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BIRMINGHAM HOSTS INDUSTRY-LEADING DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION CONFERENCE
Nurturing Welcoming, Connected, and Reimagined Communities
at Main Street Now 2024, May 6-8

CHICAGO, Ill. (April 23, 2024) – Nearly 1900 local leaders from across the country will convene in downtown Birmingham, Alabama, from May 6-8, for the 2024 Main Street Now Conference, a one-of-a-kind event that provides attendees with an opportunity learn time-tested techniques and innovative methods that make the Main Street Approach™ one of the most powerful preservation-based economic and community development tools in the nation.

The conference is hosted by Main Street America in partnership with Main Street Alabama and Sweet Home Alabama. Conference sponsors include Regions Bank and The Hartford Insurance Group.

“Main Street Alabama is one our most recently established Coordinating Programs,” stated Erin Barnes, President and CEO at Main Street America. “In just twelve years they have gone from startup to supporting 65 local Main Street programs across the state of Alabama. We are proud to partner with Main Street Alabama in welcoming our national network to learn from one another and from Birmingham’s rich heritage, vibrant commercial corridors, and powerful community organizers.”

Over the course of three days, nearly 280 place-based economic development and community preservation experts will lead over 140 dynamic learning and network-building activities centered around themes of welcoming and belonging; connectivity through civic infrastructure; and reimagining local spaces and economies. Attendees will also have ample opportunities to engage in special events and to explore Birmingham’s Downtown, Historic 4th Avenue Black Business District, and Woodlawn commercial corridors.

“We are looking forward to welcoming Main Street Now 2024 attendees to Alabama,” said Mary Helmer Wirth, President/State Coordinator at Main Street Alabama. “In Alabama, our historical districts are the heart of our communities, the core of architectural and cultural heritage, they are the places where people gather to celebrate, where communities big and small are reinventing the way Alabama does business. We extend an invitation to come early, stay late, and explore our beautiful state!”

Conference highlights include:

- **Opening Plenary on Monday, May 6** – Featuring inspiring welcome remarks from the City of Birmingham Mayor Randall Woodfin and state leaders; Main Street Alabama representatives; Birmingham Poet Laureate Salaam Green; and Erin Barnes, Main Street America President and CEO. The plenary will conclude with a ceremony announcing the winners of the prestigious 2024 Great America Main Street Award, sponsored by The Hartford.
- **Main Idea on Tuesday, May 7** – An intimate fireside-style conversation between Dr. Mindy Fullilove (author *Main Street: How a City's Heart Connects Us All*) and Erin Barnes (President and CEO at Main Street America) exploring how well-designed, equitable spaces can create connection to place and people. Followed by a special musical performance and artist conversation exploring the important role of free, live music in public spaces in fostering belonging, sponsored by the Mortimer & Mimi Levitt Foundation.
- **Civic Leaders Lunch, Tuesday, May 7 (invite only)** – A celebration of civic infrastructure through the Community Development Grant Program and conversation with Claudia Monterrosa (Deputy Assistant Secretary for Grant Programs, Office of Community Planning and Development at Department of Housing and Urban Development), sponsored by City of Birmingham.
- **Closing Plenary, Wednesday, May 8** – Concluding with a celebration of joy, community, and the power of place. Featuring a dynamic keynote presentation by Dr. Akilah Watkins (President and CEO at Independent Sector) about the intersection of civic and civil infrastructure; commencement ceremony for the 2024 Main Street America Revitalization Professional Credential recipients; and presentation of the 2024 Mary Means Leadership Award, sponsored by Regions Bank.
- **Mobile Workshops, Sunday, May 5-Wednesday, May 8** – 18 immersive mobile workshops demonstrating a multitude of approaches and successful techniques to historic preservation, economic development, and community building in Birmingham's vibrant commercial corridors and dynamic Main Streets in nearby towns.
- **Big Bash, Wednesday, May 8** – An evening of celebration, immersed in Birmingham's industrial ironworks heritage at Sloss Furnaces.

Onsite check-in and registration begins on Sunday, May 5, at the Birmingham Jefferson Convention Complex, from 7:15 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. The conference is open to members of the media; press passes may be requested in advance by emailing communications@mainstreet.org or on-site at the registration desk.

For conference updates, follow @MainStreetsConf (X), @MainStreetNowConference (Facebook), and the hashtag, #MainStreetNow across social media platforms. More information and full program details are available online at mainstreetnow.org.

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ABOUT MAIN STREET AMERICA

Main Street America leads a movement committed to strengthening communities through preservation-based economic development in older and historic downtowns and neighborhood commercial districts. For more than 40 years, Main Street America has provided a practical, adaptable, and impactful framework for community-driven, comprehensive revitalization through

the Main Street Approach™. Our network of more than 1,600 neighborhoods and communities, rural and urban, share both a commitment to place and to building stronger communities through preservation-based economic development. For more information, visit mainstreet.org.

ABOUT MAIN STREET ALABAMA

A nonprofit organization, Main Street Alabama stresses public-private partnerships, broad community engagement, and strategies that create jobs, spark new investment, attract visitors, and spur growth. Main Street builds on the authentic history, culture, and attributes of specific places, to bring sustainable change. 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 downtown and neighborhood commercial districts across the state. For more information, visit mainstreetalabama.org.