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REP. ROGERS RECEIVES MAIN STREET ALABAMA LEADERSHIP AWARD

Birmingham, Ala. (August 12, 2025) — United States Congressman Mike Rogers was recently presented with the Main Street Alabama Leadership Award in recognition of his outstanding leadership contributions to the organization's AL Spark initiative, which continues to generate positive economic impact throughout the state.

"I am deeply honored to receive this award from Main Street Alabama," said Rep. Rogers. "Small businesses are the backbone of our communities, and it has been my honor to work with local leadership to ensure Alabama's small businesses can thrive. I will always be their staunchest ally in Congress!"

Presenting the award was Main Street Alabama President and State Coordinator Mary Helmer Wirth, who reiterated the initiative's benefit to the small business community since the \$700,000 Small Business Administration grant was first introduced. She said, "What we did with that money has touched over 300 businesses across the state of Alabama...It's pretty exciting to see how many of those businesses we've touched across the state this past year, and we're hopeful to get another round of SBA money to continue that process as we move into 2026."

Leif Espelund, owner of Heritage House in Opelika, is one of the funding recipients and explained, "The marketing education platform and \$1,000 grant gave me the resources needed to test a search engine marketing strategy I had been contemplating for a while, but hadn't quite tested. I found success with that strategy and have continued investing in it to this day. The grant gave me the ability to do this without risk to my bottom line."

Likewise, grant recipients Adam Morris and Karen Grammar, owners of The Main Olive in Oxford, said, "The grants helped us to purchase a new point of sale system and new signage that helps us be more visible to passersby."

The first Alabama Bright Ideas \$25,000 winner, a culminating part of the AL Spark program, will be announced on the last day of this year's Main Street Alabama LAB conference in Jasper on August 22. More details can be found at mainstreetalabama.org/lab2025/.

Main Street Alabama is a non-profit organization which stresses public-private partnerships, broad community engagement, and strategies that create jobs, spark new investment, attract visitors, and spur growth in core commercial districts. Main Street builds on the authentic history, culture, and attributes of specific places, to bring sustainable change.

Pictured left to right: Hunter Gentry, Historic Oxford Main Street Executive Director, Mary Helmer Wirth, State Coordinator and President, Main Street Alabama, Congressman Mike Rogers, Tammy Perry, Heflin Main Street Executive Director, and Jackson Hodges, City of Anniston's Public Relations Director.