



Community Updates February 2024

Athens Main Street

Athens Main Street is excited to announce **THREE MORE** new independent, upscale restaurants have opened in downtown Athens in November & December. Ro's Grille relocated from outside the district to a newly renovated, larger beautiful space. They added a full bar and new menu. Church Street Restaurant Family from Huntsville

opened their ninth restaurant, this one in Athens. Li'l Maz-zara's Italian opened in a lovely renovated space reminiscent of cozy NYC Italian restaurants. The Southern Table opened next to Merchants' Alley. Chef Yokely offers a taste of something down home, but with a gourmet twist!

We held our very popular Sippin Cider Event. We had a record number of participating

businesses this year. Patrons came downtown to shop, eat, and vote for their favorite Cider.

We partnered with the Athens-Limestone Chamber of Commerce to put on the Christmas Parade and hold the Christmas Open House weekend event. Pictured County Commissioners, Tere Richardson, Pammie Jimmar, Chamber President as the Grinch!



Main Street Atmore

Main Street Atmore finally received approval for the Arts and Entertainment District!

In a collaboration with The City of Atmore and Atmore Area Chamber of Commerce, MSA will host a two-hour morning show called Studio10 that will air on May 3, 2024, on FOX10 from 9am-11am.

They are working with the city to purchase a building that will be used for public restrooms in the district.

They are planning a Father's Day Bourbon Tasting and Dettling has agreed to be apart of the Studio 10 show to promote the tasting.



Birmingham - Historic 4th Avenue Business District

Under the impactful branding initiatives of 4th Avenue Forward, the Historic 4th Avenue Business District orchestrated a series of noteworthy events during the quarter from November through January. A standout occasion within this timeline was the 8th Annual MLK Day 5K Drum Run, held on January 13th. This event was not merely a celebration of physical fitness but also a testament to community engagement, paying sincere homage to the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr. The integration of a drumline infused a unique and vibrant element, crafting a lasting and memorable experience for more than 800 participants and spectators alike.



mately 90 participants actively engaging in a district-wide cleanup. Partnerships formed a crucial aspect of this community-driven endeavor, with contributors including UAB students, the Alabama Power Foundation, members of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Inc., and some of our leading youth, the Omega's LampLighters. Their collective efforts made a significant impact, fostering a sense of shared responsibility and community pride.

These events not only showcase the success of 4th Avenue Forward's branding strategy in drawing community participation but also underscore the district's commitment to cultural celebration, physical well-being, and community service. They stand as vivid examples of how strategic branding can assist in transforming a historic district into a vibrant hub of cultural and community activities.



Over the years, this initiative has achieved significant milestones:

- Awarded \$18K in scholarships to graduating high school seniors.
- Donated \$9K in assistance to metro Birmingham school music programs.
- Contributed \$5K to local nonprofit, community, and social organizations registered as team beneficiaries for the MLK Day 5K Drum Run - Birmingham.

Continuing the momentum, the second event scheduled on January 15th was the MLK Service Day. This initiative saw approxi-



Calera Main Street

Calera Main Street received six painted trash cans created by our local student artists to decorate downtown for the holiday.



The inaugural Railroad Rumble, an urban disc golf tournament, was held throughout downtown on December 2 with a sold-out roster including professionals competing for cash prizes. This year's Christmas parade was live streamed for

the first time and hosted by Jackie Batson and Ben Nelson.

January began the bridal marketing season. Calera enjoyed an eight-page spread in Shelby Living Magazine that covered the Married on Main Street wedding giveaway held last year.



Centreville Main Street

Centreville Main Street has been continuing to work with our board, committees, and volunteers to set goals and projects for 2024. We had our first fundraising event New Year's Eve Eve event that was a big success with over 200 in attendance.



We are working with the city, Board of Education, and Bibb medical center towards our first community project, to be announced soon.

Pictures at left - Alabama Senator April Weaver & her husband, Dr. Darrel Weaver at the New Years Eve Fundraiser.



Decatur Downtown Redevelopment Authority

Decatur's Downtown Dash promotion ran from Veterans Day until New Years Day encouraging people to shop/dine downtown. Participants could enter their name every time they made a downtown purchase for a chance to win a \$2,000 prize, \$1,000 prize, and \$500 prize! It was so successful, we had to use a display bathtub in one of our downtown boutiques to hold all of the entries for the drawing!

Multiple downtown merchants reported record breaking sales this December.

The new 80 room Fairfield by Marriott hotel opened in January in the heart of downtown. The hotel is already full with corporate travelers and sold out for Mardi Gras!



Main Street Demopolis

Main Street Demopolis entered our first major float in the Christmas on the River day parade. We also hosted an open house for our members during the festivities. The venue was a building that has recently been renovated and is for lease. The open house drew lots of attention to the space and the owner is now in negotiations with potential renters.



We welcomed three new board members and Kingdom Grounds Coffee Shoppe in January.

Construction is underway on small rental spaces and a full building, which will house an interior design business and upstairs apartments.

Elba Main Street

Elba Main Street hosted a President's Day Downtown Birthday Salebration. Stores will host parties for the presidents, decorate with streamers and balloons and give out cake, special sales, etc.

Scheduled for March 1st will be Eggs and Issues Breakfast held at the Fellowship Hall of First Baptist Church

Their April Walking Tours will be held each Saturday Morning in April beginning at 10 a.m. This is a historic tour of downtown.



Main Street Enterprise

Main Street Enterprise hosted our first ever Volunteer Awards Ceremony during our Board meeting in January. Awardees received locally made custom awards named for the Committees (ex: Organization Award, Design Award, etc.).

They hosted our first ever Mardi Gras on Main fundraiser and raised over \$18K for MSE Projects.

The Young Main Street Committee hosted their first Social Media Workshop for our district businesses.



Main Street Eufaula

Eufaula is preparing for the upcoming Pilgrimage and the Pilgrimage Art Walk will be held in front of the stores in downtown Eufaula April 5-6th.

In addition to these preparations they are in the middle of 2 Broad Street Alleyway projects as seen on facebook. Lots of excitement and feedback in community meetings.

March 1st is the day they start stabilizing the Bluff City Inn from the inside. Lots of exciting infrastructure type things happening!

Foley Main Street

Four more (door) murals were completed in Downtown Foley's Cat Alley in November. We also purchased an ad in the Alabama Tourism Guide in partnership with OWA, City of Foley and Graham Creek for Foley to have a full page presence in the guide.

We rolled out our Downtown Foley Community Gift Cards in Oct. with 22 businesses. \$3,425.00 cards have been purchased to date. The Downtown Foley Turkey Hunt had 486 participants with 5,600 entries.

Our Christmas Open House Facebook Ad received 9,800 views. The Window Decorating contest Facebook views totaled 12,152. The competition was fierce. Our social media hit record numbers: Facebook followers went over 9,000 and Instagram followers went over 2,000. Board members and volunteers helped out with the announcement of the 2023 Turkey Hunt winners at local Scuttlebutt Pub.



Fort Payne Main Street



Fort Payne Main Street hosted a Synthetic Ice Rink at the Rotary Pavilion during the month of December.

The Ice Rink was not only a successful fundraiser but a lot of fun.

We had many tourists as well as locals enjoy the rink. They purchased this rink two years ago as an investment. The community, especially children, look forward to it each year.



Downtown Gadsden Inc.

On November 3 & 4, Downtown Gadsden kicked off the holiday season with Christmas Open House. The weekend proved to be very successful with lots of traffic from a 60 mile radius. The shops stayed open with later hours to accommodate the shoppers and restaurants were very busy as well.

Then on November 24th, Downtown Gadsden celebrated the day after Thanksgiving as PLAID FRIDAY, not Black Friday. The merchants dress in their plaid and encourage shoppers to wear plaid as well. Even Santa sports a plaid scarf to join in the fun. Plaid Friday celebrates the creativity and diversity of local independent businesses!

On December 9th they celebrated the largest Snacks with Santa ever! The kids were thrilled to be able to talk to Santa and the parents were excited to get photos at no cost (instead of the \$35 charge at the Mall!). Then the Christmas parade that night!

January – Rest and recoup! Let's get ready for 2024!



Heflin Main Street

On Nov 4th, Heflin Main Street partners with the Cleburne County Chamber, Friends of the Talladega National Forest and Pinhoti Outfitters to provide an aid station for the Pinhoti 100. The aid station is located at the Pinhoti Spur Trailhead that connects to Heflin Main Street.

Heflin Main Street hosted a Thanksgiving Breakfast. There were 60 attendees that consisted of HMS business owners, Cleburne County School Board members, elected officials, City of Heflin employees and Cleburne County Chamber members. It is the perfect time for HMS to present work plans and recruit committee volunteers.

On November 24th HMS hosted the Heflin Tree Lighting and Cookie Crawl. Due to the weather, this event was moved to Black Friday Night. This was a great decision and well received by everyone. It will

be our new date in the future!



The Heflin Christmas Parade of Lights was held on Dec 11th.

New Business Openings in the District were - The Blushing Peony - Nail Salon & Asimpa - Pipeline central office.

Projects: Courthouse Row - working on drawings and grant opportunities, HMS Mural should begin in a few weeks. \$12,500 = \$5000 RCD + Alabama Power \$2500 + Building owner \$5000. Youth Main Street Program - organization in progress.

Jasper Main Street

Jasper Main Street hosted their 2nd Annual Hispanic Heritage Festival - Dia de los Muertos (Day of the Dead) on November 3rd featuring a free movie Coco in the pocket park. This event is a successful partnership with Jasper High School Spanish Club.



Also, in November JMS hosted over 150 supporters & friends at their annual Celebrate Jasper Membership event in one of the district's historic churches that recently sold. A loft project is in the works for this over 100-year-old building. Renderings of the JMS new office space were also presented at this event.

December was busy with the new Candy Cane Trail Retail Promotion. Participants could enter their name every time they made a downtown purchase into a drawing for a chance to win a \$500 Downtown Dollars Gift Card. Over 1200 entries were processed. This new gift card program was launched in December with a focus exclusively on retail shops in the district (26 shops on-board to date). In the first month alone, over \$4000 in cards were purchased.

January welcomed a new business to Downtown - Par64, an indoor golf simulator & sports bar.



LaFayette Main Street

December LaFayette Main Street paid tribute to the lives and legacies of LaFayette residents who significantly influenced the town. The Portraits of Honor Ceremony was a beautiful time of reflection and celebration.

Their inaugural Cookie Crawl event was a success. Multiple businesses participated.

In January LMS announced a partnership with the Auburn University Urban Design Studio. They have chosen to complete an exciting project in downtown LaFayette. This program is a teaching and outreach program focusing on community development and community planning.

Opportunity Alabama chose LaFayette as a location for their Community Accelerator Program. Our LaFayette Main Street Youth Leadership program kicked off in January as well.



Main Street Marion

In November 2023, the week after Thanksgiving, Main Street Marion board members and volunteers decorated the historic downtown square for Christmas. In December



they hosted classical pianist Miki Sawada in the Marion Art Center



for a community concert. In January, MSM hosted in partnership with Blue Phoenix Consulting, Perry County, Commissioner Cedric Hudson, C.H.O.I.C.E. and Blackbelt Women Rising presented the Rural Energy for America Program Renewable Energy & Energy Efficiency. The program provides

guaranteed loan financing and grant funding to agricultural producers and rural small businesses for renewable energy systems or to make energy efficiency improvements.

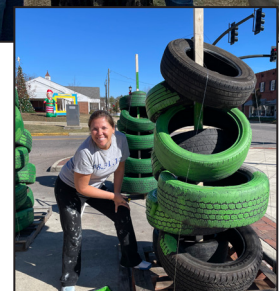
Montevallo Main Street

Montevallo Main Street held its first Dia de los Muertos (Day of the Dead) festival on November 2, bringing nearly 1,000 visitors to the District.

They also celebrated 4 graduates in their fall 2023 CO.STARTERS cohort. Applications are now open for new and aspiring entrepreneurs to join their August 2024 cohort.

Beautification efforts at a closed downtown gas station have included creating Christmas trees out of tires, and have continued with them reconfigured into tulips for the spring while the building awaits demolition.

Indigo Café & Bar, a new restaurant, opened in the District in December.



Opelika Main Street

Opelika Main Street added 4 new board members.

They have turned the front space of their offices into now a full event space for rent and added new plants to planters in the district.

They hosted their annual Membership Bash and a Community Volunteer Reception.

OMS gave away 2 small minority business grants for \$5000 each.



Historic Main Street Oxford

Historic Main Street Oxford celebrated 10-year anniversary of Hubbard's Off Main.

They Coordinated annual Christmas on Main event.

They welcomed two new eatery establishments- Le Coin des Artistes and The Bank. Side note- downtown Oxford hasn't had more three eating/ drinking establishments since the 1950s/1960s.



They coordinated a business development workshop focused on Fire Safety & Emergency Planning.

They Published 2023 year-end report: welcome five new businesses, Public investment- \$17,050, Private investment- \$194,982, and 596.5 volunteer hours. Planning for busy spring and summer season.



Main Street Scottsboro

Main Street Scottsboro had 4 new businesses move into the district (art studio, clothing retail, and candy/dessert store). They started a new "ring the register" type event for downtown businesses. It is a once a month extended shopping hours opportunity from 5PM-8PM. It includes a door prize and specific downtown coupons to draw customers back in within 2 weeks.

This event attracted new faces and helped increase traffic as well as sales for businesses in the downtown area!



South Huntsville Main Business Assoc.



The South Huntsville Main Business Association took part in organizing two highly attended, free community events: our annual Bluegrass & BBQ Festival and Christmas on the River at Ditto Landing. Thousands of folks joined us for live music, fireworks, craft shows and family fun during these events.

Our primary goal this year was to showcase the vibrant spirit of South Huntsville and extend a warm invitation to residents from all corners of Huntsville and surrounding

towns to experience the charm and diversity of our district.

Talladega Main Street

Talladega Main Street welcomed Legacy First Protection Insurance to the district and J W International LLC was opened in the Pop-Up Space.

TMS was busy with the United Way - Heavenly Beds at Talladega Speedway, the Veteran's Day Hall of Heroes Ceremony held at the Ritz Theatre, the Square Lighting Dedication, and Christmas Trees in the park. And The TMS Lighting Project of the Big Springs Fountain was completed in November.

"The Chromatic" Mural Dedication - Muralists Dan Seymour and Scott Hayes Revealed their first commissioned TMS canvas mural in the H&H Buildings. And the Promotions Committee hosted a TMS Mural Walk.



The Promotions Committee is working with LMO & Co Medallions to create Historic Location Art Pieces.

December activities included The Taste - Supper Club, The Polar Express Event with Ritz Theatre with AIDB Cookies, Christmas on the Square event with Vendors & Food Trucks, Christmas Paint Party on the Square, with Donna Renee,

and the TMS Christmas Break @ CACC.

TMS partnered with City & AIDB to host Santa's Workshop Event including a Christmas Cookies Drop-off with Chef Bree.

TMS hosted a send-off for the Talladega College Band as they parted for a New Years Day Parade in London, England.



Main Street Wetumpka



Main Street Wetumpka hosted their final Community Market event and other promotional events such as Pink Friday and Small Business Saturday in November 2023

They Co-hosted A Downtown Dickens Christmas with the Chamber of Commerce in December 2023

In January, New Business Opened in the district - Hello Good Buy.

