



## **AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE WINNERS AND DESCRIPTIONS**

Award categories are based on the nationally recognized Main Street four-point approach of Design, Organization, Promotion, and Economic Vitality. The awards are broken into different sub-categories within the four points.

**Main Street Alabama Leadership Award** – to recognize an individual or organization who has made an outstanding leadership contribution to a local Main Street organization or to Main Street Alabama

### **Leadership Award: Honoring Our Heroes – Gadsden**

Downtown Gadsden, Inc. partnered with The Chamber, Rep. Gil Isbell, along with Greater Gadsden Area Tourism to host a "HONORING OUR HEROES" event to recognize the health care workers and first responders who had worked so hard during the pandemic.

Held May 20, 2021, from 4:00 - 8:00pm Broad Street was closed, and registration tables were set up to register first responders (healthcare workers, police, fire, ambulance, etc.). All that registered were given a \$10 Downtown Gadsden gift certificate. Downtown Gadsden, Inc. had received two one-week vacations in Cabo San Lucas, Mexico by one of their supporters. In the previous 3 years, this gift had been used to raise funds for downtown projects. This year, instead of using the donation to raise funds, the Board decided to give the vacations to two deserving winners. The lucky winners were drawn at the conclusion of the event.

Almost \$6,000 in gift certificates were distributed to those in attendance and to others who were not able to attend due to their work schedules. This gave the Heroes a few dollars to spend with local merchants and provided an economic boost to the merchants. DGI, along with their partners, were proud to honor those who have worked so hard during this unprecedented time.

### **MAIN STREET HERO AWARD**

Award given in recognition of individuals, businesses and organizations that have made an outstanding contribution to their local Main Street program.

### **Alexander City – David Booth**

David serves on the Main Street Executive Committee as Treasurer, he started volunteering with Main Street Alex City several years ago through the Farmers Market and has served on the board the last five years. He is a small business owner, involved in the Lions Club organization as well as his church.

As Treasurer, David manages the budget, bank accounts and pays invoices, but he does so much more than that! David is the first one that Stacey – local Main Street director, calls when she needs help. He is the voice of calm on many days, he volunteers at the Farmers market each Saturday, Bingo, Downtown Christmas and more. David's impact has been tremendous for Main Street, their board, downtown and

community as a whole. David is always willing to help with a smile on his face and is always promoting Main Street and the downtown area.

### **Athens – Brad Mallette**

Brad is a hardworking architect, talented musician, and passionate community volunteer. He comes to Athens via Los Angeles, where he gained a wealth of experience in commercial historic renovation and how to form a rock band – interesting combination! He is a member of the Athens Main Street Board and Design Committee. He serves on the City of Athens Planning Commission as well as joint project with Athens Main Street and the Limestone County Commission. Not only is Brad a volunteer for Athens Main Street, but he is also a property owner in the district. He and his wife/business partner recently purchased a building downtown that they will renovate for their offices.

Brad brings a fresh perspective to Board Meetings where he is able to provide real insights into other cities' approaches to codes, ordinances, and historic renovations. His knowledge of structure and aesthetics makes him invaluable as a Design Committee member. He has also attracted quite a crowd with his recent musical performance at a local restaurant, prompting other restaurants to request him! His In-Kind contribution of the Merchants Alley consulting, renderings, and elevations would easily top \$10,000. Additionally, he contributed \$2,000 to sponsor the Brittany Howard Live Art Event.

### **Atmore – The Pride of Atmore**

The Pride of Atmore Organization/Strand Theatre Arts Center is a 501 (C)(3) non-profit organization whose main mission is to preserve and protect the historical legacy of Atmore. When Atmore became a Designated City in June 2021, the majority of the Board of the Pride of Atmore served on the application committee for the formation of Main Street Atmore.

The Pride of Atmore is working on the nearly century old Strand Theatre and the 121-year-old former Hardware Store which will serve as the primary focal point of a multi-faceted Arts and Cultural Center that will enhance the quality of life and tourism in Atmore and the surrounding communities and be the anchor to the redeveloped downtown corridor. Planned activities include concerts, lectures, and summer film programs for students.

Main Street Atmore appreciates their dedication to the downtown preservation project and looks forward to partnering with the Pride of Atmore to support these important projects that make their community a better place to work and live.

### **Calera – Jami Noe**

Jami Noe is a local State Farm agent in Calera and one of Main Street's recurring sponsors. As soon as Jami found out about the Calera Main Street program, she immediately asked how she could help. Jami helps the promotion committee brainstorm events and local engagement opportunities. She has even recommended other businesses to sponsor us. It's because of Jami that we decided to allow sponsors to exhibit at our festivals for another community engagement opportunity. This has been lucrative to our fundraising.

Jami Noe State Farm is a recurring sponsor for Calera Main Street. (\$500 both years) She is a leader in our local Kiwanis Club as well and helps us promote our activities through her network. During Main

Street events, Jami and her team have personally painted countless little faces and handed out free food and drink to the community. Jami helped us recruit community groups to volunteer to paint all our ugly vacant windows downtown to dress us up for the holidays. Her art was so clever they actually won the window decorating contest by an overwhelming amount of votes on Facebook.

### **Decatur – Senator Arthur Orr**

Arthur Orr is Decatur's state senate representative and as such has focused a great deal of effort regarding the redevelopment of Downtown Decatur. He has been a staunch supporter of the Main Street program statewide also.

Senator Orr has been fully instrumental in facilitating funding for many of the Economic development projects in downtown Decatur. He helped facilitate the creation of the Alabama Center for the Arts, a \$23 million-dollar fine arts school located in downtown. He was responsible for working with ALDOT in securing over \$2.25 million dollars for the extensive streetscape projects in the city center. He worked closely with the development of the \$32 million dollar Cook Museum of Natural Science.

His work is truly instrumental in changing the entire face of downtown Decatur in working the Decatur Downtown Redevelopment Authority, the city, county, and Chamber to witness close to \$100 million dollars in economic impact over the last 10 years. He is directly involved in the exciting new project to develop Decatur's downtown waterfront. The high visibility of the projects mentioned above has stimulated and encouraged out of state developers to invest in Downtown Decatur in an overwhelming economic impact. Senator Arthur Orr has certainly been in the forefront of this successful economic recruitment effort.

### **Elba – Aaron Pope skip – not attending**

Aaron Pope is the business owner of Pope Tents and Events. He owns a building on the Square in downtown Elba. Aaron is a person Elba Main Street can always depend upon. He is a leader and does not wait on others, he takes a project and makes it happen. He is a Main Street volunteer and a member of our Farmers Market Committee.

The outcome of Aaron's help is always successful, and he does this because his heart is in serving Elba. The Farmers Market could not have happened without Aaron, and I am sure that assisting J.J.'s Barbecue helped them capture "The Best Pulled Pork in Alabama."

### **Enterprise – Wendy Grimes**

Wendy Grimes, Enterprise native, currently serves on the Main Street Enterprise Board of Directors as the fearless leader of the Promotion Committee. She is also the successful business owner of Hello Beautiful Boutique in Downtown, celebrating their first anniversary on February 11, 2021. Wendy's leadership and positive attitude have opened the door for our events to be taken to the next level. We can successfully fundraise, elevate marketing initiatives, and attract more vendors and patrons to our events and festivals due to her hard work and motivation.

In the past year, Wendy has helped plan and execute over 20 promotional events and festivals, such as Whoville, Spring Festival at the Monument and several others. She has logged countless volunteer hours and is always a team player. Wendy's leadership skills and servant heart have helped the Main Street Program in more ways than we could name. Not only is Wendy the leader of the promotion committee,

but she has also helped with other projects and initiatives for design, economic vitality, and organization committees.

### **Eufaula – Tim Brannon**

Tim Brannon is the City of Eufaula Public Works Director. He has been a Main Street Eufaula board member for the past 10 years with his leadership on the Design Committee

Mr. Brannon has become the Department Head for the City that goes above and beyond the call of duty when it comes to Main Street Eufaula. He has been involved with, made it happen, actually showed up and enjoyed the following but not limited to: Hometown Hero Banners, Manny the Bass, Spur of the Moment Downtown Cleanups, Splash Pad, Christmas deco, Independence Day Celebration, Veteran's Day Parade, tree lighting and much more. Always willing to help recruit sponsors, supply what we need for street closures and events.

The success of our events and promotions are a direct result of the efforts our Public Works Director puts forth in making sure it all happens. After many "ride arounds" with Tim, next up will be downtown signage. They have completed the majority of planning but are waiting on some final colors. Tim wants to make sure everything that is needed is taken into consideration with this highly visible project. A quality in someone that doesn't come around often.

### **Florence**

Connie Wallace served as the President of Downtown Florence Alliance from October 2019-April 2021. She took pride in her role and made sure to be available for meetings, events, and even random calls for help. Connie's retirement happened in sync with her duties as President of DFA in April 2021. Even throughout the busyness of wrapping up her duties as Assistant Superintendent of Florence City Schools, Connie remained enthusiastic and exhibited fantastic leadership skills that are an asset to DFA. She is passionate about the organization, and she even gave \$500 to our Christmas Light Fundraiser personally! Her contributions to the organization are far more than financial and physical, as she is a developer and cheerleader of the organization. Connie's professional background as CFO of Florence City Schools gave her a great perspective when it comes to finances and budgeting, which contributed to our financial success in building back our reserves that had previously been depleted.

She built a solid foundation between DFA and Florence City Schools. She provided meeting space with ample room for social distancing. Even after her retirement, her replacement has continued to attend meetings and be engaged with the organization because of the foundation that Connie built.

### **Foley – Riviera Utilities**

Riviera Utilities is the main utility company for our downtown Foley. General Manager Tom DeBell, Former employee Sherry Sullivan served on Foley Main Street's board. Riviera Utilities Board member Barbara Ingram serves currently and has served on Foley Main Street's Board since the beginning

Riviera Utilities has given unwavering support to our Foley Main Street Program since our inception with money, time, and support for many projects. To date, they have financially supported us with \$15,000. They have given us support with manpower for our Lucky to Love Foley event in March of 2020 when volunteers were in short supply due to the scare of COVID. They helped us set up and take down our booth and displays. Riviera supported our "support local restaurants campaign" and stepped up and

challenged other businesses to support downtown restaurants and do group order lunches for their employees. They did weekly orders for over three months, averaging 10 lunches or more. Most importantly during and after Hurricane Sally, they worked around the clock to get our businesses open for business. They were instrumental in getting downtown Foley quickly back online with electricity. This was especially critical with the double whammy of COVID and Hurricane Sally.

### **Fort Payne – Mary Reed**

Mary Reed owns and operates Heritage Wiring in Fort Payne Alabama and a Fort Payne Main Street board member as well as chair of the Design Committee. Mary is very talented. Under her leadership the Design committee has been responsible for developing "The Small Town That Shines" Chandelier Tree, purchasing chandeliers that she donated and collected donated chandeliers for the Chandelier tree. She personally supervised the installation of all the chandeliers in the tree. She also designed The Ida Goza project as part of Our Common Thread series and developed the Ida Goza recognition window wrap and was in charge of getting the Fort Payne Main Street Mural done on the side of a business downtown. She also developed the design and color of our new Fort Payne Main Street Office. She dedicates time and money to all our design projects. Our downtown is looking amazing thanks in part to Mary's talent and dedication.

### **Gadsden – John G. “Jack” Page, III (Posthumously)**

Jack Page was instrumental in the formation of the Downtown Gadsden’s Main Street Program in the 1990s. He served on the DGI Board in all capacities. He loved his hometown and worked diligently to bring the business community together to focus on strengthening our historic downtown. His skills were developed from time served as a proud Marine, teacher, firefighter, small business owner, councilman for the City of Gadsden and a State Representative.

Page was always there when you needed him. He was a constant volunteer at First Friday, a supporter of the local business community, and he promoted downtown Gadsden wherever he was. Page wouldn’t settle for less than the best in anything he did, and he expected the same from others. As Chairman of the Governance Committee, the Board depended on him to make sure everything was functioning appropriately and efficiently. Not only did he support Downtown Gadsden, Inc. with his volunteerism, he was a financial supporter as well.

### **Headland – Chief Mark Jones**

Chief Mark Jones is the Chief of Police for the City of Headland and a Main Street volunteer, but he is so much more than that! Mark is always helping people out. He paid for new business cards for a business owner who was starting his own business. He teaches classes for free for Main Street and the Headland Area Chamber of Commerce (educating senior citizens about scams, teaching CPR classes, teaching self-protection classes, etc.) He oversees his off-duty officers in public safety by putting out cones, directing traffic and helping with medical emergencies.

But probably the biggest for Main Street has been his efforts to oversee the car show during Under the Oaks. His connections and expertise with the car show have brought hundreds more visitors to downtown who otherwise might not have come, and he tripled participation and income!

### **Heflin – Darrell & Bonnie Turner**

Darrell & Bonnie turner were owners of a newly renovated office on Heflin Main Street. Bonnie was a dedicated board member on Heflin Main Street. They were always the first to respond to Heflin Main Street fundraisers and made generous contributions to the Heflin Amp and Mural project. They both took great pride in the banners in front of their business that helped support the Heflin Main Street Banner fundraiser.

Bonnie was diagnosed with Cancer not long after she was appointed to the Main Street Board. She stayed in close contact with Heflin Main Street board members by attending via zoom. She returned to in person meetings as soon as she completed her treatments. She inspired so many by her determination to stay involved and engaged.

Sadly, on June 16, 2021, Darrell & Bonnie passed away together in an unfortunate car accident. The community loss two great individuals when they lost these two-giving people. They left a strong legacy on Heflin Main Street that will live on.

### **Jasper – City of Jasper Street Department**

The City of Jasper's Street Department, specifically Jerry Parker and Jeremiah Tidwell, are the city workers who run our bucket truck. They are responsible for placing banners, Christmas decorations, speaker systems, anything that Jasper Main Street has placed on the lampposts. Parker and Jeremiah, as we lovingly call them, are on the city streets at 4:30 AM and don't stop until the job is complete.

Parker and Jeremiah, whether they are aware or not, are essential to our design and promotion committees because of the public exposure of banners, decorations, and music speakers on the lampposts, attention is always drawn to them, thereby, making them a constant source of income and investment.

### **Monroeville – Boyd Robinson**

Boyd joined the MMS board in October of 2016 and is currently president, his 4th office, serving as secretary, treasurer, and vice president previously. He leads the board by example and contributes his time, knowledge, resources, and money. He led the program through a challenging year and made it look easy. He constantly supports the Main Street cause and is quick to send articles and photos of anything which might be helpful. When he takes on a task it is done quickly and thoroughly.

Annually, the vice-president is tasked with chairing the Membership/Sponsorship drive each June. We all know this can be a quite daunting task and COVID made it more daunting than ever. Boyd walked into the MMS office with a very specific plan which included every board member making calls or visits to specific businesses and industries, his handwritten signature on every letter, and a deferred payment option for any member who wished to billed at a later date.

When asked why he serves, Boyd answered " I love my hometown and believe that with hard work in promoting and developing the district along with preserving its history, we can grow our town and improve the way of life for our citizens." Boyd is a natural leader who inspires those around him through action and encouragement!

### **Montevallo – Kirk Lightfoot**

Kirk, a lifelong resident of Montevallo, has always been very active in his church and the community. In addition to serving as Design Committee Chair since 2019, he has served on the Montevallo Main Street Board of Directors since 2018. His thoughtfulness and attention to detail are unmatched. As Chair of the Design Committee, he has also supported other annual initiatives such as our Façade Grant Program, Holiday Window Decorating Contest, city-wide holiday decorations, and others. In addition, he was instrumental during the first two Tinglewood Festivals, coordinating food and beverages.

Kirk has been the tireless champion behind Montevallo's Veteran Banner Program. Kirk spearheaded this initiative in 2019 after being inspired by a similar one launched by Jasper Main Street. This program has been an all-Montevallo effort, utilizing local talent and businesses to see it to fruition. The City of Montevallo's Public Works Department installs the banners for each flag holiday, while Kirk thoughtfully determined the locations of each personalized banner based on a location significant to the individual being honored. To date, 94 (and counting!) personalized banners are displayed downtown, alongside a companion banner series which reads: "Montevallo honors our veterans."

### **Opelika – Mayor Gary Fuller**

Mayor Gary Fuller has been a resident of Opelika for several decades, serving in a variety of different roles both in civic and business capacities. First elected mayor in 2004, Mayor Fuller has embraced Opelika Main Street's goal of enhancing Downtown Opelika. Additionally, Mayor Fuller is also a past board member of Opelika Main Street. Even before his election as Mayor, he helped raise funds to establish Opelika's Courthouse Square in conjunction with Main Street, the City and Opelika Rotary.

Since first being elected in 2004, Mayor Fuller has truly embraced downtown and seen the need for its continued success. During his tenure millions of dollars have been invested by the City of Opelika to improve downtown including: several streetscapes, landscaping, Christmas decorations and ADA improvements. During his time in office, downtown has seen the addition of dozens of new businesses including: 2 breweries, a craft distillery, a vintage pinball arcade, wine bar, a new fire station, multiple restaurants, and a large variety of retail stores. These new developments have translated into hundreds of new jobs and millions of private dollars flowing into downtown. Under Mayor Fuller's leadership, downtown continues to grow and prosper!

### **Oxford – Debbie Nothdurft**

Debbie Nothdurft has actively served on our Main Street Board of Directors since 2014. She is a native of Oxford and retired from the Oxford City Schools after 44 years as a math teacher, assistant principal, principal, and completed her career in the central office of administration - she has helped maintain a healthy relationship and partnership with the Oxford City Schools.

Debbie is an "all hands-on deck" person! She has been instrumental in the organizational aspect of Oxford Main Street and has served as the secretary, vice president, and president of the board. Debbie's father and grandfather both operated and worked at Oxford downtown businesses in the 1960s and 1970s. She has a passion to see downtown Oxford revitalized into something more than it was decades ago.

### **Scottsboro – Payne's Soda Fountain**

Payne's Soda Fountain is one of the oldest restaurants in Alabama. Opening its doors in 1869, Payne's anchors the downtown square and brings many visitors to Scottsboro. Lisa Walton, the owner, is always supportive of any events and efforts to help Main Street; whether that be supplying refreshments for our events or allowing the Main Street Board to meet in her restaurant, Lisa is always helpful and encouraging of the Main Street effort.

Jessica Walton, who helps her mother run Payne's, serves on our Main Street board. Jess devotes many hours to Main Street Scottsboro and is the head of our Economic Vitality Committee. She serves as a liaison between the Main Street Board and the businesses in the downtown. For our Ice Cream Social event, Jess and Lisa are supplying ingredients for the Bananarama eating contest. They also promote any activity or event we are having in the downtown in Payne's. Recently, Jess and Lisa have completely renovated the inside of Payne's, making it more appealing than ever. This supports our work as a Main Street program as they are making Payne's a destination for anyone visiting out of town, and even locals!

Many bloggers and journalists come to Payne's to take photos and publicize them which increases visibility to our district. Payne's has been featured in Southern Living, Alabama Travel, and many other publications.

### **South Huntsville – Council President Jennie Robinson**

Dr. Jennie Robinson, current President of the Huntsville City Council and the second woman to ever serve in this role, is one of the founding members of the South Huntsville Main Business Association. In 2017, as the South Huntsville business community wrestled with major disruptions and setbacks due to construction on the southern portion of Memorial Parkway, she brought together community and business leaders to start informal conversations and meetings which ultimately resulted in the formation of the South Huntsville Main Business Association. Within a short time, the organization applied for a Main Street designation, and Dr. Robinson was an integral and crucial part of that process.

Under her leadership, the new Bailey Cove Library began construction and is anticipated to open in late summer/early fall 2021; the Sandra Moon community complex finished Phase 1 recently; and the highly demanded South Huntsville pickleball courts opened, additionally, Dr. Robinson funded the Haysland Road extension project, which was completed in late 2020.

In summary, Dr. Robinson inspires others with her leadership and creates an inclusive environment where all ideas and people are valued and welcomed. She is a true servant leader who can cast a vision and get it done while doing right by those she leads and serves.

### **Wetumpka – Dennis Fain**

Jenny Stubbs stated, "I've been waiting five years to write this submission for the most amazing volunteer: Dennis Fain!" He was instrumental in the formation and designation of Main Street Wetumpka and became its first president in 2016. Thereafter, at a crucial time in the non-profit's history, Fain stepped up and served as its board president for five years, while also acting as its secretary/treasurer. He continues today as secretary/treasurer and serves on multiple committees. Furthermore, not only has he been impactful as a representative of the organization, he also helped create its most important fundraisers and events, as well as generously donating thousands of dollars throughout the years

His knowledge of both the history of the community and its relation to the mission and Four-Point Approach of Main Street has been pivotal to its success. He's worked with every committee within the organization, sometimes chairing multiple events. His dependable, trustworthy reputation within the community has also helped the organization gain support, both from a volunteer as well as financial standpoint.

He has been a member of the Rotary Club, First United Methodist Church, and numerous other entities for decades. Besides garnering more support for the organization, Fain's wife Lynda also repeatedly and generously volunteered with the organization. We are so grateful for the Fain family and all they have done to support and sustain Main Street Wetumpka since its inception and designation in 2016! Dennis has a servant's heart and is absolutely one of the best gifts the Wetumpka community has ever been given. He is a treasure!

### **EXCELLENCE IN PRESERVATION**

#### **Florence – A Handwritten History**

For many years, Florence Main Street released a calendar highlighting historical properties in and near Downtown Florence. The calendars ranged in themes, and all are represented in the 177 pages of "Downtown Florence: A Handwritten History" coffee table book.

Along with the "Historic Downtown Florence" calendars, this book continues the effort to preserve important parts of Florence's past for future generations. The images and descriptions provide a snapshot of historic downtown Florence business area at the turn of the 21st century, feature homes in the historic downtown area, and focus on historic houses of worship. The proceeds from the calendar sales have added value to Downtown Florence, funding many projects over the years.

Residential Investors are recognized on their individual page and listed on the final page of the book. Businesses sponsored the first run of the book to cover the cost to order the first 275 copies of the book. Proceeds from book sales are currently being reinvested into the Downtown district through projects of the Design Committee

#### **Fort Payne – Our Common Thread; The Ida Goza Story**

"Our Common Thread" is a campaign by Fort Payne Main Street to draw attention to the community's rich heritage and the importance of the Main Street downtown business district. Window wraps featuring honorees are strategically placed throughout the downtown area. The first honoree is Ida Goza, a female entrepreneur, sock manufacturer, real estate owner & community advocate. The wrap with her story was placed on the Quinn building which is owned by Ms. Goza's grandson, Glenn Horton, owner of Southern Properties real estate. The Quinn building houses a mini-sock mill where visitors can watch socks being made.

Ms. Ida Goza's legacy inspires so many in Fort Payne. The history wraps have been well received and call attention to not only the history of the sock mill, women in business but also to the Main Street business district and increased visibility for Fort Payne Main Street. Two additional wraps will be up soon. Locals and visitors alike stop to read about Ms. Goza and the history of socks.

### **Heflin – Tom and Rebecca Park – An Eagle Scout Project of Sam Payne**

This project involved the beautification, restoration, and historical commemoration of Tom and Rebecca Owens Park on Main Street in Heflin. The restoration was coordinated and overseen by 17-year-old Sam Payne for his Eagle Scout Project and was approved by the Heflin Main Street Design Committee. The Park had become overgrown and its historical significance almost unknown amongst residents, Sam's focus was to rectify this. The restoration included new landscaping as well as a new park bench and a commemorative educational plaque identifying the spot upon which the park was founded.

The original J.A. Owens Store, which burned in the late 1980s, was the center of commerce and community upon which Heflin was founded in the latter part of the 19th century and sat across from this park. Sam brought much needed attention to the history of Heflin to a whole new generation of its residents and reminded the mature generation of the importance of involving our youth in the city's survival. Eleven young men ranging in age from 12-17 were involved in the project.

### **EXCELLENCE IN HISTORIC REHABILITATION**

#### **Eufaula – Mott Building**

John Mott purchased this building in late 2019 with hopes to be complete in early 2020. This property was originally the McNab Bank built in 1853. It was there that the Eastern Bank of Alabama was chartered in 1859. The McNabb Bank even had their own currency. It later became several insurance agencies handed through legacy's of various families.

Mr. Mott has done extensive research on the building to ensure the proper details were executed. Focus was given to updating, cleaning up and bringing it back to the original color and grandeur of building. The original, massive walk in safe is still intact. A once lonely hometown business is now a vibrant piece of Eufaula history for all to enjoy and learn about. Mr. Mott is willing to provide tours of the building to whoever stops by. It is now home to New York Life Securities, a wonderful partner for Main Street Eufaula and the fabric of our downtown.

#### **Gadsden – Life Insurance Company of Alabama – Kress & WT Grant Buildings**

Life Insurance Company of Alabama undertook a three-year renovation project for their headquarters located between 3rd and 4th Streets on Broad in downtown Gadsden. The Kress and W.T. Grant buildings were the final phase of the project that took place from June 2020 - May 2021. The company took great care to bring the facades back to the look of the 1940s. The lower facade on the Kress building had been covered in brick and the curved glass was removed. The company worked with Architect Craig Lipscomb to bring every minute detail back to the original look. The Kress header was removed, cleaned, and then replaced. The transom windows of the W. T. Grant building were refurbished and now proudly reflect the name above the entry doors.

The renovation project brought a positive economic impact to the eastern end of the downtown business district. The old aluminum facade had completely covered four buildings. When it was removed, the individual buildings reverted to their original look. The Kress and W.T. Grant buildings completed the final phase of the renovation project. The improvement to the eastern portion of the business district has given the entire block a fresh, new look that everyone appreciates.

### **Heflin – Carillon Oaks Assisted Living**

What began as the county high school originally built in 1936 has opened its restored doors as a senior living community in the heart of downtown Heflin, Alabama. Carillon Oaks Assisted Living is the former Cleburne County High School built in 1936. The Lathan Company bought and renovated the building to be completed and moving in residents Fall of 2020.

Cleburne County High School was closed in 1985 and sold at auction. Luckily for Heflin, a local family purchased the school to prevent its demolition. In late 2017, Mr. Lathan and his partner in the senior care business, Stuart Coleman, began conversations with City of Heflin Economic Developer and then Main Street Director, Tanya Maloney and the local family who owned the property. A historical consultant was brought in to determine if the project would qualify for Federal or Alabama Historic Tax Credits, which it did. Tanya introduced Lathan and Coleman to Alex Flachsbart of Opportunity Alabama early in the process and it was discovered the project would qualify for Opportunity Fund investments and New Market Tax Credits. At this point a decision was made to move forward and ground was broken in September of 2018.

A unique project from the start, the full restoration and conversion of the school is noted as being the first project in Alabama to utilize Opportunity Funds and the first OZ project in the nation to stack New Market Tax Credits along with Federal and State Historic Tax Credits. A project budget of \$12M was reduced to a debt of roughly \$6M by utilizing those tax credits and OZ funds in the capital stack. Without that combination of tax credits and OZ funds, a \$12M investment in rural Alabama for the purposes of a senior care facility would not have been financially feasible.

### **EXCELLENCE IN FUNDRAISING**

#### **Gadsden – The Art of Giving**

When looking for a creative way to raise money for a new project, members of the Organization committee suggested working with a local artist to create a piece to showcase downtown landmarks. It was determined that a series of limited art pieces would be commissioned by a local artist, Donna Clayton, a local artist who is well known for her art around the southeast. The fundraiser is a 3-part series with a numbered set of 50 pieces available for each design.

The first piece was a 3x3 hanging ornament of the Pitman Theatre decorated for Christmas. The second piece was a 3x3 piece featuring the Memorial Bridge. The limited pieces created quite a stir as shoppers hurried to get one before they were sold out. The pieces were wonderful gifts and great souvenirs for those who had moved away. The project supported a local artist while also raising funds for additional projects in historic downtown Gadsden.

#### **Jasper – Further the Flourish**

During a period of the pandemic and no public events, this fundraising effort was used to replace an annual social fundraising event, instead became the Jasper Main Street Case of Support printed brochure and supporting video. The fundraising goal was \$25,000 and an overall greater awareness of

Jasper Main Street and their accomplishments. The actual amount raised was \$36,650 most of which were unencumbered dollars. The video has been downloaded and viewed over 400 times and is featured on the Jasper Main Street website. The cost for this fundraising effort was \$10,382.

The printed collateral features the Mission & Vision of Jasper Main Street as well as the 2021 Work Plans and Milestones for the organization. Most impressive are the stats showing funds raised, projects completed, and new jobs created since the inception of Jasper Main Street. The video highlights "then and now" shots of Jasper as well as how the COVID pandemic was addressed. Local business owners were featured in the video through with interviews and B-roll. Additionally, the printed collateral included bio information on the Board of Director officers and testimonials from local business owners. And, of course, a fundraiser envelope was included in each brochure for ease in making donations. This collateral piece was distributed to all JMS supporters and has been utilized throughout the year when requesting additional project funding.

### **Wetumpka – Main Street Wetumpka's Wine Push**

When the pandemic prohibited Main Street Wetumpka from raising funds through the annual wine pull, the organization committee worked to create a "Wine Push" instead! The wine push entailed inviting supporters to host a wine event for other couples in a manageable setting for social distancing. Included in the \$100 cost per couple were four bottles from sponsor Hahn Family Wines, a basket of food pairings and an appropriate number of signature glasses to take home. The event raised over \$11,000, with \$8,000 of the funds netted after expenses.

Committee members invited couples to host and encouraged them to share the experience with three other couples. The hosts received the following:

- 1) A great evening with select friends, in a manageable number for social distancing.
- 2) A flexible schedule to host the event on a Thursday evening in October, with an emphasis on choosing a porch or patio to help with social distancing.
- 3) Four bottles of Hahn Family Wines
- 4) Appropriate food pairings, hand-selected and prepared by a chef to go with the wine selections.
- 5) A pair of commemorative wine glasses. These glasses allowed people to continue their annual "wine push" glassware collection without missing a year!
- 6) A YouTube video featuring Paul Clifton, Hahn's Director of Wine Making, prepared especially for Main Street Wetumpka.
- 7) A private "run through" event for host couples, conducted by Hahn Family Wines.

This initiative certainly created more support for Main Street Wetumpka, especially in a very challenging year.

### **EXCELLENCE IN PUBLIC RELATIONS**

### **Enterprise – Taco Bout Branding**

Main Street Enterprise hosted "Taco 'bout Branding" on May 5, 2021, to officially 'weeveal' their new brand identity. This was a collaboration between Main Street Alabama, Arnett Muldrow & Associates and Main Street Enterprise. The goal of this event was to bring the community together to enjoy a Cinco de Mayo cuisine and reveal the new branding for the program. The event consisted of a food display from Main Street local restaurants, a presentation from Main Street Alabama and Arnett Muldrow & Associates, and ended with networking and the opportunity to purchase some new branded swag of t-shirts, stickers, etc.

### **Foley – Countdown to Branding Covid Style**

The branding exercise in Foley was anything but normal! They held 11 focus groups with avg of 7-10 people, created a social media countdown for 21 days with words that were used by focus group attendees to describe Downtown Foley. This created interest leading up to the unveiling of the new brand. Special invitations were sent to TV and newspapers. and all three local stations and newspapers covered the branding and did stories on Foley Main Street. The 21 Countdown posts had 379 likes, 18 shares, 2083 views. The two unveiling logo posts had 1,490 likes/loves, 189 shares, and 241 views.

The City of Foley was so excited about the Branding look and tag line, they committed funds immediately to apply the logo to new street signs, wayfinding signs, and banners which will be finished this summer. This COVID event brought our Board of Directors closer and brought Foley Main Street closer to the City of Foley staff and elected officials. The people who did come out were impressed they were moving forward despite COVID.

### **Gadsden – Welcome Back Promotion**

What can you do to let the world know that you are open and ready for business after the most unexpected incident that has ever happened? The Organization and Promotion committees worked with the Glen Williams Agency and Appalachian Digital Photography to bring owners and employees of 47 downtown businesses to the sidewalk to film an aerial commercial welcoming shoppers and diners back to downtown Gadsden. They successfully brought everyone together prior to opening hours to showcase downtown and merchants. And BOOM, we were able to recreate the video as an invitation to the Main Street Alabama State Conference! A double success story!

The video brought a great visibility to downtown and was instrumental in reaching a huge audience from central to north Alabama. The downtown businesses were grateful for the exposure and for the positive economic impact that it brought.

### **Jasper – Walker Voices Podcast**

As the need for printed news continues to evolve, Daily Mountain Eagle Publisher and Podcast Producer Jeffery Winborne make it possible to connect with younger audiences so that the revitalization of Downtown Jasper and its efforts, personalities, and outreach will be showcased. Jasper Main Street's Mike Putman and co-host Walker Area Association of Realtors' Lauren Gilbert Vance collaborate on guests and hosting.

Several podcast episodes have been already aired and more episodes have been recorded for release every other Friday. They invite guests to these recordings so that the good news of Jasper Main Street and its partners can be promoted. Both Jasper Main Street and its partner, Walker Area Association of Realtors, pay \$150.00 monthly to record, edit, and broadcast episodes through the media of Daily Mountain Eagle. That's helpful to both organizations since no one bears the entire cost alone.

### **Montevallo – Living Local Commercials**

Montevallo Main Street originally commissioned CBS 42 to create commercials to promote large upcoming events such as Arts Fest and Tinglewood. However, when the pandemic and subsequent business restrictions began affecting the community full force, they were forced to “pivot” this message to invite visitors to explore attractions on their own as family units or in small groups. Not only was this advertising effort intended to attract new visitors to the community, but it was also an effort to address the slump in sales caused by the pandemic and attract new customers to the shops, where it is easy to socially distance.

The 2-minute version of the commercial received over 12,000 online views and 260 engagements. The thirty-second version had over 22,000 views and Click-Thru-Rate of .27% - more than double the industry-standard. This commercial series resulted in a boon of increased visibility for Montevallo. It also strengthened their relationship with one of the regional news media outlets, which subsequently covered Montevallo more often with news stories that featured their veteran banners and some business updates throughout COVID.

### **Opelika – Downtown Promotional Video**

Opelika Main Street produced a promotional video aimed at telling the story of Downtown Opelika and Opelika Main Street. The video discusses Main Street's 4 Point Approach and includes interviews from a diverse array of community stakeholders. The video was produced in house by Opelika Main Street's Executive Director Ken Ward and videography intern Jacob Prather and included interviews from various business owners, Main Street board members and Opelika's Mayor Gary Fuller.

The video provides an easy way for Opelika Main Street to communicate their mission to the general public, it is positioned in a prominent spot on the homepage of their website and is pinned to the top of the Facebook page. The hope is that the video will help communicate the strong role Main Street has played in the growth seen in Downtown Opelika to both residents and visitors.

## **EXCELLENCE IN PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS**

### **Athens – Downtown Outdoor Dining**

Athens Main Street, the City of Athens, the Limestone County Commission, and Optimal Geo, a GIS company located in the district, partnered together to greatly increase outdoor dining in downtown Athens amid the COVID-19 crisis. Given it became extremely popular, all four worked together to create a permanent, attractive, uniform look utilizing the district branding.

Athens Main Street initiated the effort by discussing with the local restaurants, ways to increase outdoor dining space. Athens Main Street rented crowd control barriers to place on the sidewalks adhering to ABC regulations for alcohol consumption. The extended spaces were extremely popular. In September,

the City of Athens decreed the sidewalks to be used for dining where possible and funded the wrought iron bollards and chains. The Limestone County Commission allowed tables to be permanently placed on the courthouse lawn. Optimal Geo funded the Athens Main Street branded umbrellas and 10,000 Entertainment District logo cups, thus kicking off the trend for other companies to sponsor the logo cups.

This partnership provided restaurants with extra capacity when they needed it the most, keeping them afloat during COVID. It has also changed the look of downtown, making it more vibrant and active.

### **Calera – Courtyard**

Since becoming a designated Main Street Program in June 2019, Calera Main Street has had good communication with city leadership, and it has improved event by event. The city has replaced all the water, sewer and gas lines behind the buildings and are preparing to take power underground as well.

For events, public works department brings barricades, takes care of the trash, and mows the grass! The parks and rec department set up tents, tables and chairs and anything else needed. The police and fire departments have become more involved as well, attending Main Street events for a public presence and of course protection. The City IT department even shares Main Street social media and helps spread the word. City personnel and elected officials attend everything Main Street does.

The most notable result of this partnership when the City purchased a lot, cleared it, and created parking for the Calera Courtyard. This alone created more opportunity for every merchant to be visited by more customers and allowed Calera Main Street to have a local event space to create gatherings.

### **Montevallo – Pendleton Hydrant Parade**

Montevallo's Pendleton Hydrant Parade is a trail of painted fire hydrants originally created in honor of long-term volunteer firefighter Dudley Pendleton and his faithful canine sidekick Pedro. The trail includes 27 working hydrants.

Mr. Pendleton served 50+ years with Montevallo Fire and Rescue Service and 20+ years with the Montevallo Water and Sewer Board. When the condition of the paint on the hydrants began to deteriorate, Becky Cox-Rodgers organized the effort to revitalize the hydrant trail. In addition to recruiting 27 different local artists to volunteer their time and talents to paint a hydrant whose theme would tie back to Montevallo, she also recruited Montevallo Main Street as a partner to help fund and publicize the project. Montevallo Water & Sewer board split the cost of the sandblasting and priming of the hydrants with Montevallo Main Street. The Pendleton Family donated \$1,000 towards enamel paints that would last a long time on the hydrants. In addition, Main Street paid for additional materials and a sign at the Fire Station, as well as the design and printing of a brochure for visitors, and posters featuring all the hydrants that are on display at City Hall, Montevallo Fire Department, Montevallo Water Department, and Falcon Art Supply--the business that Becky manages. Montevallo Main Street volunteers also put the hydrant trail on the All-Trails app to make it even easier for visitors to explore the trail in its entirety.

## **EXCELLENCE IN BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT**

### **Birmingham – REBOUND**

As a response to the pandemic, a group of 16 Bham metro area economic development organizations convened to create workshops and resources for local business owners and aspiring entrepreneurs to weather the storm of COVID-19. The result was 23 online workshops + 27 hours of programming featuring content experts. 427 individuals participated, 254 of those were business owners, 65% MWBE's. Programming was developed and deployed by the Ecosystem and the technical service providers on a 100% pro bono basis.

A follow up survey indicated that within six months of the REBOUND programming of those responding: 19.5% registered a business with the State of Alabama, 21% obtained a City of Bham biz license for the first time, 30% opened a business checking account, 22% obtained a line of credit or loan, 48% launched a website and over 17% hired at least one new employee. The program was also instrumental in helping retain restaurants and retail in downtown Bham and other historic commercial districts in the City of Bham.

### **Gadsden – Video Series**

As part of an ongoing educational series, Downtown Gadsden, Inc contacted influential businesswomen, asking them to prepare a video or written information that could be shared in a private Downtown Retail Merchants social media group. The information ranged from the importance of consistent hours communication, partnering with other businesses, and the need to take a fresh look at their businesses. This led to an open discussion in the online retail merchants' group as well as during the monthly retail meetings.

The women who recorded videos or sent emails were not a part of the downtown "family" but were business-oriented professionals, aware of the importance of sound marketing strategies. Their work experience enabled them to share ideas about exceptional customer service and business practices. This information has helped both established and new businesses recognize the importance of keeping information up to date and to take a critical look at your business on a regular basis.

### **Heflin – Small Box Shop**

Heflin Main Street's Small Box Shop is a partnership with Main Street Alabama. Through a partial grant from USDA, Main Street Alabama placed the Small Box Shop in two communities, one being Heflin. Heflin Main Street's Economic Vitality committee worked to create a program of work for the Shop including leasing rules and advertisements. Initially, Heflin Main Street opened its own store during the Holiday season, using local makers, to show the community an example of what the Small Box Shop could be. In the Fall of 2020, Heflin Main Street recruited Southern Charms Home Decor to the Small Box Shop. In just four short months, Southern Charm grew out the space, bought and renovating a building, and opened for business in March of 2021.

Incubating businesses like Southern Charms is the purpose of the Small Box Shop. It has taken a little time for the public to see the benefits of having a pop-up shop. Southern Charms served as a good example of what a space like the Small Box Shop can do for our community.

## **EXCELLENCE IN ECONOMIC IMPACT**

### **Athens – The Square Arts & Entertainment District**

Athens Main Street advocated for an entertainment district in downtown Athens with the Mayor, City Council, and downtown Stakeholders. The goals for the district were to draw more foot traffic downtown and increase attendance at events. When the COVID-19 crisis hit, they saw a third important goal surface, providing restaurants a mechanism to recognize profits from the sale of alcohol lost due to patrons' hesitancy to return to dining indoors. These goals, as well as proven increased commercial property values in entertainment districts, made a convincing case for adoption.

Athens Main Street researched other Alabama cities' districts, spoke with those responsible for implementation, law enforcement, and restaurant owners to gain lessons learned. They formed a committee of supportive stakeholders, created a boundary map, created ordinance language, and agreed each would advocate actively. From the research, they documented metrics and insights from other cities both larger and smaller to support the request. They received unanimous support from the Mayor and City Council.

Two tangible metrics that support the success are 1. they are in the 2nd run of 10,000 cups and about to place a 3rd order 2. They have had sponsors purchase the blue logo cups for both the 1st and 2nd run, so, the logo cups are free to restaurants.

### **Decatur – Shops on 2<sup>nd</sup>**

Shops on 2nd is 4,200 square foot shared retail environment with nearly 40 distinctive specialty shops. Art, Artisans, Boutiques, Antiques, Essential Oils, Handmade Gifts, Home Décor, Kitchen Goods, and more fill this beautifully curated shopping venue. The owner's goals were: To create a destination for people to shop and create a space for local artists and craftspeople to sell their work. After opening in October 2020 mid-pandemic, Shops on 2nd has done nothing but thrive.

Owner Joey Crews is a businessman from Anniston who frequented Downtown Decatur every year for Carnegie Carnival. It was through his yearly visits to participate in the Carnival that he fell in love with downtown and decided to purchase the former Decatur Athletic Club building on 2nd Avenue. He had the idea of an “antique mall” style specialty shop featuring a variety of goods including his own essential oils.

### **EXCELLENCE IN ADAPTIVE REUSE**

#### **Decatur – Temple, Inc**

The goal of the owners of Temple Inc. was to repurpose their old warehouse (formerly a car dealership) into a new warehouse and executive office space that was an attractive addition to downtown. The architect's goal was to draw in architectural details from buildings on both Bank Street and Second Avenue so that the old and new portions of the building would blend seamlessly with the historic downtown.

Architect John Godwin and Interior Decorator Betsy Stark were given free reign to use their talents to create something truly special for downtown. Downtown has gained a beautiful new corner with historic architectural detail and exterior that are aesthetically pleasing. What once was an unattractive warehouse next to a gravel lot is now a beautiful brick building next to an amazingly beautiful office building.

### **Headland – Keel & Company Tasting Room**

Keel & Company Distilling had outgrown its space. The tasting room, whiskey production and storage areas had become too small due to the success of their whiskey and moonshine products. They purchased the Redeem Fitness Gym, a 5044 square foot metal building near their distillery. Walls were removed, bathrooms enlarged, new plumbing and electric installed. The building was completely renovated and transformed from a gym to an entertainment venue. They spent \$150,000 for the building and another \$250,000 on renovations.

Lloyd and his wife Kay decided the plans for the new building should include a large bar for tasting moonshine and whiskey, and for serving mixed drinks. They set up a stage area for bands to play and a parking pad with hookups for food trucks was added as well as an outdoor entertainment area. They used old whiskey barrels for tables and brought in chairs. Each Friday and Saturday night they have a different band and food truck. The food trucks have sold out almost every week since opening! Whiskey sales have never been better.

### **Jasper – Mack Lofts**

A two-story red brick office building showing its age with few improvements and updates stood along the Square in Downtown Jasper. John and Lisa Mack bought the building and have transformed it into luxurious loft living with a balcony on the 2nd floor along with a rooftop balcony. These former offices were relocated to much nicer office space at a local bank benefitting everyone and providing 2 lofts in Downtown Jasper that are now occupied. John and Lisa used local contractors to gut the building and turn it into upscale downtown lofts.

While Mack Lofts is a stand-alone project, John, and Lisa's views from both the 2nd floor balcony and the rooftop balcony faced the west side of Walker County Courthouse. This side is where the loud and unsightly air conditioning units are housed by a chain link fence. The Macks worked with Friends of Downtown Jasper for landscaping to camouflage the area, and since then other funding has been secured to completely renovate the courthouse's landscaping.

### **Monroeville – The Shop at 66/Loft at 66**

Local realtor Jess Martin partnered with local businessman & investor Billy Jones to bring this much need project to our downtown. With 3 churches and the Monroe County Museum, many weddings take place in the Main Street district and the city needed a larger, updated event space downtown. This adaptive reuse project adds the perfect character and interest while creating something needed in the community. The renovations came in just over \$1.3 million; the work was done by a local construction company and the materials were ordered from local businesses when possible.

Investors saw potential in the dilapidated 1940's County Maintenance Shop & Office and renovated it into a beautiful event space with a luxury 2-bedroom apartment. The event space has a catering kitchen, multiple restrooms, a portico to the front of the building and porches on the side and back. The renovation-maintained character leaving the wood beams of the barrel roof exposed & made minimum changes to the layout. The apartment is available for rent when you book the event space and is available to the public through Airbnb when the event space is not rented.

### **Opelika – Whistle Stop Bottle & Brew**

Whistle Stop Bottle and Brew transformed an old creamery building that had sat empty for over 25 years into a thriving bar and retail space. One half of the building contains a retail shop that sells equipment needed to make your own beer and wine with the other half hosting a bar featuring a variety of different craft beers on tap from around the country. The business, with both a retail and bar component, attracts a wide array of customers from across east Alabama into the downtown district.

The building's walls are a combination of thick concrete, brick, and insulation. They took advantage of the thick insulated walls when designing the beer cooler- two walls and the floor were already insulated and they built two walls and the ceiling and insulated them. The owners did not want the main space to be visually obstructed with traditional air conditioning ducts, so they installed min-split units from the ceiling. The taproom and retail space are connected inside. The total cost of the renovation ran roughly \$80,000.00 with much of the work being done by the business owner himself.

## **EXCELLENCE IN PROMOTION**

### **Athens – Brittany Howard Mural Live Art Event**

Brittany Howard Mural Live Art Event was held in the downtown district on the Courthouse Square lawn during the Fridays After Five Event. Athens Main Street commissioned ARCY, a renowned street artist, to paint a tribute mural to Grammy award-winning singer-songwriter, Brittany Howard, who is a native of Limestone County. Within six hours the mural was complete and ready to hang in the alley upon completion of the renovation. The goal was to heighten interest in their Merchants Alley Renovation Project, increase patrons for Fridays After Five & Singing on the Square, and increase reach to a new demographic young adults 18-30yrs.

The district retailers ran specials and stayed open late to provide shopping/browsing opportunities. Local restaurants ramped up staff in support of the crowds. A district architectural firm, AMBL Studios donated \$2,000 to sponsor ARCY's artist fee. A local Real Estate developer donated time to create the frame. A local company donated time and trailer transportation to and from storage to the site on the Courthouse lawn for the Live Event. Two local PR firms donated time to cover the event, creating the time-lapse video, and social media content.

### **Eufaula – Main Street Pajama Party**

Wear your favorite pajamas, robes, slippers, curlers, etc.... and shop downtown after hours all while keeping it clean and socially distant was the theme of the Main Street Eufaula Pajama Party. After a lengthy lull in the downtown district because of the pandemic, something new was just what locals needed. Sales, free cookies, gourmet sampling and music was the perfect addition to a lot of laughter.

Main Street Eufaula got them there with the promise of a possibility of winning. 5 Pamper me baskets with everything from cooling eye masks, 24 carat gold facial mask, pedicure, manicure, wine, girl tribe supplies and everything you can imagine pampering yourself was provided by Main Street Eufaula. 3 substantial gift certificates to downtown restaurants and boutiques were provided as well.

In the stores you could spin the bottle (nail polish bottle) for a discount, find a discount hidden in stores, Blindfold draw for a discount (use your face mask on your eyes) enjoy pop up shops, best Hairdo, best attire, selfie, and list goes on. All participated by wearing their own PJ's!

### **Florence – 2020 Reverse Christmas Parade of Lights**

Downtown Florence Alliance proudly hosted the “2020 Reverse Christmas Parade of Lights presented by Bank Independent” in lieu of the traditional Christmas parade. The goal was to provide a safe, socially distanced parade that allowed the community to experience the joy of a holiday parade during the difficulties of 2020.

Preparation for the 2020 Christmas Parade began in June, as all other events for the year had been canceled. Typically, the Christmas Parade is the largest fundraiser for DFA each year. Although the reverse parade did not meet typical Christmas Parade revenue, the 2020 parade did profit \$5,500.

Parade entries lined Tennessee and Court Streets, and cars traveled through Downtown Florence to experience the Parade of Lights with vehicles lined up nonstop from 6:00-9:00 p.m. Lineup began at 4 p.m., the parade route was judged at 5:45 p.m., and the parade route opened for vehicle traffic at 6:00 p.m. The creativity and holiday spirit of Florence was on display during this fun holiday event.

### **Foley – Snowbird Coffee Covid Style**

The Snowbird Coffee is an annual event welcoming our Snowbirds to the area and introducing them to Downtown Foley. This year was especially hard because of the impact of COVID AND Hurricane Sally. The goal was to hit numbers from the year before and increase scavenger hunt participation. Logistically it was decided to leave the participants in their cars and have them drive to the different stations to be given hot chocolate, scavenger hunt sheets, coupons, and visitor information.

We did not know if the Snowbirds would even find us. But they did! Due to COVID, they had an entire week to find the businesses and get the answers to the questions turned in for the scavenger hunt. Snowbirds are the reason that many area businesses excel during the winter months. The weather that day was freezing cold 38 degrees with a brisk wind, so volunteers were bundled up for sub-zero weather – the Snowbirds got a kick about them “being overdressed” while they were in their cars usually in shorts and Hawaiian shirts.

440 Snowbirds attend the 2021 drive-through. The year before they had 600 walk-ins. 117 scavenger sheets turned in - an increase of 25%. And no one handing items out developed frostbite. The Snowbirds enjoyed driving through.

### **Gadsden – End of the Rainbow Celebration**

After the St. Patrick’s Pub Crawl was canceled by the restaurants due to continued COVID concerns, Downtown Gadsden, Inc. decided to spread the joy - and economic vitality - by hosting the “End of the Rainbow - A Celebration of Downtown Restaurants, Bars & Other Places”. Rather than focus on a one-night event, DGI set up a week-long celebration from March 11 - 17 and encouraged people to eat at the downtown restaurants while following the CDC guidelines. All 17 bars and restaurants participated, bringing thousands of people downtown for a fun week of drinking and dining.

By spreading the event from a one-day event to a weeklong event, it allowed the bars and restaurants to better plan for staffing and food and beverage needs. In complying with the CDC regulations, the event allowed all establishments to serve people safely instead of crowding people into small spaces during a one-day event. The weeklong event also allowed patrons to visit multiple businesses, which provided

them a chance to win bigger prizes. It also encouraged participants to try other places that they might not have visited previously. Many of the visitors were repeat customers and most patronized seven or more establishments.

### **Scottsboro – Salsa on the Square**

Salsa on the Square was an event in May 2021 to help bring people to downtown Scottsboro during Trade Day weekend. Local restaurants and citizens in the town were asked to participate in a salsa-making competition. Local restaurant Toros supplied the chips, and a fee of \$5.00 was charged for to taste test as much salsa as they wanted. People could vote for whose salsa they thought was best, who was the most festive, and who the best business and amateur salsa maker was.

Overall, Scottsboro Main Street made \$4,100 on this event with total financial gain being \$2,664.27

### **EXCELLENCE IN BUSINESS PROMOTION**

#### **Birmingham – Virtual Woodlawn Street Marketplace**

For most of 2020, REV suspended in-person Woodlawn Street Markets in response to COVID-19 but didn't want local vendors to lose sales opportunities. REV rolled out the Virtual Woodlawn Street Marketplace on June 13, 2020, showcasing both new and long-time vendors at woodlawncity.com. Creating a virtual market space had long been a goal, so with markets postponed, the team redirected their energy from event prep to building out the virtual market concept in 2020.

More than 80 different local vendors (including at least 20 first-time vendors) have been featured on the Virtual Woodlawn Street Marketplace, and the page has logged more than 2,000 page views since it went live. The page is a directory-like grid of local businesses, pointing shoppers to explore the shopping platforms of all their favorite vendors. Building the virtual marketplace was also an opportunity for REV's Business Growth team to work with local startups that were not yet set up for e-commerce.

#### **Heflin – 12 Days of Christmas Giveaway**

Using money that Heflin Main Street received from the State for Covid recovery, they launched the 12 Days of Christmas giveaway contest via social media. Using the famous Christmas song, they shot videos of business owners and locals that sang what the giveaway was each day. The videos were posted to Facebook where they tagged the businesses and asked friends to like, tag, and share. This promotional event, with no cost to local merchants, was a successful way to support businesses with sales and marketing as well as reach new audiences outside the immediate area.

Approximately 40 businesses were either included in the promotion or actively participated by filming videos to use. Each business liked and shared the posts via their own social media. This promotion was successful in reaching out to include **all** retail businesses throughout the district. Businesses were appreciative of both the sale and the marketing. Success was determined through an insight report via

Facebook - 24,732 people reached; 818 likes; 564 comments; 3,300 link clicks. In addition, new audiences were reached through the posts. A couple of the winners were from outside the county.

### **Jasper – Eats in the Streets**

Jasper Eats in the Streets is an event that was tailored to the pandemic and the lifting of the crowd and mask restrictions. Shutting down the streets and placing tables and chairs in front of restaurants on those streets allowed for a safe environment while encouraging commerce.

Each participating restaurant offered specials for the 3-day event. By scanning the QR code with a smart phone, you can access the information all those participating and their specials.

The outreach via Facebook alone resulted in 3,054 people reached, 274 engagements, and 10 shares of the post. This event was more heavily attended than simply Jasper Eats in the past perhaps because of the need for people to socialize after the lifting of restrictions. The QR code was accessed 302 times during the event.

### **Montevallo – Blooming Bargains**

The American Village launched their Festival of Tulips in 2017, which brings over seven thousand people to Montevallo annually. In order to lure some of these visitors to downtown Montevallo, Main Street and the Chamber of Commerce partnered on a “Blooming Bargains” promotion. Each participating business offered a discount to visitors who presented their Festival of Tulips admissions sticker. In addition, 500 tulips were planted in six strategic locations downtown to promote the program and share in the beauty of the Festival of Tulips.

To simplify the program for the business and the customer, participating businesses agreed to offer 20% off one item per customer who presents their Festival of Tulips admission sticker. The discount only applies during the tulip blooming season, which varies based on weather conditions. The program also encourages Montevallo citizens to support the Festival of Tulips and receive discounts at their favorite local shops.

## **EXCELLENCE IN MARKETING**

### **Alexander City – Main Street Marketing Campaign**

The goal was to have a huge marketing push with a total revamp of the outdated website using the logo and colors from the Branding scope, rack cards with QR code distributed throughout downtown and the Lake Martin area, Trifold mailouts with information about Main Street and how to volunteer and donate, QR codes mounted on light poles throughout downtown directing people to a map of downtown on the website and Koozies with logo to give out at events.

Rack cards were distributed to all downtown businesses to give out to customers, these have gone over well, and businesses have requested more. Since this effort they have seen more traffic on the website and have been able to track this information.

### **Birmingham – The Great Receipt Race**

REV launched The Great Receipt Race to incentivize buying from local retailers and restaurants. Over a combined three months, the REV team threw themselves into finding creative ways to highlight local

businesses and send customers their way, ultimately driving \$44K in local sales. The Great Receipt Race invited shoppers to submit photo proof of their local purchases via text. REV randomly selected prize winners weekly from all the shoppers who texted in receipts—and shared fun local prizes to keep the support going!

Great Receipt Race participants were asked to text a keyword to automatically receive easy instructions to share proof of local purchases for chances to win gift cards and items from Birmingham businesses. Every receipt submitted earned a chance to win that week's prize package/gift cards. Prizes and gift cards were awarded weekly. For the Great Receipt Race, we defined a "local business" as any business within the city of Birmingham that is not nationally franchised. REV posted across social media platforms about the efforts and created a toolkit from which many businesses shared their own posts about the Great Receipt Race. REV also printed marketing materials like posters and rack cards and distributed them to businesses to promote the effort.

### **Enterprise – Restaurant Week Enterprise Eats**

Restaurant Week was a collaborative marketing campaign between Main Street Enterprise, Enterprise Chamber of Commerce and Visit Enterprise. Restaurant Week 2020 was a 10 Day campaign, with each day having a different theme (ex. sweet tooth Sunday, etc.) The businesses participated by promoting the graphics on social media, displaying posters and flyers provided by Main Street, Visit Enterprise and the Enterprise Chamber of Commerce in their restaurants, and by offering special menu items to match the theme of each day. The businesses also donated items to be used in daily giveaways to patrons who participated in the daily theme. The names were drawn at the end of the 10 Day campaign.

With this promotion local businesses were able to benefit by getting more visibility for their business and new/more customers. Each day a different promotion was presented on social media for the public to see who they would want to visit relating to the promotion. It allowed the public to see what items these businesses had that the public may not have been aware of. During the campaign, the social media promotions reached upwards of 4,000 people and had almost 400 responses!

### **Jasper – Explore Jasper Tourist Map and App**

Hundreds of families visit the Bankhead National Forest and various campgrounds in Walker and Winston Counties each year. The goal of this project was to reach this untapped audience, showing them all Jasper has to offer with a 2-fold approach - 1: a detailed printed map and 2: an interactive digital map that can be accessed through a separate URL - [www.explorejasperal.com](http://www.explorejasperal.com). All addresses listed are linked to google maps for easy navigation to the selected business.

The printed map details restaurants, shops, lodging, recreation, points of interest, arts & events, and local services for the City of Jasper. The interactive digital map detailing the same information, is housed on the Jasper Main Street website with multiple avenues to access the maps - the JMS app, City of Jasper's website, and the Chamber of Commerce's website. Additionally, several local businesses have requested the map link and icon to add to their websites.

The Jasper Main Street App targets both residents and visitors within the district because of its capability to assist in the following: finding retail and restaurants, using an interactive map, reading Tallulah Leads articles, listening to Walker Voices Podcast, and to connect to city services, county services, and to pay bills.

The marketing budget for the app was \$2,400 paid for by a grant. Yearly maintenance expenses can be up to \$500 depending on update frequency. Rebecca Roberts, who also created the JMS website, was employed to create the JMS app. The businesses and services were placed on the app as a benefit of membership and/or contribution levels.

### **EXCELLENCE IN PLACEMAKING**

#### **Florence – The Saint Francis Project**

Footsteps of Florence is a gift to the citizens of Florence from Trinity Episcopal Church in gratitude for the support of the St. Francis Project. This project has raised over 1 million dollars since its beginning in 2008. Funds are used to give grants to local organizations whose practices are based on the Prayer of St. Francis. The plaques were installed in the periphery of Wilson Park. Inspirational words of wisdom from important historical figures encourage citizens that tread the path around Wilson Park. The details in the illustrations are thoughtful and appropriate for each quote.

Mary White, who led this project from the start, approached the Florence Public Art Committee with the idea of a public art project similar to the Library Walk in New York City. The Footsteps of Florence is a collection of inspirational quotes, many of which have ties to our area. These quotes were then illustrated by former Florence artist, David Sims, and cast into bronze plaques. The plaques have been embedded in the concrete sidewalks surrounding Wilson Park. Three additional plaques will be placed in front of Trinity Episcopal, First United Methodist, and First Presbyterian churches highlighting their continuation of the St. Francis Project.

#### **Fort Payne – Chandelier Tree The Small Town that Shines**

The campaign was designed to feature the heart of our community, our main street downtown shopping and business district. The chandelier tree is located downtown across from the FP Hosiery Museum and Opera House. We have ten thousand vehicles that travel on our main street and Hwy 35 daily. The Chandelier Tree is turned on at dusk and goes off at dawn. It's a year-round focal point that reminds us that we are a "Small Town that Shines!"

The Chandelier Tree was a joint effort between FPMS, the community, businesses, and The City of Fort Payne. Businesses and Community members donated or sponsored chandeliers for the tree. The initial number was 33 chandeliers but 20 more have been donated since the initial lighting. The City helped place the chandeliers in the tree and they did the electrical.

#### **Monroeville – Literary Giants Mural**

5 years in the making, the Literary Giants mural represents the 10 writers who made Monroeville/Monroe County Alabama's Literary Capital. The goal was to place a mural on the north side of the square to encourage visitor and locals alike to walk to all side of the square and to cover a large

blank wall with something beautiful all while celebrating our literary history. Grove Hill artist Johnna Bush never disappoints as her work is flawless and is a perfect celebration of our Literary Giants! The project took the artist spent 7 days of painting over a 3-week period.

Local business, 7 in all, sold mural prints and post card booklets in their stores to support the project. Retailers regularly use the mural as a backdrop for their models and for social media posts. Local merchants shared the mural's progress on their social media sites and help spread the excitement all while reminding people that downtown Monroeville has lots to offer!

### **Scottsboro – Scottsboro Boys Mural**

After scouting the different areas around the square, the Main Street Scottsboro Board, the Scottsboro Boys Museum Board, and artist Don Howard all agreed that the best place for the mural would be on Peachtree Street on the wall of the warehouse beside the law office of Gary Lackey. This wall faces the courthouse, and is located in a parking lot, so this mural gets a lot of visibility on any given day. Gary saw the bigger picture, and what this mural symbolizes not only for Scottsboro, but for Jackson County, Alabama, and even the nation as a whole.

From the very beginning the Scottsboro Boys Museum was involved, they know the story of the boys better than anyone else. It was very important that everything was done in a respectful way. The budget for this project was \$8000. However, Don Howard, the artist offered to provide the mural at a discounted rate because of how important he felt the project was, \$3800 on the mural itself and \$55 on the plaque beside the mural that describes what the mural depicts.

### **EXCELLENCE IN BUILDING DESIGN**

#### **Florence – Cottonwood Farm LLC**

318 N Court St, Suite C was a small, oddly shaped building that Hope & Brian Williamson viewed as an opportunity. They had a dream to take their Farmers Market from a weekly event at Singing River Brewery and invest in a small storefront in the heart of Downtown Florence. Brian first used the building as an office for his tech business, Lime Group, LLC. However, the couple had planned from the beginning to rehab the space to create a unique storefront that would serve their customers.

Brian and Hope maximized the space of the store by transforming an angled wall into squared-off sections to allow enough room for built-in shelving and refrigerators for their merchandise. They also added vintage ceiling tiles from an old store in Nashville and a beautiful wall of wood panels to provide a rustic feel to the historic space. Their vision transformed the original office space into a functional and successful storefront and changed the perception of possibilities for this building by investing in a small space and maximizing their floorplan to work for their products.

#### **Jasper – Jasper Consulting**

This 10,000 square foot former worship center/home in dilapidated condition on Main Street has been transformed into 4 high-end spaces used for offices of successful businesses.

Formerly known as The Rock Worship Center, Sandy Prevost bought this shell of a building for \$235,000. She has since put that much back into the building, and now it stands as one of the most attractive and sought-after buildings in the downtown district. Because of Sandy, that entire block has now been revitalized.

### **Oxford – The Vine Chiropractic**

In 2017, Ryan and Gwen Parrish purchased 8 East Choccolocco Street for their practice, The Vine Chiropractic, and their home in the upper-level loft. One of the largest and longest projects was the restoration and renovation of the facade.

The plan was to replace the rotting windows on the upper level of the building, as well as completely paint the facade and add a decal to the front lower-level window. The facade of the building was in fair shape considering that it had been painted within the past 10 years. However, to keep up with the fresh look of the surrounding properties, the Parrish's chose to renovate their building. They initially budgeted \$15,000 for the project. At the completion of the project, the budget slightly came out to a little over \$17,000. The project was eligible for Main Street Oxford's Facade Improvement Grant program. Through the grant program, the Parrish's were able to receive \$4,000 for their project. All the work was completed by local contractors. The investment the Parrish's made has greatly added to the efforts of preservation and restoration in Historic Downtown Oxford.

### **South Huntsville – Das Stahl Bierhaus Outdoor Patio**

In combination with its landlord and Redstone Federal Credit Union, Das Stahl Bierhaus completed a total renovation of its outdoor patio space, increasing seating capacity from 12 to 80+, which doubled their total seating capacity both inside and out. The patio renovation has transformed the exterior from a bland strip mall into an eye-catching and inviting space to enjoy an evening hanging out with family and friends. Although planned prior to COVID-19, this renovation was critical for providing safe on-premises opportunities for customers during the height of the pandemic.

Utilizing facade revitalization grants from Redstone Federal Credit Union, the landlord and business owner undertook the renovation of the shopping center's parking lot and patio. The landlord painted the building, resurfaced the parking lot, and reconfigured the parking lot building a concrete slab that added 750 square feet of patio space. Das Stahl Bierhaus took over from there, building and purchasing all structures, furniture, and decorations required to make the patio functional and enjoyable in all weather. They included umbrellas and fans for warm and sunny days and propane and electric heaters for winter evenings. Prior to the renovation, the exterior of the building looked much like any strip mall. Now there is an appealing patio complete with cafe lights to draw people in as they drive by. They have marketed and leveraged the new space by hosting weekly trivia, larger events, and now live music outside.

## **EXCELLENCE IN PLANNING & PUBLIC SPACES**

### **Birmingham – 20<sup>th</sup> Street Green Refresh Pilot Project**

The genesis of the 20th Street Birmingham Green Refresh was Park(ing) Day. Park(ing) Day is an international event in which landscape architects rethink a public space, often a parking spot or spots,

and re orient it into a space for people. Rather than a temporary activation, Park(ing) Day 2020 was used as a roll out for one half block of more permanent improvements to the streetscape in order to show a complete vision for a more vibrant and pedestrian friendly 20th Street. The Southeastern half block of 20th Street North was chosen for the pilot project because of adjacent restaurants and businesses. The final design created a more attractive pedestrian oriented street by bringing former loading zones up to sidewalk grade using granite infill, installing new native and low-maintenance plants in existing beds (as well as additional new planters), adding flexible use tables and seating, and a creating a new multimodal street design.

REV and City of Birmingham departments of Planning and Transportation officials worked together to draft a creative new vision for 20th Street that took the large street space, and segment it into one 10' travel lane, a '5 bike lane, and an 8' "Flex Lane". The Flex Lane is a new concept pioneered by this group to solve adjacent businesses increased need for pick up and drop off, and outdoor dining during the Covid 19 pandemic. The half block completed for Park(ing) Day was so successful that the design has been extended for 1.5 blocks in March of 2021, the project has created vibrancy on this signature block of the most important pedestrian street in Birmingham's City Center District by giving more space to people, serving adjacent businesses, and lowering traffic speeds.

### **Florence – Streetscape Project**

The latest streetscape project in Downtown Florence addressed many facets of beautification and streetscape improvements such as landscaping, reconfigured parking, pedestrian lighting, crosswalks, and fixtures. The intent of the project was to contribute to the revitalization of Downtown Florence. The project's scope included E. Tennessee St. from Poplar to Chestnut St and E. College St from Cherry to Poplar.

The budget of the plan was \$2,900,000, and the total cost of the project came in at \$2,874,361.65. Construction began in January of 2020, and the completion was on May 18, 2021. The goal of the project was multifaceted and included: aesthetic, economic, and functional betterment of the area; increase in building occupancy and renovation; facilitate grants for further enhancements; increase property value for surrounding businesses; consensus building; provide a clean and safe environment; traffic calming and control; positive messaging to the private sector; create a strong downtown to sustain a strong retail sector. In addition to beautification and overall improvement of a main downtown thoroughfare, new development and redevelopment included: Taco Mama, Fashion Exchange, Rich Broke Boutique, Farmers Insurance, and the Hidden Treasures building.

### **Fort Payne – Life's Journey Reflections and Meditation Garden**

The garden was designed based on the stages of life. Life's journey is a never-ending circle, just as the seasons of the year move along this circle so do our lives. One enters the garden moving toward the East (Sunrise) and walking clockwise transitioning through the seasons. Looking at the garden you realize you are not a visitor but a vital part of this garden. The focal point of the center is the designation with a bench and 3 natural stone fountains representing universal nourishment for all living creatures. It is a place to sit and reflect and express thoughts and feelings.

The planning was a team effort between Connie Fuller, Tim Harris, and Donna Chesser of FPMS, Tim Williams of the City of Fort Payne and David Isbell, owner of Twelve Oaks Landscaping. The plan was

submitted in an application for a grant from the Community Foundation of Northeast Alabama. Fort Payne Main Street received the grant for \$10,000 December 2018. With weather challenges and Covid it was August 2020 before the garden was completed. The garden has given members of the community a place to meditate and reflect and to enjoy the healing of nature.

The garden was placed in the Alabama Walking Park which is named for the group, Alabama. Visitors and community members have enjoyed the peace of this garden. The entries in the journals have brought deep thoughts and reflections. This garden is on a national trail of Nature Sacred gardens.

### **Opelika – 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue Streetscape**

The project was conceived to provide a pedestrian friendly conversion of a portion of downtown's 1st Avenue that had three lanes. This street has had constant problems with cut-through traffic that traveled too fast for a downtown environment. Having the travel lanes reduced to 2-11 ft lanes opened the rest of the area between the buildings to have ample sidewalk/pedestrian and street café areas.

Drainage was a major consideration in the design of the project because all the roof drains flowed to the south, toward the railroad tracks. Keeping this drainage pattern in place, they designed the roadway to all drain to the south and to have the stormwater collection system on the south side of the road, instead of both sides of the road. The idea of the implementation of the bioretention systems was conceived to add stormwater detention to the area along with landscaping/trees and to incorporate the café areas all in one facility. Not only is bioretention designed to retain stormwater, the plants and trees in the system are designed to remove pollutants that come from the roof and roads.