



# ORGANIZATIONAL KICK OFF

DEMOPOLIS, JUNE 28, 2022



Creating Jobs. Keeping Character.

PREPARED BY:

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# ABOUT:

Today, Demopolis joins 31 other Alabama communities in implementing the nationally recognized Four Point Approach focusing on Organization, Design, Promotion and Economic Vitality with a unifying Transformation Strategy for effective revitalization.

Join Mayor Woody Collins, Rhae Darsey, Main Street Demopolis Executive Director and their special guest, Mary Helmer Wirth, CMSM, President/State Coordinator, Main Street Alabama, as they kick-off a new revitalization program in downtown Demopolis.



## **Demopolis Kick-Off Activities:** Tuesday, June 28

5 PM Media Event  
Marengo County History and Archives Museum  
101 North Walnut Avenue

After the media event, join the community for live music in the park and light hors d'oeuvres. Local restaurants and businesses will host open houses during this time.

Mayor Collins, Mary Wirth, and members of the application team will be available for interviews and comments after the program concludes.



## **OUR GOAL**

**CONNECTING PEOPLE  
TO THEIR COMMUNITY  
ASSETS AND MAKING  
DOWNTOWN A VIBRANT  
CENTER FOR COMMERCE**

# GETTING TO WORK IN DEMOPOLIS:

Main Street Alabama is focused on bringing jobs, dollars, and people back to Alabama's historic communities. Economic development is at the heart of this statewide organization's efforts to revitalize downtowns and neighborhood commercial districts.

Main Street Alabama is affiliated with the National Main Street Center and utilizes the proven Main Street Four-Point Approach® to help communities organize themselves for success, create vibrant public spaces through design, promote their districts, and enhance their economic base.

## CONTACTS for MEDIA:

### Main Street Alabama:

Mary Helmer Wirth  
President and State Coordinator  
mary@mainstreetalabama.org  
205.910.8819

Trisha Black  
Assistant State Coordinator  
trisha@mainstreetalabama.org  
205.913.4399

## Local Main Street Contact:

Rhae Darsey  
Executive Director  
Main Street Demopolis  
darseylaw@gmail.com  
601.917.8661



# HOW DEMOPOLIS BECAME A DESIGNATED COMMUNITY:

Demopolis became affiliated with the Main Street Alabama program through the Network tier in 2016. At this introductory level, members become more familiar with the program, attend training workshops at a discounted rate, and given the opportunity to visit other Designated cities to see first-hand the success of Main Street. In December 2021, Mary Helmer Wirth, Main Street Alabama State Coordinator, and Tanya Maloney, Field Services Specialist, made a presentation about Main Street to the city, local business owners, downtown property owners, and civic organization members. In January 2022, Rhae Darsey, an attorney, Diane Brooker, Alabama Power Community Relations Manager and Brian Brooker, a local architect, attended the New City Application Workshop in Birmingham. Shortly after, it was announced that Demopolis was seeking Main Street Alabama Designation and would begin the application process.

In the written application, it listed the city's priorities in the downtown district to be, "preservation of historic buildings, job creation, the revival of the downtown business district, and to create a sense of place for citizens and visitors that is unique to Demopolis."

Demopolis is Greek for "the city of the people," and the city has lived up to its name as it listed the people as its major asset. As stated in the application, "We are a volunteer-based community that greatly contributes to the quality of life through annual events and active organizations." One annual event that community embraces and supports is the Chamber's Christmas on the River that draws 30,000-40,000 annually in attendance.

The Tombigbee and Black Rivers meet in Demopolis bringing outdoor enthusiasts to the area. During the onsite presentation, the group expressed that they hoped Main Street Alabama could assist in developing a tourism strategy to bring those visitors to the downtown district to shop and dine. Other projects and activities the group wants to accomplish during the first year of designation includes developing an entertainment district, recruiting two new businesses, relocating the Farmers Market downtown, hosting a "Third Thursday" monthly event, and adding lights to the district to name a few.

Another issue of concern is the disrepair of some of the buildings in the district. The group started a grass roots facade program to help beautify buildings, but that didn't address leaking roofs and lack of maintenance. Main Street Alabama will work to guide and advise the group in tackling such issues.

Once the scores were tallied for both the written application and on site presentation, the selection committee made its recommendation to the Main Street Alabama Board that Demopolis receive Main Street Designation and the announcement was made official on June 1. Rhae Darsey is now serving as the Executive Director for the Main Street Demopolis program.

Earlier today, the steering committee and others interested received their first intensive training on the Main Street Four-Point Approach™; in Board development, organizational stages, budget, hiring a director, etc., as well as, reporting economic statistics. On September 27-29, the Main Street Alabama Resource Team will visit and listen to the community, coupling their ideas with both short and long-range plans in each of the Four Points. These plans will be unveiled during a public presentation on Thursday, September 29.

Demopolis joins Anniston, Alexander City, Athens, Atmore, Birmingham's 4th Avenue Business District, Birmingham's Woodlawn District, Calera, Columbiana, Dothan, Elba, Enterprise, Eufaula, Florence, Foley, Fort Payne, Gadsden, Headland, Heflin, Leeds, Jasper, LaFayette, Marion, Montevallo, Monroeville, Opelika, Oxford, Jasper, Scottsboro, South Huntsville, Talladega, and Wetumpka, and as Designated Communities and Districts in Alabama.



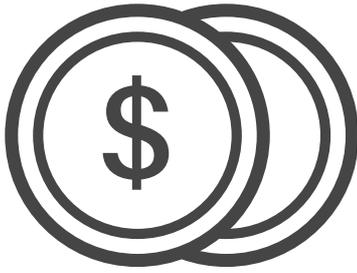
# **NEXT STEP RESOURCE TEAM VISIT & COMMUNITY VISION SEPTEMBER 27-29**



**MAIN STREET ALABAMA WILL HOST A TEAM OF EXPERTS IN  
EACH AREA OF THE FOUR POINT APPROACH:  
MARY HELMER WIRTH, TRISHA BLACK,  
TANYA MALONEY, JAY SCHLINSOG,  
AND BEN MOORE**

# WHAT MAIN STREET ALABAMA PROGRAMS HAVE ACCOMPLISHED:

From June 2014 to present

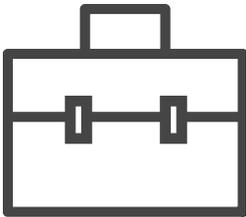


**Public Investment**

**\$97,400,835**

**Private Investment**

**\$669,300,046**

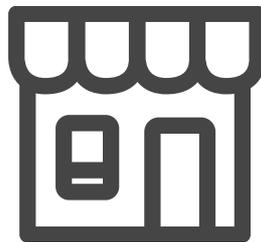


**Net New Jobs**

**2,984**

**Net New Businesses**

**909**

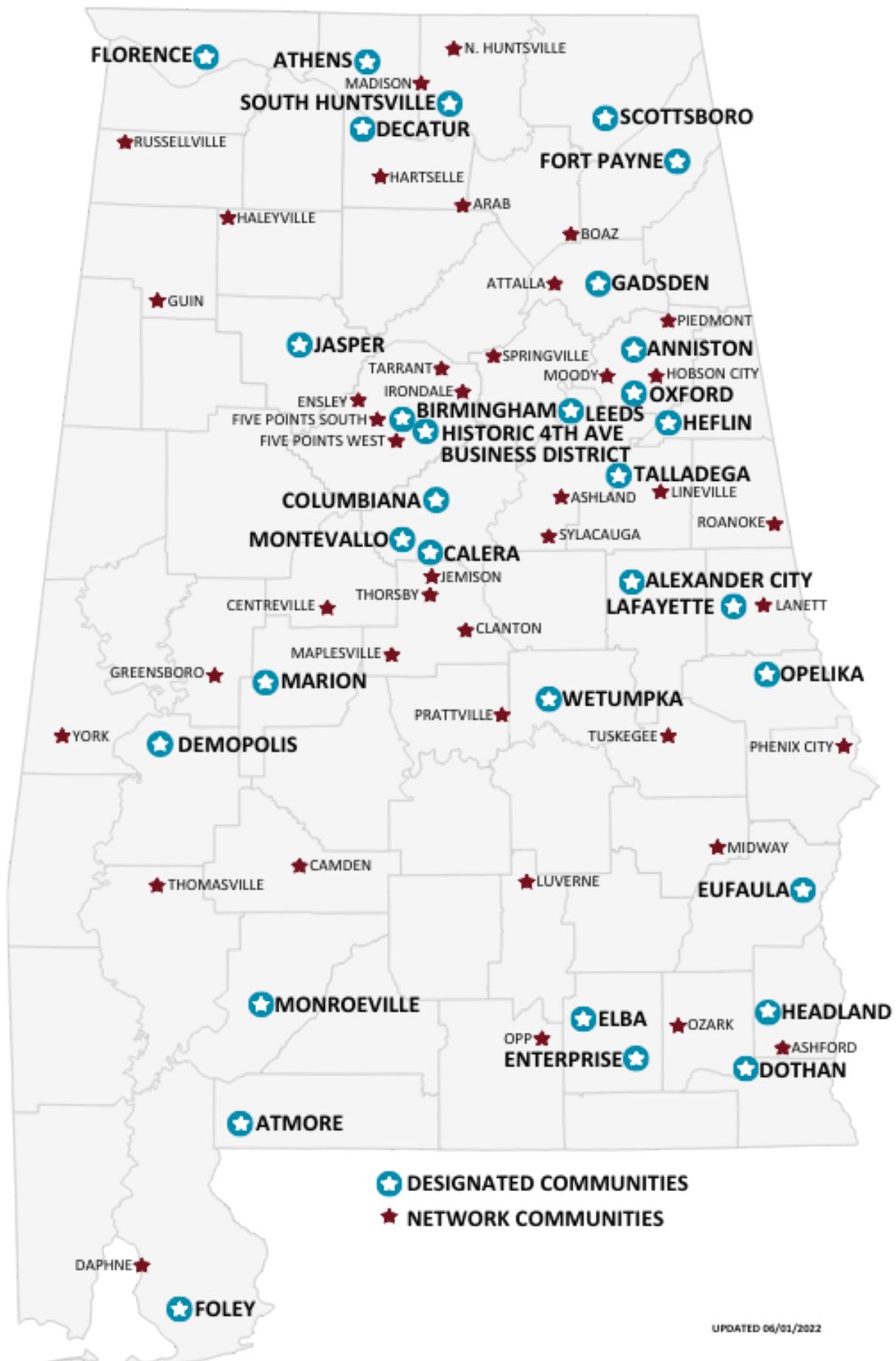


**Volunteer Hours**

**140,198**



# Main Street Alabama Communities



# ANNUAL CONFERENCE: AUGUST 17-19, OPELIKA



# BACK ON TRACK



OPELIKA AUGUST 17-19

Join Main Street Alabama August 17-19 in Opelika for the 9th Annual LAB as we bring all of the elements of the Main Street Four Point Approach® together. Learn how working in all areas of the approach simultaneously can be the most significant method to get your downtown or neighborhood commercial district back on track to revitalization. Explore ideas with other downtown and neighborhood commercial districts enthusiasts and build a vital network for your local efforts.

Opelika is where we will discuss topics related to the Main Street Approach to district revitalization in Organization, Design, Promotion and Economic Vitality.

- Engaging Educational Sessions
- Awards of Excellence Banquet
- Social Event
- Networking

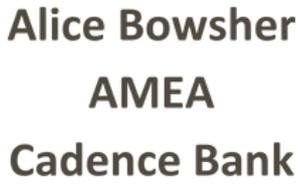
For registration information, visit [www.mainstreetalabama.org](http://www.mainstreetalabama.org).

# MAIN STREET

★ ALABAMA ★

## INVESTOR

Thanks to our generous investors, Designated Communities only pay a small portion of the services they receive.



Communities interested in starting the revitalization process can get started by joining the Network. Contact Mary Helmer Wirth for more information: [mary@mainstreetalabama.org](mailto:mary@mainstreetalabama.org) or call 205.910.8819.