



YEAR IN REVIEW 2022

Athens Main Street

During 2022, Athens Main Street worked through its vast volunteer base, committees, and dedicated board of directors, to continue to strive to make downtown Athens a vital, exciting, and beautiful place to live and work. Athens Main Street utilizes the 4-Point Approach to downtown development and revitalization. These points consist of Economic Vitality, Design, Promotion and Organization.

Promotion (Events & Brand Awareness)

Fridays After Five - Last Fridays in April, May, June, & July. Largest attendance since inception, over 3,000 patrons for each event, 10-12 food trucks, and stores open late for shopping. Free to the public.

Merchants Alley Happy Hour Music Series NEW - Each Friday night April through July and September through November. Local musicians performed from 5-6:30 p.m. Free to the public.

Athens Farmers Market - Each Saturday and Tuesday May through September. Local produce, prepared foods, and artisan items. Alabama Certified Farmers Market.

Sippin' Cider - Second Saturday in December. Patrons sample homemade ciders, vote on their favorite, and shop for holidays. Single best sales day for most merchants.

Chocolate Walk - First Saturday in February. Patrons purchase tickets, receive chocolate treats from merchants, and shop for Valentines Day gifts. Tickets sold out to this popular event within five minutes of going on sale.

Brand Ambassadors NEW - The ambassadors consist of a diverse group of high school students, parents, young professionals, and business owners. Through their efforts, they will showcase merchants, restaurants, events, and suggest those unique experiences that only downtown insiders know to expand Athens Main Street's social media.

Partnerships - Through partnerships with the Athens-Limestone County Chamber of Commerce and LCEDA, Athens Main Street worked to bring the community Christmas Open House on the weekend before Thanksgiving and the Athens-Limestone County Christmas Parade on the first Thursday in December.

Design (Placemaking & Historic Preservation)

Merchants Alley Construction - Athens Main Street finalized construction on Merchants Alley. Long an eyesore in the heart of our downtown, the Jefferson Street alleyway was renovated into an inviting and usable space with outdoor dining, inclusive murals, and green spaces in which to gather and enjoy the city. Athens Main Street received several awards for the project, including being named Project of the Year by both the regional and state RC&D councils; the Mountains, Rivers & Valleys RC&D council and the Alabama RC&D council.

Athens Farmers Market at Doug Gates Park NEW - Athens Main Street embarked on a collaborative project to revitalize the farmers market, a historic site central to our downtown in a diverse socioeconomic community and key to supporting local producers, prepared food vendors, and artisans. This project will increase the capacity of the market by adding additional vendor stalls and improve the site's overall attractiveness. Local art will be used to increase the vibrancy of the site, landscaping and shade trees will be added, and we will create multi-use areas that will provide for more varied usages such as educational areas for youth and community quality of life events where people can gather, relax, socialize, enjoy music, and support their community.

Signage & Facade Grants - Athens Main Street assisted local merchants and building owners with signage and façade improvements to enhance the overall appeal of our downtown, through privately raised funds.

Parking Wayfinding Signage - Partnered with the City of Athens to design and locate new signage for parking.



NEW BUSINESSES

4



PUBLIC INVESTMENT

\$77,000

2022



PRIVATE INVESTMENT

\$3,360,523



VOLUNTEER HOURS

1,131



Economic Vitality

Real Estate Redevelopment Workshop - Main Street Alabama conducted a real estate redevelopment workshop in partnership with Athens Main Street. Consultants looked at various properties in the district, getting community input, showing the current market trends for Athens, and made recommendations on the best use for the space as well as providing a pro forma for those properties interested in selling their property.

Business Recruitment- Athens Main Street partnered with Limestone County Economic Development Association and the Athens-Limestone County Chamber of Commerce to identify top area projects that would attract investors to Limestone County. Through our joint efforts, Old Black Bear Brewing has begun renovation on a location in downtown. Revive Café and Limestone Legends opened this year, as well as several other food establishments that are currently waiting to announce opening dates in 2023. That's SO Art, a new art studio opened in June. Boutique Bliss clothing boutique opened a second location on the square in July. Numerous professional services firms have also opened downtown.

Testimonials

"To my recollection, there has NEVER been an initiative that has done more to promote Athens than Athens Main Street. Because of their work, we have more people visiting Athens and specifically the Square than ever before. Those people are boosting our local businesses and economy. They have toiled diligently to create an engaging and welcoming atmosphere and have really drilled deep to tap into what the public at large wants to see and what they are going to potentially enjoy and want to attend. Tere Richardson and her dedicated crew work tirelessly to determine what's going to get people up here. They work social media to create buzz and they DELIVER. Their ROI is astronomical. Awesome job Athens Main Street!" Dana Henry, Athens City Councilmember.

"Fridays After Five has grown our business significantly. We have had to hire additional people just to accommodate our customers on Friday nights due to the FAF events and the Merchants Alley Happy Hour events. Surprisingly, Sippin' Cider has become as important as Christmas Open House. They both have become two of our bigger days of the year. Last, but not least, the Chocolate Walk is another huge event for us. Its benefits are seen well after the event has taken place. The event helps establish and grow UG White's Chocolate Counter clientele and we have several customers that discovered us through this exceptional event." Shannon Bryant, Manager U.G. White

"Alehouse hit the one year mark this past week. Our story began with such tremendous help through Athens Main Street. Our custom outdoor patio seating area was the first item to help expand our capacity. Countless blue cups have ensured we were able to serve and send customers beyond our doors to explore the rest of the square. Fridays After 5 has exceeded expectations, and next year will draw even more attention. A generous portion of our store front signage was sponsored while brand recognition significantly increased. We were proud to be a part of the annual event such as the Chocolate Walk and Sippin' Cider. We continue to see new customers as a result of increased foot traffic. Merchants Alley entertainment has been great for Alehouse as well. We see all that traffic before and after those events keeping business booming on the square. Athens Main Street has been among Alehouse's strongest allies since our inception. We look forward to this fall, and a strong closing to 2022. Special thanks to Tere and everyone at AMS!" Ken & Lori Hill, Owners Athens Alehouse & Cellar

"We have seen unprecedented numbers of vendors and patrons this year. Our last Saturday market of the season was the busiest we've ever seen." Katherine Greene, Manager, Athens Farmers Market

The mission of Athens Main Street is to enhance downtown vibrancy, preserve its historic charm, empower its community of business owners, and foster a center of activity for the community.

www.athensmainstreet.org

