



2024 AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE WINNERS

EXCELLENCE IN FUNDRAISING

This award recognizes a Main Street Program for outstanding local fund-raising activity or campaign, displaying creativity and success in securing funds for the district program or specific project.

Athens - Investor Recognition

Athens Main Street wanted to increase the visibility of supporters and encourage others to become supporters, increase fundraising dollars, and promote businesses. To date, they have seen a 100% increase in business investors and a 30% increase in stakeholders, an increase of over \$5,000 over last year.

Elba - Moonlighters on Main

The Elba Moonlighters on Main Ball was a fundraising event to generate financial support for establishing a historical museum in Elba. The goal was to raise enough money to establish the museum's 501c3 non-profit status. (This is being completed.) The gross raised was \$12,062 from tickets and donations. Expenses were \$1,171.82 Net \$10,890.18

Enterprise - Mardi Gras on Main

The community came together to celebrate "Mardi Gras on Main" on the evening of Friday, January 26, 2024. Prior to the event, fundraising efforts took place as community members donated money to vote for their chosen "King" and "Queen." The community's votes raised \$18,997.58, and the total budget for the event was \$1,084. Thanks to a \$1,000 sponsorship from a local dealership, the Organization Committee was able to secure most of the funds needed. The actual amount spent was \$983.62, resulting in a total profit of \$19,097.96.

EXCELLENCE IN CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

Excellence in Capital Campaign recognizes a Main Street Program for outstanding intense fundraising efforts designed to raise a specific amount of money within a defined time period to build an organization's assets and capacity.

Atmore - Main Street Atmore Foundation

Main Street Atmore created a strategic plan using all the features through the MSA Foundation 501(c)3. With grant writers, foundation members, fundraising events, and political outreach, our board members, via the MSA Foundation, raised over \$400,000 last year. Earmarks



included \$55k in personnel and \$200k in community development. \$150k is available for façade grants and the Start More entrepreneurship program, with the excess to be used for future projects. Additional in-kind donations totaled \$25,000.

Jasper - Jasper Main Street Property Acquisition

Jasper Main Street (JMS) bought the historic Tweedy building for \$400,000 and estimated that \$600,000 was needed for renovations. JMS used \$150,000 from reserves and obtained a \$250,000 mortgage. They received \$389,000 from donors. They decided to sell the Tweedy Building and buy the renovated Savage Building at a lower cost, which saved them \$237,500.

EXCELLENCE IN PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

This award recognizes outstanding local partnerships between the local Main Street organization and another community entity or entities (public or private).

Alexander City - 2nd Saturday Clean Up

In July of 2023, Alexander Cities' Main Street director noticed the need for a community clean-up. She contacted John Thompson with LMRA (a non-profit organization whose mission is to protect and preserve Lake Martin) to get advice on hosting a community clean-up day. The partnership continues monthly. It has now grown into a competition. The county commissioner contributes charitable prize money. Teams get points for how many volunteers they bring and the amount of trash collected. The winning teams receive a donation to the non-profit of their choosing. The result is increased garbage removal from medians and roadways. The 2nd Saturday Clean Up Day has had a tremendous impact mainly because of John.

Enterprise - Hoobler Music Studio

The partnership for this project took place between private business/property owner Roy Hoobler of Hoobler Music Studio and the Main Street Enterprise "Young Main Street" Committee. A mural of a winding keyboard with three boll weevils playing instruments was painted on the Hoobler Music Studio. "Local public art makes the community more interesting, and I am so happy I participated in this project," Hoobler Music studio owner Roy Hoobler said. The mural compliments the new outdoor space, including concrete benches and landscaping.

Gadsden - The Art Community

Downtown Gadsden, Inc. partners with The Walnut Gallery and the Museum of Art to bring art to the downtown district. Although Director Kay Moore has a great love for art, she depends on Mario Gallardo (Walnut Gallery) and Ray Wetzel (Gadsden Museum of Art) to find appropriate sidewalk pieces and murals to enhance the beauty of downtown. The continued



growth of the artwork has brought tourists and locals to the downtown district to enjoy as they stroll down the streets.

EXCELLENCE IN VOLUNTEER DEVELOPMENT

This award recognizes outstanding local Main Street program volunteer recruitment, training, and recognition.

Enterprise - Volunteer Award Ceremony

The inaugural Main Street Enterprise Volunteer Award Ceremony was held at the Enterprise First Methodist Church in Downtown Enterprise on January 22, 2024. The organizing committee collaborated to create the awards, design custom table centerpieces, and coordinate all aspects of the event. The committee extended invitations to Main Street Alabama staff, Mayor, and City Council. The ceremony provided a wonderful opportunity to reflect on the projects and achievements of 2023 while honoring all the volunteers who contributed to its success.

Heflin - Volunteer Interest Reception

To ignite new volunteer interest, seek possible new committee and board members, and ensure the greater community knows that Heflin Main Street is open to all who love Heflin, the Board devised a plan: Host an early-evening, come-and-go volunteer interest reception. Committee Work plans were displayed, and Committee Chairs were present to answer questions regarding how to get involved. Twelve new volunteers joined committees, and two new board members were selected.

EXCELLENCE IN PROMOTION

This award recognizes outstanding special events/activities that promote the Main Street district by creating a quality authentic event which generates traffic for the district.

Athens - Fridays After Five 2.0

Fridays After Five (FAF) takes place at the Limestone County Courthouse in the heart of the Athens Main Street District. On the last Friday of April, May, June, and July, this event draws over 4,000 attendees each time. People can enjoy live entertainment, extended shopping hours at district shops, and delicious food from local restaurants and food trucks. Admission is free, and the event starts at 5 pm with a DJ setting the mood until 6:30 pm. The main band performs from 7 until 8:30 pm.

Atmore - Window Grinch Campaign



On the morning of the 2023 Christmas Parade, 11 businesses on S Main were vandalized (23 windows, 9 doors, a sign & a toy soldier). Main Street Atmore assessed the damage & declared the "Window Grinch Campaign" within an hour. They encouraged owners to cover the vandalized windows to look like gifts, and the Atmore Flower Shop decorated her remaining windows with a Grinch theme. The entire community showed their support by rallying around the affected businesses, and Main Street Atmore raised 13K to help with insurance deductibles and materials used to cover the damages.

Enterprise - Whoville Celebration

The Whoville Celebration has become a signature event for Enterprise. It is scheduled annually for the first Saturday in December. The event is full of free Who-themed activities including pictures with the Mean One himself: Mr. Grinch! Attendees can be transformed into Whovillians by visiting the Who-Hair Station. Along with musical entertainment, the event hosts Max's Pet Costume Contest and the Who Look-A-Like Contest. The event drew in over 150 vendors and more than 17K attendees (over 60% of which come from outside of the Wiregrass)

Eufaula - Turkey, Tinsel and Touchdowns

This event began at the summer merchant meeting with a discussion about what works, what doesn't, and what can be incorporated into already established events. Questions arose: when do you put out flyers for Black Friday, Small Business Saturday, and when do you advertise for Iron Bowl? They decided to put all events under one umbrella for a cohesive event. Most businesses experienced record-breaking sales. Customers were lined down Broad Street and wrapped around the inside of stores! A radio station remote topped off all the festivities, making everyone aware of the vibrant downtown.

Gadsden - Cigar Box Guitar Weekend

MBGGUITARS.COM presented The Gadsden Music Fest, in concert with the Mary G. Hardin Center for Cultural Arts and Downtown Gadsden, Inc. The event celebrated handmade cigar box guitars and music, showcasing more than 80 unique instruments, many dating back to the 1880s. More than 40 cigar box guitar builders from across the country spent three days in downtown Gadsden, teaching the art of making and playing the cigar box guitars. The event brought hundreds of visitors downtown and created positive economic impact.

Leeds - Mistletoe on Main

In its second year, Mistletoe on Main has become a tradition, drawing residents and visitors to celebrate the holiday season in downtown Leeds. Event highlights included Horse-Drawn Carriage Rides, Food Trucks, Live Music, Letters to Santa, a Snow Globe Photo Booth, Bounce Houses, Frozen Character Photo-Op, Winter Wonderland with Snow Machines, Polar Express Train Rides, Cookie Decorating, Grinch Character Photo-Op, Face Painting, Christmas Games,



Cookies and Grinch Juice with The Grinch and Cindy Lou Who, all leading up to the annual Leeds Christmas Parade.

EXCELLENCE IN MARKETING

Recognizes outstanding efforts in overall marketing by a Main Street organization to promote the entire district as a destination or a branding or image development campaign.

Atmore - The District

The initiative to establish an Arts & Entertainment District began in June 2023 with the introduction of the Brand of Excellence Campaign to create a vibrant, pedestrian-friendly downtown area and encourage social interaction utilizing the brand provided by Main Street Alabama. The goals included attracting tourists, residents, and businesses, enhancing the downtown quality of life, fostering creativity and innovation in the community, and showcasing the rich cultural heritage. The A&E District is a way of nurturing trust & enthusiasm in the district. The primary marketing tool is a tourism campaign with the local news station, FOX10.

Enterprise - Main Street Monday Campaign

The "Main Street Monday" campaign by Main Street Enterprise was a strategic social media marketing effort designed to promote the entire district as a destination and enhance its branding. The campaign's overall goals were to increase awareness of the history, ongoing projects, and dedication of volunteers, thereby fostering a sense of community and pride. Utilizing Facebook and Instagram, the campaign posted nearly every Monday of 2023, featuring the history of downtown properties, updates on Main Street Enterprise projects, and business highlights.

Eufaula - Eufaula 101

The purpose of Eufaula 101 was to educate the workforce in Eufaula's hotels, restaurants, museums, and retailers on what Eufaula has to offer—referring to the workforce as "hospitality heroes". This training gave the heroes a hands-on service exercise that showed them details they could pass on to visitors and perhaps help them plan a return visit or extend their stay. Eufaula 101 came about because a relative of a Main Street Eufaula employee was staying in town for the weekend. When they asked the hotel attendant where to eat, they were advised to go out of town.

EXCELLENCE IN BUSINESS PROMOTION

This award recognizes local promotions, events and activities that result in increased sales or the development of an effective retail promotion(s) in conjunction with district merchants.

Jasper - 90's Bar Crawl



To kick off the spring event season, the 90's Bar Crawl was held in conjunction with five bar and restaurant locations in Downtown Jasper. The goal was to increase foot traffic, boost sales, and raise awareness of establishments in the Downtown Entertainment District. While the event was open to all ages, it primarily focused on the 25-35 age group. Each participating location offered drink and food specials as well as live entertainment.

LaFayette - Downtown Businesses Shine

LaFayette Main Street initiated and implemented a "shop local" campaign, which includes the slogan "Our LaFayette Businesses Shine." They understood the needs and concerns of the local business community by having conversations with them. They identified opportunities, built a coalition, created a plan, and planned the campaign. The goal was to support local businesses and boost local economy by placing vibrant Sun Shines at the locations to encourage higher foot traffic.

Monroeville - "Doing More Today"

To say Regions Bank is "Doing More" would be a gross underestimation! Regions brought a team to Monroeville to highlight businesses in the district and their most prominent corporate supporter. They used quotes, photos, and videos to encourage others to invest in the Main Street district. After Monroeville won the GAMSAs award, they updated the article and released a video. Added attention has come from Region's large footprint; Main Street has even picked up some new donors. Yahoo Finance, CSR Wire, and more picked up the article and video nationally. Thank you, Regions!

Wetumpka - Christmas in July

Downtown Wetumpka's Christmas in July is a promotional event that supports local businesses during the tax-free weekend in a fun and festive way. July is typically a slow month for revenue downtown, so the Main Street Wetumpka Promotions Committee created this unique event to help boost the local economy and the spirit of the community.

Excellence in Business Development

This award Provides recognition for outstanding efforts by a local Main Street organization to improve the business climate, support, strengthen, retain, and attract businesses in the district.

Athens - Restaurant Boom

In 2019, the Athens Main Street Board designated the addition of more restaurants downtown as its top priority goal. This goal was in line with the City of Athens 2040 Master Plan, Main Street Alabama's Board Refresh research, and Real Estate Redevelopment report findings, all of which identified a significant outflow of restaurant business to surrounding counties. After four



years of efforts to improve the business environment, they have seen the opening of five independent upscale restaurants, an elegant cigar bar restaurant, and a venue offering food, drink, and world-class golf simulators, all since October 2023.

Atmore - Rainy Day Fund

Main Street Atmore's Rainy-Day fund is designed to assist owners in enhancing their business or building with no upfront costs. The 3-way initiative offers a grant for 50% of interior or exterior projects, up to \$7,000; an interest-free loan with a maximum of \$3,500; and an emergency fund. The micro-loan grants can be used to match any Main Street Atmore Grant, purchase business equipment, or acquire inventory and supplies. These micro-loan grants can be utilized once per calendar year. The interest-free loan can be utilized for inventory, business equipment, wall repairs, interior renovations, and matching grants and emergency funds. By the end of the year, MSA will have distributed well over \$50,000.

Jasper - Free Public WIFI Downtown

The Connected Jasper project has brought free internet access to all downtown residents, businesses, and visitors. This initiative is a collaboration between Alabama Power, Tengo Internet, and the City of Jasper, with the support of Jasper Main Street. They have established 68 Wi-Fi access points throughout Downtown Jasper. The project is funded by a \$1.6 million federal grant through the Abandoned Mine Lands Program. The goal is to enhance economic opportunities, improve quality of life, and ensure Jasper's readiness for growth. This project represents a significant step forward for the community.

Leeds - Posh Building Development

Laura Barnes and Jeremy Deason invested \$200,000 to transform a long-vacant former Leeds City school board building into "Posh Salon." They improved the space by adding a glass door entrance, new windows, and a large garage door to bring in more natural light. Amazingly, they also included a restaurant build-out within the salon to ensure that the building could easily adapt to future business changes.

Oxford - Business Development Workshop Series

In early 2023, Historic Main Street Oxford and the City of Oxford launched a free Business Development Workshop Series for local businesses. The series covered topics such as Downtown Resources & Incentives, Small Business Marketing Plan, Leadership in Every Generation, Fire Safety & Emergency Planning, and How to Use Canva. Nearly 400 participants have benefited from this initiative, with the most popular session being "Leadership in Every



Generation" by Kristin Scroggin of genWHY Communications. This initiative has equipped businesses with essential skills and fostered community collaboration.

Excellence in Placemaking

This award recognizes outstanding local efforts that capitalize on local assets, inspiration, and potential, with the intention of creating public spaces that promote people's health, happiness, and well-being.

Birmingham - Live on 20th

Live on 20th is a seasonal live performance program led by REV that brings entertainment to Birmingham's Main Street, 20th North. This includes dancers, instrumentalists, vocalists, fine artists, and more. The goal of Live on 20th is to enhance the pedestrian experience during peak times for walking traffic and promote a high-quality busking culture in downtown Birmingham. Between June 1, 2023, and May 31, 2024, REV's team led two seasons of the program: a summertime and holiday series.

Enterprise - The Nook

The transformation of the underutilized parking lot at 123 South Main Street into a vibrant community space is known as "The Nook". The main goals of the project were to improve the area's appearance and functionality and create a welcoming hub for community engagement. The initiative, which took place from March to December 2023, involved volunteer-driven activities and targeted residents, businesses, and visitors. "The Nook" has become a popular space, especially during events such as the "Nook at Night Summer Music Series", featuring live performances by local musicians every Friday night.

Leeds - The Pants Store Mural

Michael Gee, the owner of The Pants Store, wanted to create a noticeable space in downtown Leeds by installing a mural that celebrates the rich history and vibrant spirit of the city. His initiative has transformed a prominent space into a visually engaging and historically significant landmark, promoting community well-being and pride. The mural depicts an image from the late 1950s when Taylor Gee would bus people from Birmingham to shop the famous 3 for \$10 pants sale. It is positioned to be visible to all who enter the Leeds Main Street district.

Oxford - Historic Plaque Project

In the fall of 2023, Historic Main Street Oxford completed its Downtown Historic Plaque Project. The project aimed to recognize downtown landmarks by highlighting buildings based on their architectural style, era of construction, significance, and current state, integrating Oxford's history into the present community. As part of the project, ten buildings received bronze plaques noting their name, year of construction, and address. Each plaque is accompanied by a



sidewalk sticker with a QR code linking to a webpage that provides a brief history and historic photos of the building.

Wetumpka - Rumbling Water Mosaic Steps

Main Street Wetumpka partnered with Alabama artist Linda Munoz to design and install a unique beautification project in downtown. The project, called the Rumbling Water Mosaic Steps, is a mosaic installation that has been a perfect addition to the growing arts community. It captures the essence of what makes Wetumpka "The City of Natural Beauty". The vision behind this project was to transform a plain space and to make the most of the community's assets, inspiration, and potential, all of which contribute to the health, happiness, and well-being of the community in a positive and uplifting manner.

Excellence in Property Activation

Excellence in Property Activation recognizes a Main Street Program for outstanding ingenuity in creating a positive space while awaiting development of the property.

Montevallo - 747 Main Street

After the Dawson's retired and closed the Montevallo Auto Repair in 2023, it had become somewhat of an eyesore. The University of Montevallo has purchased the property, but until it is developed, Montevallo Main Street spruced it up, adding a banner, planters, and later a tire tree farm for Christmas, which turned into a garden celebrating the Festival of Tulips.

EXCELLENCE IN BUILDING DESIGN NON-HISTORIC

Recognizes outstanding completed design projects including façade renovation and/or interior renovation efforts and infill construction.

Alexander City - Downtown Dreaming

163 Alabama Street used to be a storage space for a gym that moved out 8 years ago. Now, Downtown Dreaming is a top-notch luxury hotel and event space right in the heart of downtown Alexander City. This property features four bedrooms, five bathrooms, and high-end amenities, making it the perfect setting for memorable short-term rentals and events.

Athens - Old Black Bear Brewing Company

Old Black Bear Brewing Company decided to expand its brewing operation and became the first brewery in Athens. They purchased an abandoned, dilapidated warehouse off the downtown square and hired a local Architecture firm, AMBL Studios, to solidify their dreams for the space. The project budget was \$1.5 million and has added 52 new jobs to the downtown workforce.



Fort Payne - The Reed House

Two loft apartments were developed above a retail shop with a gym/workout room between the two and a large shared balcony. They are rented for short-term leasing. It has been two years in the making as the retail area was developed first, and then the apartments were finished this year. Both apartments have two bedrooms and two baths with a separate office and a living area with a kitchen. They are both magazine-worthy. Elegant and beautiful.

Jasper - Downtown Foods Reimagined

In 2023, Jasper Consulting, LLC acquired the former Downtown Foods Grocery Store, which had stood vacant and needed extensive renovations for two decades. Located on 19th Street West, the building has since undergone a complete transformation and now serves as the home of the Alabama Back Institute. This orthopedic surgery clinic offers the latest advancements in neck and spine care. The newly renovated building attracts individuals seeking specialized care to Jasper from near and far, standing as a testament to the excellence and resilience of the community.

Monroeville - Repurposing Former Jail

The Old Jail, initially built in the 1860s, has served the community in various ways and has undergone many transformations to conceal its original purpose. JWJ Investment Properties took a dilapidated eyesore and repurposed it into one retail space and four living units. Among these, three are ground-floor units that are ADA-accessible, marking a first for downtown Monroeville. The Old Jail Inn is set to open in this building this summer, showcasing the beautiful transformation achieved through a well-thought-out renovation. The remarkable team has done an outstanding job with this project!

EXCELLENCE IN PLANNING AND PUBLIC SPACE

This award recognizes outstanding planning projects and quality, completed design improvement projects such as streetscape, public spaces, etc.

Anniston - City Market

In October 2020, Jackson Hodges and the City of Anniston were approached by local attorney George Monk, a former city manager, regarding a property owned by John D. Lee, Jr. Lee expressed his wish for the Auto Parts Incorporated building to be used for public purposes. As a result, the city acquired the property through a donation. Subsequently, plans were developed to establish a permanent home for the downtown farmer's market. The project expanded to include the Main Street office, and there was a vision for an entrepreneurial incubator and a pop-up shop. Finally, in 2023, the city celebrated the opening of the City Market.

Decatur - Sonny Side Alley



The Sonny Side project transformed an abandoned alley into a vibrant park space that will be used for street performances and gatherings. The alley is located beneath the art college dorm in the heart of downtown Decatur. It features a massive multi-building mural, a slide, landscaping, creative lighting, alley cat art, beautiful hardscape, bench seating, and a performance area.

Foley - Wilbourne Antique Rose Trail

The Wilbourne Antique Rose Trail opened in 2007. It is a public walking trail that winds through the heart of downtown Foley, following the path of the old railroad line. The north section measures a mile and a half and is full of antique roses, native plants, flowers, and grasses. The southern section is made up of two blocks. This year, the final block of the trail was completed, connecting the two sections. The city turned an underutilized parking area into this beautiful connector. The downtown businesses along the trail have seen increased foot traffic.

Gadsden - Up From the Depths Sculpture

Kay Moore, the director of the Downtown Gadsden Inc., was inspired by a kinetic wind sculpture farm in Colorado. She reached out to Mario Gallardo of the Walnut Gallery and Ray Wetzel of the Gadsden Museum of Art for assistance in bringing a similar piece to downtown Gadsden. They issued a call for proposals and selected Harry McDaniel of Asheville, NC. His proposal featured four fish shapes that would move independently as the wind blew. He chose fish as the subject because the project was located near the Memorial Bridge and overlooking the Coosa River. The completed sculpture was named "Up From the Depths."

Montevallo - Shining Star Memorial Sculpture

Montevallo Main Street commissioned a painted sun sculpture to be installed downtown in Bicentennial Park in memory of the beloved local artist Robin Nance Metz. The sculpture, named "Shining Star," was painted by her step-daughter, Maya Metz Logue, onto a metal sun sculpture which was first created in 2007 by a public art class taught by Robin's husband, Ted Metz. In addition to promoting the arts, Main Street's goal was to memorialize a beloved community member who continued to create art and bring smiles to people even while bravely fighting cancer.

EXCELLENCE IN HISTORIC REHABILITATION

This award recognizes outstanding historic rehabilitation projects that continue the economic use of the building. The project must be in the district and should include exterior rehabilitation



work but could be both interior and exterior work. Must meet Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation.

Anniston - Sinclair Social

The project's main goal was to transform the old 101 Texaco gas station into a food truck park and a family-friendly bar. Five local entrepreneurs and friends purchased the property over 2 years ago and spent nearly 18 months completing the project. It is already a much-loved destination in the district.

Decatur - 609 Social Market & Provisions

The building at 609 Bank Street used to be Decatur Engravers for many years. It was filled with boxes and in need of serious attention. Almost every part of the building needed to be replaced or repaired. The new owner bought the building and completely renovated it to open a new restaurant/bar, seafood market, and grocery concept.

Gadsden - Edge Real Estate Group, LLC

In February 2023, Kevin Edge purchased the old Texaco service station, which was built in 1920. It had been used as an auto repair shop until the 1970s, and then for many years until closing two years ago. After completing renovations in December 2023, the building now houses Edge Real Estate and a small event space for gatherings and small parties. The exterior of the building has been refurbished, keeping the original look as much as possible by replacing the roll-up doors with full-length windows. The old Texaco star above the entry reflects the building's original design.