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**FOUR COMMUNITIES RECEIVE 2022 MAIN STREET ALABAMA DESIGNATION**

**BIRMINGHAM, Ala.** - Main Street Alabama continues to expand its statewide reach by selecting four communities for Designation. The new communities are Demopolis, LaFayette, Leeds and Talladega and will begin receiving technical services this month.

"Applying for Main Street Alabama designation takes time, dedication, and commitment from several people in a community, explained Mary Helmer Wirth, Main Street Alabama President and State Coordinator. "The process begins with attending a new city application workshop in January and then deciding to move forward with a letter of intent to apply that shows both public and private support for the effort as well as need and capacity."

"The application itself is meant to have a community take a good look at themselves from vacancies, absentee property owners, historic properties, and the current economy in the downtown or neighborhood commercial district," Wirth continued. "It generally takes about two to three months to complete the application with a group of people working in concert. Applicants also make in person presentation to the selection committee, this is their opportunity to go beyond the written portion and show the heart and soul of their community, and why they feel it is time for them to have a designated Main Street program. It is a wonderful process of self-discovery."

In Demopolis (pop. 6,734), the group expressed a desire to capitalize on outdoor recreation. The Tombigbee and Black Warrior Rivers meet in Demopolis and is a tourist attraction year-round with the annual Chamber sponsored Christmas on the River drawing nearly 40,000. Main Street Demopolis wants to make downtown Demopolis a place that brings those tourists into the district by crafting a strong marketing presence, increasing the number of shopping and dining options, and renovating the historic Marengo theater.

LaFayette's, (pop. 2,684) goals during the designation process include an improved appearance of historic buildings and streetscapes, diversification of the retail mix, increased activity in the district after normal business hours, and more community participation in the overall improvement of the city.

In their application, Leeds (pop. 12,324) expressed, "with the help of Main Street Alabama, we hope to truly flesh out the strong bones that already exist in our historic, charming downtown so that we can bring in jobs, increase foot traffic, and capitalize on the community involvement that already exists. We also hope to achieve a facelift of our historic business district, including design details, branding,

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streamlining and beautifying the look of our downtown area, while maintaining the small-town charm."

For Talladega (pop. 15,861), creating a district for all users is important to them. In their application, they stated, "we aspire to develop an economically-healthy pedestrian community where diverse individuals of all ages, including college students, children, elderly citizens, and the deaf and blind come together to live, learn, play and enjoy life."

Main Street Alabama will begin work immediately in these communities to provide board development, goal setting, work planning, market study with economic development strategies, targeted design assistance, and training related to district development.

Main Street Alabama is a private non-profit and state coordinating program of Main Street America. The National Main Street Four Point Approach™ is an over 40-year model that focuses work in four areas: organization, design, promotion, and economic vitality with strategies unique to the community and based on market-based outcome. "Setting achievable goals using community input and market data is critical to the revitalization of the district, but it's also equally crucial to bring stakeholders to the table to work towards a common goal," said Wirth.

Demopolis, LaFayette, Leeds, and Talladega joins Alexander City, Anniston, Athens, Atmore, 4th Avenue Business District - Birmingham, Calera, Columbiana, Decatur, Dothan, Elba, Enterprise, Eufaula, Florence, Foley, Fort Payne, Gadsden, Headland, Heflin, Marion, Monroeville, Montevallo, Jasper, Opelika, Oxford, Scottsboro, South Huntsville, Wetumpka, Woodlawn district - Birmingham, in using Main Street's comprehensive and incremental approach. Each Designated community listed above reports their success by tracking their reinvestment statistics. Main Street Alabama's Designated communities have reported 909 net new businesses, 2,984 net new jobs, \$688,329,640 in private investment, \$96,331,635 in public improvements, and 139,177 volunteer hours in their districts collectively since June of 2014.

Main Street Alabama Application workshops are held in January each year. Communities interested in learning more about the program are encouraged to join the Main Street Alabama Network. More information can be found at [www.mainstreetalabama.org](http://www.mainstreetalabama.org).

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