2. Be certain that your inventory is sufficient to handle customer requirements. I.E., if you place an ad for a popular item, be sure that you have plenty in stock. Disappointed customers don't always return.
3. Sales and profitability margins must be adequate to provide for your needs while accounting for the customer's expectations and needs regarding pricing
4. Store floor plans should be set up so that traffic flows naturally into the areas where you most want your customers.
5. Display of merchandise in an appealing, aesthetic and approachable manner is crucial to sales.

If you need assistance with any of these issues, contact your local Small Business Association or hire a marketing consultant. Look for local or regional workshops on these topics.



Do you know who your Downtown Connectors are? These are the people who know all the "right" people. They help you get things done downtown by connecting you with the right individuals to help you raise funds, support a renovation project, or stage a great event. Make a list of your downtown connectors and their areas of expertise. It will be an invaluable resource.



## MCMA Board Members

- Roger Potratz, dh2w, president
- Rick Welch, The News-Dispatch publisher, vice president
- Debbie Burke, Merrion & Associates, treasurer
- Jane Daley, LaPorte County Convention & Visitors Bureau, secretary
- Jan Smith, Feallock House
- Rick Welch, The News-Dispatch
- Jerry Peters, Festival Players Guild
- Jack Luchtman, Trinity Church
- Jan Kostielney, Mayor's Office and JK Enterprises
- Tim Haas, Haas & Associates, LLC
- Tim Bietry, Chamber of Commerce
- Donna Howard, Station 801

## Committee Members

### Finance/Audit

- Debbie Burke, chair
- Jan Kostielney

### Promotion/Events/Marketing

- Jan Kostielney, chair
- Jane Daley
- Tina Hoffman
- Jerry Peters
- Tim Haas
- Jack Luchtman

### Design

- Roger Potratz, chair
- Jan Kostielney

### Membership

- Jane Daley, chair
- Tina Hoffman
- Jack Luchtman

### Economic Restructuring

- Tim Haas, chair
- Roger Potratz
- Jerry Peters
- Jan Kostielney

### Ad Hoc: Bylaws

- Janice Behler, chair
- Jerry Peters
- Janet Smith

## Committee Meetings:

- Marketing/Promotions: Tuesday, January 29th, Noon. Oriental Pearl.
- Economic Restructuring: Thursday, February 7th, 4:30. Haas & Assoc.

## The Birth of Downtown Programs

A study submitted by Downtown Ohio, Inc. reports that downtown programs typically follow three distinct organizational phases:

Catalyst Phase—where the plan is established and the basics of revitalization are initiated and implemented. The program also seeks support from the community to develop a credible base for the organization.

Growth Phase: highlighted by the bulk of reinvestments, this is where the actual redevelopment of the commercial district takes place.

Management Phase: the cycle's conclusion focuses on monitoring the marketplace to assist the district with any economic adjustments, innovations, maintenance or physical improvements necessary to preserve the downtown.

The phases differ in duration depending on the community involvement by volunteers, the political climate and the organization. Understanding these three phases is key to helping a downtown program mature and successfully tackle ongoing revitalization challenges.



# Calendar of Events

- January—National Cervical Cancer Awareness. Mayor's Campaign Against Cancer. See Marketing/Community Relations page at [www.emichigancity.com](http://www.emichigancity.com).
- March—National Colorectal Cancer Awareness. Mayor's Campaign Against Cancer. See Marketing/Community Relations page at [www.emichigancity.com](http://www.emichigancity.com).
- March—St. Patrick's Day parade. Contact Johnny Stimley at 872-0361 for details and to register an entry in the parade. Forms are available at [www.mcmainstreet.com](http://www.mcmainstreet.com) and [emichigancity.com](http://emichigancity.com).
- March 27—Executive Spelling Bee. Sponsored by the Literacy Council of LaPorte County. Registration and sponsorship forms can be found at [www.lpliteracycouncil.org](http://www.lpliteracycouncil.org).
- March—planning for Cinco de Mayo event in Washington Park. Contact Summer Festival at [info@michigancityfestivalsinc.com](mailto:info@michigancityfestivalsinc.com) for information and to register an entry in the parade, a food vendor slot, or an activity.
- April—National Minority Cancer Awareness. Mayor's Campaign Against Cancer. See Marketing/Community Relations page at [www.emichigancity.com](http://www.emichigancity.com).
- May—Cinco de Mayo event and parade in Washington Park.
- May 18—Cruis'n For A Cure. 27-mile cruise from LaPorte County Fairgrounds to Washington Park in Michigan City. Fundraiser for the Mayor's Campaign Against Cancer. Contact Jan Kostielney at 219/363-1407 or by email at [marketing@emichigancity.com](mailto:marketing@emichigancity.com) for more info.

## Getting Your Ideas Accepted



You have a great idea, but it is not within your power to make it happen. You decide to take your idea to the people who CAN make it happen. The first step in winning them over is organizing your proposal effectively. The following suggestions will help you create a better presentation and get your ideas accepted more often.

- ▶ Put the purpose up front. Do not wait until you are 15 minutes or 5 pages into your proposal to let your audience know what you are after. The gist of your proposal should be the first item you cover.
- ▶ Be specific. Do not cloud the issue with vague words and unnecessary background data.
- ▶ Compare, do not knock. Remember, your audience may have a vested interest in the old method and may take negative comments personally.
- ▶ Stress the benefits. Your proposal is a marketing vehicle for selling your idea, not an opinion paper. Make your case using facts and figures that demonstrate savings or improved performance.
- ▶ Acknowledge limitations. Every idea is going to have some drawbacks. If you can state those shortcomings up front and provide ways to work around them, you will not give opponents ammunition.