



IOWA DOWNTOWN CONFERENCE IT'S A WRAP FOR ANOTHER YEAR

Approximately 270 professionals and volunteers involved in preservation-based downtown revitalization convened this August in Dubuque for the annual Iowa Downtown Conference. Leaders from across Iowa learned about downtown-focused community development strategies and walked away with solutions to apply in their respective cities.

As is tradition, the 2019 conference included plenary sessions, breakout sessions and tours providing attendees an immersive experience to explore the host city and plenty of time to network with like-minded downtown enthusiasts.

A bonus day of training on various funding mechanisms available for downtown development was a special feature at the conference this year. "Show Me the Money" sessions included an application workshop on the Iowa Economic Development Authority's (IEDA) Community Catalyst Building Remediation grant program; funding opportunities provided by USDA Rural Development; TIF, SSMID and Urban Revitalization programs; the Community Development Block Grant Downtown Revitalization Program and a number of national sources that can be added to the capital stack.



Also new this year, the conference included IEDA Director Debi Durham's interview of three up-and-coming business owners who

shared their experiences as successful female Iowa entrepreneurs. Their experiences and solutions to challenges they faced were an inspiration to everyone.

One of the coolest opportunities enjoyed by attendees was the chance to experience downtown Dubuque's historic spaces. Hotel Julien Dubuque was the perfect location for the conference headquarters, exhibit hall, space for educational sessions and lodging.

The Opening Plenary Session with keynote speaker Irvin Henderson was held in the historic Five Flags Theatre. His message inspired attendees to focus on what we have uniquely available to inspire each other, to maintain hope, to work smarter and to elicit help from the right sources. Irvin encouraged attendees to focus on the better day that is coming and what should WE do to be ready, willing and able to capitalize on that better day. He shared that people around the world are looking for what Iowa offers: quality of life, a true sense of belonging and an opportunity to grow and prosper.



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IOWA DOWNTOWN CONFERENCE, CONTINUED

Michelle Reeves provided the keynote for the Thursday morning plenary in the Grande Opera House, Dubuque's oldest theater. Her presentation entitled Innovation and Intentionality featured real-world examples from communities big and small. She discussed partnerships, innovative financing, and development projects that could provide economic opportunity for communities.

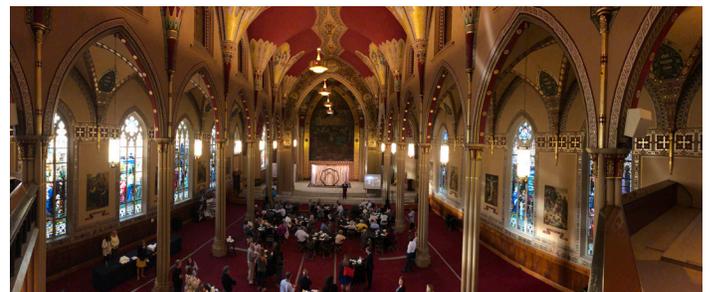
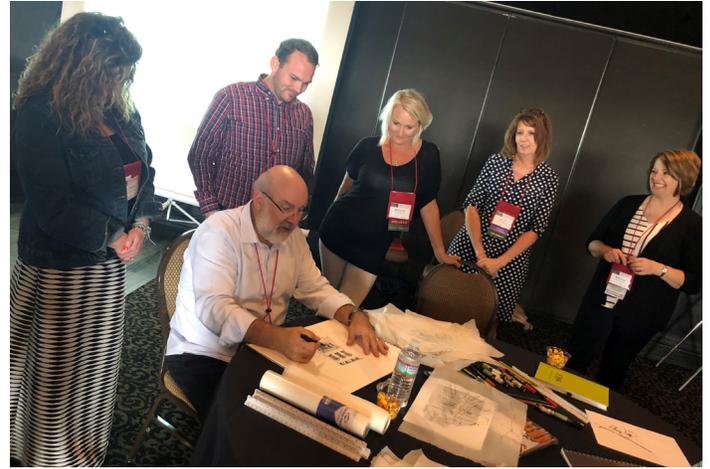
Conference attendees reconnected with colleagues and met new friends on Tuesday evening at the mixer, which was held in the award-winning CARADCO Courtyard in Dubuque's Warehouse District. Built between 1880 and 1906, the 20,000-square ft. building that was once the centerpiece of the nation's largest window and door manufacturing district has been restored and redeveloped as a vibrant mix of residential, commercial/retail and not-for-profit tenants.

Wednesday evening's networking event was held in the Steeple Square Event Center, a unique event space with a towering steeple, majestic stained-glass windows, ornate paintings and rich history.

The 2019 Iowa Downtown Conference was brought to you by IEDA's Iowa Downtown Resource Center, in partnership with the City of Dubuque, Main Street Dubuque and Travel Dubuque with thanks to its sponsors: IEDA's Community Development Block Grant, Curt and Sharon Heidt, and Renew Rural Iowa/Iowa Farm Bureau.

Save the date for the 2020 Iowa Downtown Conference, which will take place July 28 and 29 in Iowa City!

"Another new feature this year was an interactive session featuring Dennis Reynolds. Dennis shared hints and tips on how to communicate visually."



THE POWER OF PROMOTION

“So... we do this rodeo. It originated from an idea at the businessmen’s luncheon in 1904! Attendance is down a bit. It’s not competitive anymore or nationally certified or anything like that, but some people still look forward to it. “

“Why do you do it?”

“Because we always have.”

Bringing people downtown with events has and always will be important. Promotion is even one of the Main Street Program’s four tenets to developing a successful downtown. Yet, it has always been undervalued by some as the fluffy component of the Main Street Approach. I have even heard community leaders say economic development must be the focus. Of course, it does, but bringing people to town to spend money and embrace the downtown district is certainly part of the economic development strategy. Events have value! They are critical to a downtown’s success in several ways. They ring cash registers; they help activate downtown as a place to be; they provide entertainment; and, greatly influence a community’s image to residents and visitors. It has been a challenge to craft a tool that measures economic impact of events, but cities and states do this. A real estate professional once told me there can be a correlation between the value of a building and the number of people that walk by that building daily.

For some communities interested in invigorating their downtowns, events are simply a good place to start. It is low hanging fruit. While it may be extremely difficult to quickly fill up empty buildings or even restore downtown buildings, any town can organize an event. The key is to do it well. And, the hope is that activities like this increase community pride, and it is always productive to get people in the community talking to each other. Events can make that happen.



Here is the chicken or egg dilemma. I’ve worked in a lot of downtowns, and there certainly are extremes. Some communities have incredible, vibrant downtowns. Events are already on their radar screen and are probably one of the ingredients to their success. Their event focus will be to keep them fresh and exciting. The other extreme... I’ll just say it... disgraceful downtowns... perhaps the weakest area in the city, both economically and aesthetically. There are two schools of thought. Gathering people for community pride and entertainment is certainly important, but do you meet in a location where they don’t want to be? On the other hand, holding events like outdoor community dinners get people talking and noticing the weaknesses of their community, and perhaps creating ideas and volunteer networks to do something about it. I am guessing that most of you live in cities that fall somewhere in the middle of these extremes. Regardless, incorporating events into your downtown strategies is crucial.

Let’s go back to the town with the rodeo. And, nothing against rodeos. This sounds like fun. But communities always must ask themselves why they host specific events. What are the true goals for each event? For example, a Ridiculous Day Sidewalk Sale created to ring cash registers probably no longer makes sense if the downtown only has three retailers remaining. Events are too much work to not be efficient.

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THE POWER OF PROMOTION, CONTINUED

Goals can be different for events. I once worked in a community with a well-known chocolate company. They did an annual chocolate festival that was always the worst retail day of the year, but they didn't discount the value of the event for that reason. So please, take a step back. Evaluate your events based on your intentions for them and then react. It's okay to get rid of a promotion or even change it.

I frequently see small towns underserved in this area. Residents are itching for entertainment, and the downtown is sitting waiting for people to utilize it! Start with what makes sense. Every community has something it can promote. This could be heritage, a local company, a famous person, unique topography, etc. Sometimes it's easy. Perhaps you have a waterfront to utilize. Or, maybe the only item you can identify is that you're the hometown of one of the Three Stooges. That sounds like a festival opportunity to me. Some communities have negative tidbits they aren't proud of but are well-known by a national audience. One Wisconsin community is the home of a world-famous architect who was not extremely popular locally.

They chose not to develop a themed event around his greatness. Another community I worked in with a logging history has quite a sinful past. They actually play off this in a big way and have fun with it (but not too much fun). Be creative and start where it makes sense. Of course, the components of the event are more important than the theme itself. A good event can be created out of almost anything.

Not every community needs an enormous, signature festival. Smaller towns that hold tiny events (perhaps done as a series) attracting 150 people to the downtown gazebo in the summer are accomplishing something much more than fluff. They develop community pride; establish downtown as a place to go; provide entertainment; create fund raising opportunities; sometimes ring cash registers; show off downtown improvements; and get people talking. It must be done. I encourage you all to develop an event schedule that complements the work you're already doing in your downtowns.

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Save the Date! May 18 - 20, 2020, in Dallas, Texas, for Main Street Now, the largest national conference of local leaders working to advance economic opportunity in downtowns and commercial districts. Network with peers from across the country, find solutions to common problems, and discover innovative techniques and tools to help your community thrive. Get inspired by Dallas and surrounding Main Street communities while learning from their revitalization successes and challenges.



DOWNTOWN DIFFERENCE MAKER — BREANN BYE

Breann Bye is a unique downtown difference maker for many reasons. Not only has she been a Certified Main Street America Revitalization Professional since 2017, she's in an elite group of Main Street Directors in the country, who are also Historic Real Estate Development Finance Professionals. She uses this training, her master's degrees in Architecture and Community and Regional Planning and her passion for history, architecture and the development of communities to make a difference in the 6th Avenue Corridor Urban Neighborhood Main Street district in Des Moines.

She grew up in the small Iowa town of Monroe, attended a small all-women's college in western Massachusetts, spent time living in Boston and coastal Maine and eventually headed back to her home state for graduate school at Iowa State. As Breann neared graduation, she and her husband came to realize how much they loved living in the Des Moines area and that the cost of living couldn't be beat compared to east coast cities.

When asked "Why do you love where you live?", Breann offered the following incredible story of their attraction to live and work in the historic 6th Avenue Corridor. "To say I'm passionate about where I live in Des Moines is an understatement. I'm consumed by my love for it. While I attended graduate school at Iowa State we lived in a suburb, which I will leave nameless. Not to knock the 'burbs, but I'm a city girl at heart and always have been. I wanted to live in an urban neighborhood that matched the diversity of people I'd experienced while living on the east coast. And, I knew I didn't want to live in a house any younger than 75 years old.

So, we started exploring options in Des Moines, and I fell head over heels for a 1905 foursquare on the north side. It was as if my soul already knew the house. However, I'm a researcher and analyst by nature so I told my heart to quiet down while I gathered data about the area. I read everything I could find online, I drove and walked the neighborhood streets, and I reached out to people living in the area on social media with whom I had mutual connections. I could see that the area had a strong and active neighborhood association (River Bend), and I was intrigued by the existence of this relatively new organization, the 6th Avenue Corridor Urban Neighborhood Main Street Program. The house we were looking at was on 6th Avenue within the Main Street district, and I remembered the saying, 'Is the area dying? Or is it trying?' This was an area that was clearly trying.

I love living in the 6th Avenue Corridor District because it feels like living in a small town within a perfectly sized city. I know so many neighbors of all races and ethnicities within a mile radius, and I've never felt such acceptance of diversity of all kinds. I'm fascinated by our area's rich history as "North Des Moines," an independent community founded in the 1880's completely separate from Des Moines with its own mayor, council and school district. Once the largest Victorian-era suburb, North Des Moines' growth was fueled by a streetcar line along 6th Avenue connecting it to Des Moines.



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DOWNTOWN DIFFERENCE MAKER — BREANN BYE, CONTINUED

Eventually annexed into the city of Des Moines, our area later experienced decades of urban decay and disinvestment wrought by the forces of suburbanization, racism, auto-centric planning and urban renewal.”

As the 6th Avenue Corridor’s Executive Director, Breann is particularly passionate about making connections between people and projects. She loves that she gets to work with so many incredible, committed people on a daily basis—City staff and elected officials, business owners, residents, artists and developers. Breann has found that she really enjoys fundraising, even for their massive streetscape project. Her mantra is, “If you don’t ask, they can’t say yes.” She admits she has no patience, which is difficult when the wheels of progress move much more slowly than preferred. And, yet, it is patience and perseverance transforming the corridor.

One of Breann’s favorite conversations over the past few years was with an entrepreneurial family who opened a (fantastic) restaurant on 6th Avenue. When asked why they chose this location, they responded, “We live in the area, but we could have opened our restaurant anywhere. Another part of the city might have been a more obvious choice, but there’s an energy here. We knew so many good things were in the works on 6th Avenue, and we wanted to be a part of it.” It doesn’t get any better.

When not working in the yard or tackling rehab projects on their old house, Breann, her husband and two children spend time together in their vintage 1973 Airstream. As a self-



proclaimed introvert, her passions include flowers, fishing, kayaking, cultivating a mini urban farm, watching sci-fi series and making crazy, elaborate birthday cakes.

Anyone interested in learning more about the 6th Avenue Corridor in Des Moines can contact Breann anytime at director@6thavedsm.org or 641.521.9340. Breann says “I’ll talk as long as you’d like on the phone, give you a personal tour of the district, personally introduce you to our incredible board of directors and community volunteers, or invite you to sit and rock awhile (perhaps with a cocktail featuring my homegrown mint) on my front porch where you can watch the rebirth of 6th Avenue unfold before your eyes. If you’d prefer a somewhat less time intense introduction to who we are and what we do, please visit www.6thavedsm.org or better yet, on Facebook for more regular updates at www.facebook.com/6thavenuecorridor/.”

OPEN 4 BUSINESS 2019

Entrepreneurship is alive and well across the state of Iowa, and the 2019 Open 4 Business contest showcased the business expansion plans from five small business owners. Held in conjunction with the Iowa Downtown Conference, the state finals of the Main Street Open 4 Business contest were hosted in Dubuque on August 27. The field, which started with 22 applicants in May, showcased five businesses located in designated Main Street districts in Iowa.

Euphoria Coffee owners Nick and Jacey Yost from West Union received the top honor and a \$20,000 grant, which they plan to use to purchase additional roasting equipment and create an outdoor gathering space at their new Main Street location. Runner up, Blooming Acres, located in Mount Vernon, will receive a \$10,000 grant. Owner Becca Owen plans to expand her space and materials for hosting crafting classes. Third-place winners, Andrew and Misty Johnson with RJ's Plumbing & Heating in Corning, will receive a \$5,000 grant to support the purchase of new equipment and software to better track their business operations.

"I'm always wowed by our competitors. It takes guts to stand in front of a panel of judges and share your dreams for your business," said Debi Durham, director for the Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) and Iowa Finance Authority, who emceeds the event.

"They each have a unique story, but they all share a passion for their Main Streets and a commitment to using their business to make their communities better."

Luxurious Hair Care in Dubuque, owned by Shamika Ranier, and Mayberry's Coffee House & Eatery in Osceola, owned by Molly Crawford, rounded out the five semi-finalists making their pitch in this year's contest. All semi-finalists received \$8,000 in support of their business plans and for standing out among the significant field of Open 4 Business applicants.

Judges for the event included Rand Fischer, Iowa Area Development Group; Vada Grantham, Director of Entrepreneurship at DMACC; Sandy Ehrig, Iowa Farm Bureau Federation; and Lisa Shimkat, State Director of the Iowa Small Business Development Center.

This is the fifth year of the Open 4 Business contest. Businesses located in the 55 Main Street Iowa districts across the state are eligible to apply for the grants, which are administered through IEDA's Iowa Downtown Resource Center and Main Street Iowa programs. For more information about the Main Street Open 4 Business Grant program, contact Robin Bostrom, Business Specialist, Main Street Iowa, at 515.348.6176 or robin.bostrom@iowaeda.com.



TWO NEW MAIN STREET IOWA PROGRAMS ANNOUNCED

Becoming a designated Main Street Iowa program is no easy task. A community must navigate through an intense application process that targets a focus on its downtown district, drives a local commitment to economic development in the context of historic preservation, engages the community in a self-reflection process, and challenges local stakeholders to invest time, talents, and resources in new and exciting ways.

In August 2019, Iowa Economic Development Director, Debi Durham, announced the two newest Main Street Iowa communities. Coon Rapids (1,264) and Nevada (6,798) now join the ranks of 53 existing Main Street Iowa designated programs.

While their path to this significant designation has been challenging, the real work begins now. In September, Main Street Iowa staff began their intensive partnership and technical services in each community. These visits range from public relations visits to program training and action planning and market analysis processes.

Main Street Iowa is proud to extend its partnership to the communities of Coon Rapids and Nevada. For more information on each community, please refer to the full press releases:

- [Rural Coon Rapids is Newest Main Street Iowa Community](#)
- [Historic Nevada Joins Prestigious Main Street Iowa Program](#)

To learn more about the Main Street Iowa program, visit:

iowaeconomicdevelopment.com/MainStreetIowa.



DOWNTOWN GEM: CHEROKEE DEPOT, 119 SOUTH FOURTH STREET, CHEROKEE

Downtown Cherokee is the home of the Cherokee Depot which was built in 1896 and was used by the Illinois Central Railroad as a passenger station until May 1971 and as a freight station until January 1982, after which it was vacated by the railroad. The depot sat unused for many years and deteriorated until a group of local people banded together to form Depot Renovation, Inc. to renovate and save the historic landmark. The group successfully raised funds and purchased the depot complex in 1991. This amazing building and restoration reflects the importance of railroads to the development of communities like Cherokee Iowa in the early years of our nation's history. Along the way, the organization has been given a number of artifacts and documents that are displayed in the depot.

Today this impressive structure and important part of Cherokee and Iowa history is used for many purposes. It is well worth a visit! Office spaces are rented on the second floor by one business and three nonprofit groups. Another second-floor space will be available for rent soon. Rooms are also for rent for special events such as wedding receptions, graduation events and meetings. And, a number of scheduled activities such as the Western Cookout, Cherokee Area Farmers Market, Fall Family Festival and Christmas events have featured this landmark building. Depot Renovation, Inc. also honors tour requests for groups and individuals. Call 712-225-4664 to see the depot, the Little Sioux Valley Model Railroad, the Bunk Car, Caboose and all the history they represent. Congratulations to Cherokee for having the drive and foresight to save this downtown gem.



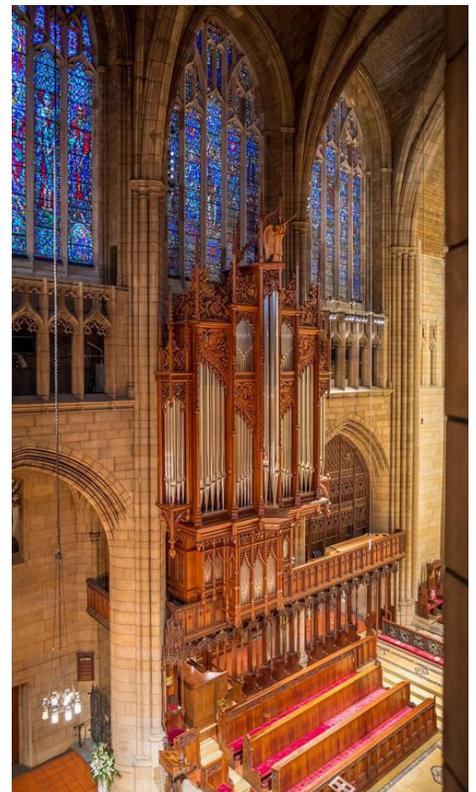
DOWNTOWN GEM: DOBSON PIPE ORGAN BUILDERS, LAKE CITY

For more than three decades, Dobson Pipe Organ Builders have constructed fine pipe organs for churches, schools, public spaces and private individuals. In every project, they strive to create timeless works of musical art that faithfully perform the literature, inspire the composer and improviser, and are a joy to both player and listener.

Since its 1974 founding by Lynn Dobson in Lake City, Iowa, Dobson Pipe Organ Builders has built 96 new pipe organs and restored several dozen more in 28 states, the District of Columbia and in England. With a staff of 23 craftsmen, Dobson builds and assembles all parts of a pipe organ in its workshop on Lake City's city square; the same people who build the organ then travel to the organ's permanent home to install it. Upcoming work includes new instruments for the University of Dubuque and churches in Chatham, Massachusetts; Sydney, Australia; and Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Other current projects include the restoration of the 1899 organ at St. John the Evangelist Church in Independence.

In addition, Dobson tunes and services approximately 100 pipe organs, chiefly in Iowa and Minnesota.

Known for the beauty of their sound and their visual artistry, Dobson organs can be found in prominent institutions across America. The firm recently completed its largest instrument to date for St. Thomas Church in New York City, which has over 7,000 pipes. Other noteworthy organs can be found in the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels in Los Angeles, and Verizon Hall in Philadelphia's Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts, home of the world-renowned Philadelphia Orchestra. Closer to home, there are Dobson organs in 20 Iowa churches and on the Iowa State, Wartburg College and Wartburg Seminary campuses. The firm has also restored numerous historic Iowa organs, including those for the Union Sunday School in Clermont and St. Wenceslaus Church in Spillville, famously played by the Czech composer Antonín Dvořák during his summer there in 1893.



AUDUBON ROSE THEATER

The city of Audubon is the county seat for Audubon County. It is important to this rural area to bring together families and to provide young people good choices for entertainment. If a family wanted to see a movie, the only theaters available were at least 30 miles away.

What makes this community unique is its accomplishments to date, with credit given to the residents of the entire community and county. Because of the support of the private sector and businesses, there has been a new clubhouse built, a Rec Center with an eight-lane bowling alley and the revitalization of the Rose Theater. Each of these endeavors has their own story, and this is the story of the Rose Theater.

The start of the revitalization of the Rose Theater started with a few couples talking at a wedding reception about the deteriorating theater. From there, a group of citizens with the common interest in saving the theater gathered in November of 2015. They called themselves the Audubon Community Cinema (ACC) group with the primary goal to save the theater and provide family friendly affordable entertainment.

By the next month, the ACC board formed and an application for a 501©3 submitted. The board consisted of nine members and approximately 20 members.

In January 2016, the charity status was approved, and the fundraising began. By the next month, enough funds had been raised to purchase the building. Immediately after the deed was transferred, the group moved into high gear.

Volunteers completely gutted the building, and a new roof installed providing a blank canvass on which to design the new modern theater.



From the start, the ACC wanted to keep the same concept as the 1916 Rose Theater. Some modern changes were inevitable. What once housed 242 seats now holds 162 “comfortable” seats with four spots for wheelchairs. The standing room only bathrooms were relocated to accommodate handicap-accessible bathrooms.

Fundraising events were held such as comedy shows, and auctions and grants were written for State and County allocated funds. Donations started to pour in from private citizens and businesses. The community’s excitement was building, especially when tours were given during T-Bone Days, a celebration that brings home alumni from all over the country. People would reminisce about their youth and the good times recalled.

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AUDUBON ROSE THEATER, CONTINUED

The Rose Theater showed its first movie in June of 2018. The result was a first-class movie theater with exceptional sound and picture quality presenting G, PG and PG13-rated movies that were affordable for all residents in the community. For a mere \$8, patrons can buy a movie ticket, a medium-size popcorn and a medium-size pop. All of this made possible because of the many volunteers running the day-to-day operations. It takes approximately 60 volunteers per month during show times that run Friday and Saturday nights with a Sunday matinee.

The revitalization of the Rose Theater cost a total of \$587,400. This price tag includes over 2,300 hours logged in volunteer labor, \$18,646 of donated materials and professional in-kind services, \$178,197 in grants, \$151,831 in business donations, \$35,750 local organizations, City and County and the balance in private donations and fundraisers.

Like many other rural communities, the challenge is to keep the downtown alive. Reviving the Rose Theater aided both the visual and economic breath to this community. The success is evident with the main street parking spots full during show times.



MORE THAN DECORATION... CUSTOMERS USE VISUAL CUES IN THE STORE ENVIRONMENT TO DETERMINE PERCEIVED PRODUCT QUALITY, PRICE POINT EXPECTATIONS AND PRODUCT VALUE

Customers love the authentic experience downtown areas provide, and districts are experiencing growth in the number and variety of retailers. Main Street Iowa and Anna Woodward Retail Display teamed up this summer to provide select Main Street Iowa towns a two-day Visual Merchandising training. The training provides each downtown district with expertise to make their specialty shops create engaging shopping experiences for its customers. Retailers learned ways to use the sales floor space more effectively, aide the customer's shopping experience, and the power of suggestion with strategic and thoughtful product placement.

Each training begins with a morning meeting open to all downtown business owners and interested stakeholders. Discussion topics include how the store environment influences customer perceptions, the emotional shopping experience, and how creating a unique sense of place or "placemaking" applies in retail spaces, as well.

Immediately following, action-based business consultations were given in up to five businesses. In each store, Anna Woodward, Visual Merchandising Expert, and Terry Poe Buschkamp, Main Street Iowa Promotions Specialist, discussed merchandising strategies related to assortment clarity, space planning, traffic flow, store layout, fixture integrity and visual support elements. With the partnership of business owners, employees, local program staff and volunteers, participants were able to immediately implement strategies in stores. This gave store owners an opportunity to apply classroom discussion to their space and business needs.



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Here's What's Poppin' in Downtown Waterloo experienced a more pronounced transformation. The training date coincidentally timed with the opening of their second location in downtown Waterloo. Jenny and Clint Bagenstos also operate the original Here's What's Poppin' location in downtown Cedar Falls, Iowa. The specialty snack shop specializes in gourmet popcorn, ice cream, candy, among other snack items including the \$5 Gourmet Hot Dog lunch.

During the visit, the traffic pattern of the store was discussed, customer buying motivations, and the logical thought process of the Here's What's Poppin' shopper. Following these conversations, work was completed on integrating dining areas among the retail selection. This positioned high-volume merchandise categories in prime locations within the store, directly in the customer sight lines and natural traffic pattern. The group chose to complete a few environmental upgrades to elevate the store appearance, and give Here's What's Poppin' an additional layer of a "specialty" touch. The floor was sectioned into specific zones based on product category, leading the floor with an impactful presentation of Here's What's Poppin' signature product, gourmet popcorn, back dropped by large Here's What's Poppin' branding. The goal behind every action was to create a "nostalgic" environment mimicking the traditional soda fountain - a candy shop model in which customers could relate.

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MORE THAN DECORATION... CUSTOMERS USE VISUAL CUES, CONTINUED

“It creates a presence that is unmistakably unique to ‘Here’s What’s Poppin’,” explained Anna Woodward, the Visual Merchandising Consultant hired by Main Street Iowa to deliver visual merchandising services in select Main Street Iowa communities. “Customers are bombarded with too many choices in products and services today, particularly as e-commerce increases product availability. It is the responsibility of the store owner to create an experience unlike anything customers have to compare to,” Woodward added.

Business owners were also led through activities to evaluate their business, merchandise assortment, and vision for their store during the morning instructional meeting. Often times a large variety of goods can interfere with merchandise clarity

and dilute powerful product presentations. “By listing my top five categories, I realized I need to refocus,” said Cathy Lafrenz of Miss Effie’s in Donahue, Iowa. “I will sell my existing inventory and narrow my focus to kitchen and farm-inspired merchandise,” she added.

The two-day Visual Merchandising training is available to communities outside of the Main Street Iowa network. Anna Woodward of Anna Woodward Retail Display can be reached at 515.290.4566 or via email at AnnaWoodwardRetailDisplay@outlook.com. Follow the retail adventures and shop visits on Instagram @annawoodwardretaildisplay and like on Facebook, Anna Woodward Retail Display.



COMMUNITY RESOURCE EXAMPLES AVAILABLE

Every community and commercial district is different, with its own distinctive assets and sense of place. In order to increase the social, political, economic and physical values of downtown, strategies need to be developed to promote downtown and stimulate appropriate reinvestments in the properties and businesses.

The Iowa Downtown Resource Center has gathered a wide variety of [community resource examples](#) (see below) to help further local revitalization initiatives.

Have excellent examples to share? If yes, please send them to downtown@iowaeda.com.

Examples are available for download focusing on the following activities:

BOARD GOVERNANCE Board members are the fiduciaries who steer the organization towards a sustainable future by adopting sound, ethical, and legal governance and financial management policies, as well as by making sure the nonprofit has adequate resources to advance its mission. Examples include: board of directors – commitment letter, roles and responsibilities, the ideal board; committees – roles and responsibilities; meetings – agendas and helpful hints; planning – plans of action, strategic planning and vision and mission statements; policies and procedures – bylaws, financial and general; staff – contracts, letters, hiring, job descriptions, reviews and evaluation, roles and responsibilities and sustainability



ORGANIZATION involves creating a strong foundation for a sustainable revitalization effort, including cultivating partnerships, community involvement and resources for the district. Examples include communications – internal communication, newsletters, outreach and social media; fundraising – examples of internal communication, newsletters, outreach efforts, reports and meetings; volunteerism – articles, recognition, recruitment and training.



ECONOMIC VITALITY focuses on capital, incentives and other economic and financial tools to assist new and existing businesses, catalyze property development, and create a supportive environment for entrepreneurs and innovators that drive local economies. Examples include assessment – business visitation and market analysis; business development – business recruitment, retention, succession, incentives and promotion; real estate development, downtown housing, incentives, project feasibility and project tax assessment



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COMMUNITY RESOURCE EXAMPLES AVAILABLE, CONTINUED

DESIGN supports a community's transformation by enhancing the physical and visual assets that set the commercial district apart. Examples include buildings - accessibility, ADA, awnings and canopies, building rehab and maintenance, energy efficiency, interiors, masonry, paint, signs, storefronts and windows; design management - building inventory and survey, design management guidelines and review, National Register and historic research; public spaces - public art and placemaking, public improvements and streetscape, traffic and parking; and visual merchandising/ window displays, etc.



PROMOTION positions the downtown or commercial district as the center of the community and hub of economic activity, while creating a positive image that showcases a community's unique characteristics. Examples include assessment and planning - event evaluation and planning calendars; marketing and image activities - digital marketing, branding, media strategy, etc.; retail and business promotions - buy local, retail business and promotion examples and Small Business Saturday; special events - antiques, car show, farmers market, festivals, food/ beverage, holidays/seasonal, etc.; sponsorships - solicitation and recognition examples



For more information, visit: iowaeconomicdevelopment.com/idrc

CONTACTS

For more information about the Iowa Downtown Resource Center and the services offered, contact Jim Engle, 515.348.6180 or james.engle@iowaeda.com.

To find out more about the Main Street Iowa program, contact Michael Wagler, 515.348.6184 or michael.wagler@iowaeda.com.

To contribute articles and photos to the "Downtown Resource", contact Darlene Strachan, 515.348.6182 or darlene.strachan@iowaeda.com.

RESOURCE CONNECTIONS

Community Resources [Sharepoint Folder](#)

Online resources and tools to help make downtown more viable.

Iowa Downtown Resource Center iowaeconomicdevelopment.com/idrc

Learn about the importance of downtown development and how to use tools for downtown viability.

Iowa Economic Development Authority iowaeconomicdevelopment.com

Works to strengthen economic and community vitality by building partnerships and leveraging resources to make Iowa the choice for people and business.

Keep Iowa Beautiful keepiowabeautiful.com

Committed to enhancing the image and appearance of the countryside and Iowa communities. An affiliate of the national Keep America Beautiful program.

Larned A. Waterman Iowa Nonprofit Resource Center inrc.law.uiowa.edu

A center to help Iowa's charitable nonprofit organizations become more effective in building their communities.

Main Street America mainstreet.org

The national movement helping revitalize older and historic commercial districts for more than 35 years.

Main Street Iowa iowaeconomicdevelopment.com/MainStreetIowa

Iowa's program to work with selected communities to revitalize historic commercial districts.

National Park Service www.nps.gov/search/?affiliate=nps&query=preservation+briefs

Guidance on preserving, rehabilitating and restoring historic buildings.

National Trust for Historic Preservation savingplaces.org

The trust protects and celebrates America's diverse history.

Sidewalks

cedar-rapids.org/local_government/departments_g_-_v/public_works/sidewalk_repair_program.php

Cedar Rapids, IA, Sidewalk Repair & Reimbursement Program

como.gov/Council/Commissions/downloadfile.php?id=18599

Columbia, MO, Point of Sale Program-Fixing Our Broken Sidewalks

walkdenver.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/15.08.15-Rethinking-Denver-Sidewalk-Policy.pdf

Denver, CO, Rethinking Denver Sidewalk Policy

State Historic Preservation Office (Iowa) iowaculture.gov/history/preservation

Information ranging from archaeology to getting a site listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Travel Iowa traveliowa.com

Trip ideas. Things to do. Places to stay. Events calendar. Travel by region. Travel guide and map.

Volunteer Iowa volunteeriowa.org

Resources for organizations and communities to engage Iowans in addressing pressing community challenges.