

Missouri Main Street Downtown Revitalization Awards – 2014

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Missouri Main Street Connection, Inc.
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Missouri Main Street Connection Inc. presented downtown revitalization awards on July 31, 2014, recognizing revitalization excellence during the Annual Missouri Main Street Conference in Clayton, Missouri.

Four communities participating in the Missouri Main Street program reached or surpassed \$1 million milestones from private improvements in their historic downtown districts last year, when Cape Girardeau exceeded \$6 million in private investments, while Liberty, Lee's Summit and Warrensburg each passed the \$1 million mark in private improvements. As a whole, the 20 communities at the Accredited, Associate and Affiliate levels that actively participate in the Missouri Main Street program exceeded the \$18 million mark in both private and public improvements in their downtowns. The Missouri Main Street Program, launched as a non-profit organization in 2005, is designed to help communities preserve their historic buildings and reinvigorate their downtown districts, following the National Main Street 4-Point Approach® to Revitalization.

The awards ceremony on July 31 honored those communities along with individuals, businesses, cities and civic organizations that have invested funds, skills and volunteer time to revitalize their downtowns. The Missouri Main Street Connection hosted the event. Awards were presented in 12 categories.

Old Town Cape's Vasterling Suites wins Best Large-Scale Project Award

Old Town Cape's Vasterling Building – now the Vasterling Suites - won the award for Best Large Scale Project, in a tie with Liberty, MO.



Preservation experts who closely examined the Vasterling building discovered it was built in 1912 of Carthage stone, a highly crystalline, strong limestone which is seldom used outside of the Southwest Missouri region near the quarries around Carthage. Backed by research by the historic preservation program at Southeast Missouri State University, Clemco Developers acquired the building and moved quickly to have it added to the National Register.

After stripping off the false façade, the upper floors were converted into apartments that brought a new demographic of young people and mid-career professionals into the downtown and has a waiting list of tenants. For more details about the award, contact Marla Mills, marlamills@oldtowncape.org

Krystal's Up Town Salon, of Chillicothe, wins Award for Top Façade Rehabilitation

Krystal's has attracted customers from all around Chillicothe and the nearby communities: Trenton, Brookfield, Carrollton and St. Joseph, since 2008. The Up Town Salon's location in downtown Chillicothe, plus being near other great businesses with good traffic, has helped make the salon a success, Krystal said. Her salon employs four full-time people that book up quickly and are often booked a full year in advance.

Krystal considers the recent façade renovation project as the finishing touch on her building. Rehabilitation elements include the black, white and red color scheme on the inside. “My favorite colors, in case you hadn’t guessed,” said Krystal. With the help of artist Kelly Poling they designed a beautiful, clean façade while incorporating the colors from inside. Kelly suggested gray to complement the color scheme. Krystal was hesitant at first, “but now I absolutely love it,” she said.



“We are proud to be located in downtown Chillicothe and happy to have worked with Main Street Chillicothe through the façade grant program,” Krystal said. “We most likely wouldn’t have had the funds to do the façade rehabilitation if it wasn’t for the grant program. We feel fortunate to have the Main Street program in our downtown.”

For more details on the award, contact Micah Landes, 660-646-4071

mschilli@greenhillsschillicothe.org

Washington, Missouri’s 175th Anniversary Celebration wins award for Outstanding Special Project

The historically strong tradition of volunteerism and civic involvement of Washington’s citizens can be seen in Washington’s 175th birthday party. The planning committee assembled a full year’s worth of celebrations and recognition of the town’s achievements, a feat of extensive preparation.

In September 2012 the committee began planning. At the core were several events: the Battle of the Bands, a community picnic, a gala celebration to generate funding, and a Memorial Day Parade, all designed to showcase the values that



the community has established over the past 175 years. To encourage conversations about Washington’s past, present and future, the committee set up a Facebook page to chronicle the city’s progress, using historic photos of the town and previous anniversary celebrations and parades. Other events also helped generate discussion, including the dedication of a memorial to the town’s founder, Lucinda Owens. A community meeting focusing on plans for historic building restoration, WiFi access and additional highway signage also encouraged public discussion.

The efforts of the planning committee and citizens who participated in the events and discussions have truly reinvigorated community pride in Washington’s history and anticipation of what can happen in the next 175 years.

For more details about the award, contact Bridgette Kelch: bkelch@downtownwashmo.org

Historic Downtown Liberty wins award for Best Large Scale Project

Liberty won the award for Best Large Scale Project, in a tie with Old Town Cape. Two new restaurants in Historic Downtown Liberty opened last year in the old Bedinger Furniture Store that encompassed seven buildings in a 20,000-square foot space.

Liberty's Economic Improvement Committee created a plan to redevelop the site, starting with separating the utilities and marketing each parcel separately. A Brownfields Grant from the Missouri Department of Natural Resources resulted in an asbestos-free certification, as an important marketing point. To date, five of the parcels have been sold and four have been redeveloped into the two new restaurants – The Bell and the Rock & Run. Improvements include new facades and an outdoor patio, window treatments, interior floors, walls, ceilings, plumbing and electrical.

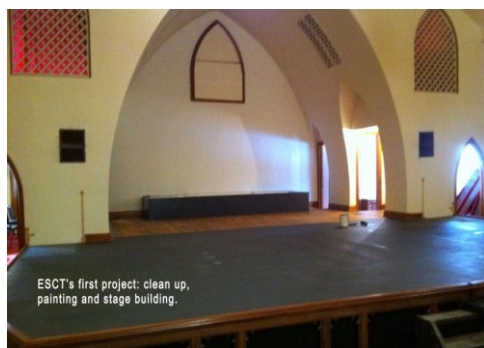
The Bell and the Rock & Run have created a vibrant eating destination in downtown Liberty, offering a variety of menu and beverage options that are attracting a young clientele and a renewed nightlife to the city square. For more details on the award, contact Vicki Vance,

vicki@historicdowntownliberty.org



Excelsior Springs Community Theatre and the Slightly Off-Broadway Players wins award for Adaptive Re-Use Preservation Project.

The Community Theatre's transformation of a former church building has been a crowning achievement in the restoration of historic buildings in downtown Excelsior Springs while boosting the development of the arts district.



The 1903 building was the Methodist Church for most of its existence, before a decade-long vacancy and falling into disrepair. The Downtown Excelsior Partnership (DEP) purchased the building in 2008, added it to the National Register of Historic Places and stabilized the building. DEP began a search for an appropriate owner. In 2010 the Community Theatre purchased the building with the desire to convert it into a home for live performances, dinner theatre, children's musicals and drama camps for the youth.

Volunteers then began a fundraising project to support the renovations and devoted thousands of hours of their labor to restore the building.

The Slightly Off Broadway Theatre is now up in lights, drawing crowds and anchoring its place permanently in the heart of Downtown Excelsior Springs' arts district with a full season of performances and a teaching program for school-aged children to learn the performing arts.

For more details on the award, contact Brian Rice, brian@leaderpress.com or 816-637-6155.

Warrensburg wins award for Top Promotional Event

Led by Warrensburg Main Street, several local organizations combined their efforts to create a new family-oriented event - Burg Fest – the first public event staged in 12 years. The festival planning committee included city leaders and staff, University of Central Missouri staff, Big Brothers and Big Sisters members, Warrensburg School District staff, Warrensburg Main Street staff and board members, and citizens in general. After the planning phase, 150-plus volunteers donated their time during the three-day festival. The event was a true representation of partners working together for the common good of the community.



Burg Fest featured local and regional bands, food booths, crafts and information booths, a beer garden, home brew competition and an antique car show. A post-festival survey of businesses that were affected by street closings during the event revealed that most all the retailers were very pleased with the event, and sales tax revenues increased compared to the same period in the previous year. The community opinion overall was extremely positive. For more details about the award, contact Julie Turnipseed: wmainst@embargmail.com

Brad Culbertson, of Lee's Summit, wins the Stick-Your-Neck-Out Award for volunteer service "above and beyond"

Brad Culbertson, of Lee's Summit, has given his time and energy "above and beyond" what is normally expected from a Main Street volunteer. For that reason he was presented with the "Stick Your Neck Out" Award. For the past 20 years, Brad has invested in his downtown properties and the people in the community. His properties



have all been renovated to the highest standards and quality, and he has helped incubate many successful businesses and has often helped a new business owner start a business, providing advice on designing a business plan and continuing to help them along the way. Other work he has done for DLSMS and the community over the past several years include: explaining how a CID functions and getting signatures on the CID petition (a six-year long effort); creating a development plan for underutilized properties in downtown, helping create a Mural Ordinance for downtown, helping develop extensive Design Standards that are now part of the City code, and recruiting businesses to downtown.

Besides being the longest-serving board member of DLSMS, Brad invests his time as a DLSMS volunteer in many other areas (hours and hours each year), and he donates to the organization regularly (he is a \$1,000-plus annual investor in DLSMS). For more details about the award, contact the DLSMS office: Trisha Drape: trisha@downtownls.org

Excelsior Springs business wins Business Excellence Award

BobKorn Kettle Corn, of downtown Excelsior Springs, won the Award for Business Excellence, in a tie with a Warrensburg business. The Meadows family established their business in 2010 as a festival and carnival business, and opened a store in downtown Excelsior Springs in 2012. Crowds began following their noses when the aromas of eight different flavors of popping kettle corn wafted down the street.

Bob and Kathy Meadows, with their son Rob, support many local organizations and committees. Immediately after opening the store, Rob became involved with the Downtown Excelsior Partnership (DEP), accepting a board position and joining the Economic Development Committee. The family started popcorn parties with the local schools, rewarding good behavior and grades, plus popcorn fundraisers for charitable organizations. This spirit of giving comes naturally, all the while they are running their business. They soon outgrew their first location and doubled their storefront and workspace in 2014 to meet increased demand. Their business won the Business Excellence Award for their volunteerism and community involvement.



For more details about the award, contact Daphne Bowman, info@visitesprings.com

Linden Square at Gladstone Village Center wins Best Streetscape and Public Improvement Award

The City of Gladstone generated a series of coordinated public outreach efforts to define the community vision for a new Village Center. The downtown was already home to Gladstone's City Hall and Central Park, which includes



an outdoor aquatics facility and Community Center facility. Anticipating future development, the City has been acquiring property in this area for several years.

Confluence led the team in designing a signature park to serve as a dynamic and flexible event space and a catalyst for economic growth in the surrounding area.

Design features include an amphitheater, a pavilion that serves as a stage, a flexible open lawn space that converts to an ice rink in winter, a pedestrian plaza, and a parking lot planned for dual use as a farmers' market.

Development has followed on the adjacent private properties, including 220 market-rate apartments in a four-story mixed-use development, with 10,000 square feet of commercial space on two full blocks overlooking the new Linden Square. For more details about the award contact Chris Cline: ccline@thinkconfluence.com

Downtown Lee's Summit advocate wins Volunteer of the Year Award

Downtown Lee's Summit Main Street, Inc. (DLSMS) knew that Suzanne Garret did a great deal for the organization, but until they started listing it all, they really had no idea Suzanne has devoted so much time, which she gives quietly, not looking for accolades nor drawing attention to herself.

Although she has a demanding every-day job, she can be seen in Downtown Lee's Summit nearly every day before and after work, patronizing the businesses and checking in on the DLSMS staff. When they say she volunteers at every event, they're not exaggerating. Suzanne is practically an unpaid, full-time staff member when the hundreds of hours she has donated in support of Main Street are calculated for the past five years.

In addition to all of her volunteer hours for Downtown Lee's Summit, she loves telling others about downtown and advocating the Main Street® mission, which earned her the Downtown Champion Award in 2012. She also attended Missouri Main Street training and quarterly training in 2013. Her volunteer work for Downtown in 2013 included: Piccadilly Gala committee, Downtown Days committee, Emerald Isle Parade committee, Fourth Fridays committee, Farmers Market volunteer, Music in the Park volunteer and many more.



For more details about the award, contact the DLSMS office: Trisha Drape: trisha@downtownls.org

Historic Downtown Liberty wins award for Economic Restructuring

Historic Downtown Liberty's Economic Improvement Committee won the award for Best Economic Restructuring Project, in a tie with Northeast Kansas City Chamber of Commerce. The Economic Improvement Committee began a reorganization plan in 2011 to expand membership and clearly state its goals and work plan. The first phase implemented the Chapter 353 Tax Abatement that resulted in two completed projects. The first was

redevelopment of a retail space – a garden and pottery shop. The second was an updated Optometry Office, including handicap accessibility and HIPAA medical security requirements. These improvements are valued at over \$155,000. Three more 353 applications have been recently approved, including a historic store-front restoration project, redevelopment of a former title insurance office for a new retail business, and restoration of a historic bank building. Total cost of these projects will be \$307,000.



The second phase was a business retention and recruitment plan. Results so far include the relocation of the women's dress shop from a 600-square-foot space into a 1,300-square-foot space; a small Mexican grocery store that has evolved into a restaurant and will be moving soon into a new downtown location; assistance to a CPA firm and stock brokerage firm in purchasing and moving into their own buildings. Other developments include two new restaurants. The total investment in these projects is over \$1.6 million.

The third phase was collaborating with the City to pass a Bed Tax for tourism/event promotions and improving infrastructure, as identified in the City's master plan. The Economic Improvement team donated over 750 hours, resulting in over \$2 million of downtown improvements, both public and private.

For more details about the Award, contact Vicki Vance: vicki@historicdowntownliberty.org

Independence Avenue/International Marketplace wins award for Economic Restructuring

Independence Avenue/International Marketplace won the Award for Best Economic Restructuring Project, in a tie with Historic Downtown Liberty. Northeast Kansas City Chamber of Commerce initiated the project with a vision and plan for the future. Supporting that plan, the City Council designated Independence Avenue as a Community Improvement District (CID), creating an annual infusion of \$500,000 in special tax revenues.

The Northeast section of the City had suffered a decline since its growth spurt in the latter part of the 19th century, leaving the neighborhood scarred by crime and abandoned businesses. Despite that, the area has continued to attract immigrant families and second-generation immigrants, offering them housing and jobs. The cultural diversity and ethnic flavor has remained, and is the foundation for the new economic paradigm - the International Marketplace.

Independence Avenue was the natural focal point for the revitalization plan, since it abuts six historic neighborhoods. Several elements contributed to the re-awakening of Independence Avenue, starting with the new CID security force called the "Angels," and the "Urban Ambassadors" who cleared the Avenue parkways and sidewalks of litter and befriended Avenue businesses. To jump-start the program, the Chamber focused new events on the ethnic restaurants, including the annual "Taste and Tour" festival, and the monthly "lunch and learn" events. An international brand is taking shape along the Avenue with a marketing plan that has already boosted the number and diversity of ethnic restaurants. "The entrepreneurial spirit is evident here," said the Awards judging panel.



For more details about the Award, contact Bobbi Baker-Hughes, indieavecid@gmail.com

Warrensburg coffee house/bakery wins Business Excellence Award

Winning the award for Business Excellence was the Old Drum Coffee House & Bakery, of Warrensburg, in a tie with an Excelsior Springs' business. Beth Wiegand, owner of Old Drum Coffee House & Bakery, started her career as a high school teacher, but her life-long love of baking and her interest in coffee led her to try something new. Before opening her business she spent a year in research – working with the University of Central Missouri's Small Business and Technology Center – to create a business plan, then sampling and selling her signature cookies and baked goods. Also, she put into action several ideas that had been brewing in her mind over time, like showcasing the work of UCM art students, and hosting open-mic nights with local musicians.



She has participated in every Main Street event available to her during the past two years she has been in business, and also donated generously to two Piccadilly Auctions, plus supplying baked goods for charity fund-raisers and other events. Warrensburg Main Street Inc. was pleased to award Beth with the Design Committee's "You Swept Us Away" prize in 2013 for her diligence in keeping up the appearance of her building. Comments from the award judging panel: "It's great to see a business do so much to prepare for start up, reaching out to the community and local university."

For more details, contact Warrensburg Main Street - Julie Turnipseed, wmainst@embarqmail.com

Warrensburg Main Street receives Special Recognition

Special recognition went to Warrensburg Main Street for its own version of the Evening of Excellence. Warrensburg submitted the nomination for the Outstanding Special Project Award, but the judges didn't see it as a special project – in fact, it didn't fit into any of the existing categories – thus the special recognition.

With this new event, Warrensburg Main Street's intention was to increase partnerships and financial support to the organization by the community. To launch the project, the Main Street board invited over 200 local business owners, philanthropists, community leaders and citizens to a reception at the home of one of the board members. While guests were welcomed at the door by the board members, a pleasant atmosphere awaited, with hors d'oeuvres and a concert pianist in the background. A video highlighted the Warrensburg Main Street program's activities, and the board president gave a brief presentation on the organization's goals, objectives and achievements. Pledges from guests totaled \$8,000. A mere \$275 was invested to cover costs of the event.

Comments from the judging panel: "very clear focus, wide range of participation, substantial results. Warrensburg has challenged us all to look at fundraising differently. We are creating a new category for next year's awards -

Outstanding Fundraising Event." The award given to Warrensburg Main Street was not a typical trophy, but a unique walking stick, representing the "pioneer" challenge.



For more details, contact Warrensburg Main Street - Julie Turnipseed, wmainst@embarqmail.com

Blue Springs wins Public Partner Award

Blue Springs Downtown Alive! accepted the Outstanding Public Partner Award for a joint project completed by America's Community Bank and the City of Blue Springs.

To launch a funding plan for improvements to a building in the downtown district, Downtown Alive! made formal presentations to the City Council before seeking a Community Development Block Grant. Using the "Preserving America" initiative which focuses on historic preservation and heritage tourism, the City Council approved allocation of \$100,000 in matching CDBG grant funds, specifically allocated to the America's Community Bank building.



Having an aluminum façade since 1968, the restoration project uncovered the original bricks and windows. With the help of an old photo, the contractor designed new cornices and parapet, re-creating the historic appearance of the building. Total investment in the project by the building owner was approximately \$310,000. A tax abatement program was the second funding mechanism used to complete the project.

Downtown Alive! believed, and the City Council agreed, that improving the aesthetic character of a large anchor building in the district would attract future renovations, benefit the neighborhood by increasing property values, and increase future investment into the district. Comments from the judges: "It is wonderful to see the bank committed to the downtown in the ever-changing marketplace."

For more details on the award, contact Cindy Miller at Blue Springs Downtown Alive! cmiller@amcommbank.com

Washington's Mayor wins award as Outstanding Public Official

Mayor Sandy Lucy, of Washington, MO, accepted the Award for Outstanding Public Official. She has been a major champion of the Main Street Approach®, and advocate for historic preservation and small businesses. Downtown Washington Inc. nominated her for the award.

It is common knowledge that a healthy cooperation with a local government is crucial for Main Street® programs. Sandy exemplifies this connection and every aspect of the Main Street® movement and local government. As a business owner in downtown Washington and mayor of Washington, she is at the crossroads between these entities.

Sandy has accumulated countless accolades including the first female president of the Washington Chamber of Commerce, president of Downtown Washington Inc., member of the original Winefest planning committee and long-term member of the merchant committee. She was elected mayor of Washington in 2010 and re-elected, unopposed, in 2014.

Her experience in these positions, along with all of her other ventures, has positioned Sandy as an expert on several points of the Main Street Approach®. She has embraced the call to serve her community in almost every way possible. In doing so, she has created an example for



everyone to engage their community through public and private engagement. Comment from the award judging panel: “Mayor Lucy has demonstrated the leadership, professionalism and energy which downtowns need in public officials to help compete in the modern marketplace.”

For more details about the award, contact Bridgette Kelch: bkelch@downtownwashmo.org

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