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July 29, 2023

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**Missouri's Premiere Downtown Revitalization Conference Awards -
2023**

Missouri Main Street Connection Inc. (MMSC) presented downtown awards recognizing performance excellence during Missouri's Premier Downtown Revitalization Conference in St. Louis on July 28, 2023. The event was hosted at the Hilton St. Louis at the Ballpark.

The ceremony on Friday night honored communities, individuals, businesses, and organizations from across the state that have completed exemplary work in downtown revitalization. Competitive nominations were submitted for projects, activities, and individuals in 13 different categories that covered aspects of design, economic vitality, organization, promotion, and other efforts in downtown revitalization.

Missouri Main Street Connection is the leading statewide nonprofit organization devoted to preservation-based economic development. Through the Main Street America™ movement and our partners, we empower community revitalization by celebrating, supporting, and sustaining Missouri historic commercial districts in both rural and urban settings.

In 2022 Missouri Main Street communities have created 332 net new jobs, 146 net new businesses, saved 303 buildings, received \$105.5 million dollars in public and private investments, and accumulated 62,165 volunteer hours in their districts. The cumulative total investment between 2006-2022 surpassed \$1.26 billion or adjusted for inflation \$1.63 billion!

**Albany and Brookfield awarded Outstanding Community
Empowerment Grant Community**

Albany is a community that joined the Main Street program in 2020 to revitalize its downtown area. Despite the challenges of the pandemic, the Main Street board and committees worked hard to organize events, beautify the square, and support local businesses. Some of their achievements include: launching a weekly farmers market that attracted vendors, customers, and new businesses to the downtown square, started

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a scavenger hunt that increased foot traffic and sales for local shops, transformed an unsightly alley into a colorful and inviting space with murals, lights, and plants, created a cleanup day and installed chair sculptures to make the courthouse square more attractive and welcoming, and planted flowerpots around the downtown square through partnerships with the high school's greenhouse and Mosaic Medical Center's Nurse Practice Council.

Main Street Albany has shown resilience, creativity, and community spirit in its efforts to make downtown Albany a vibrant and thriving place.

For more information on this award contact Main Street Albany's Mackenzie Manring at 660-726-3807 or econdev@albanymo.net.

Brookfield is a rural community that joined the Main Street program to revitalize its historic downtown area. The Brookfield Area Growth Partnership established Main Street Brookfield as a stand-alone organization with four committees: Organization, Design, Promotions, and Economic Vitality.

The organization hired an Executive Director and started fundraising for its projects and activities. Some of their achievements include: organizing and promoting events that engaged the community and marketed the downtown businesses, advertised on local and state media outlets securing a Smithsonian exhibit for 2024, partnered with the City Council to receive \$25,000 for Capital Improvement projects, established a Façade Matching Grant program for downtown businesses and building owners, planted flowers, painted railings and storefronts, washed windows, decorated for Christmas, and hosted a Christmas lighting celebration with a parade. They also collaborated with the high school, the police department, and Parks & Rec for Spring Main Street cleanup.

Lastly, they are addressing the concerns of local business owners by inviting speakers for branding seminars and economic vitality workshops. They also created a business inventory and a survey to assess the needs and challenges of the downtown businesses.

Main Street Brookfield has shown dedication, enthusiasm, and vision in its efforts to revitalize the historic downtown area.

For more information on this award contact Main Street Brookfield's Cheyenne Graff at 641-781-0042 or mainstreet@brookfieldmissouri.us.

Cape Girardeau's Danny Essner Awarded Volunteer of the Year

Danny Essner is not just a volunteer. He is a leader, a problem-solver, a fundraiser, and a visionary. He has been involved in planning and executing various events and projects that benefit the downtown area, such as the Cape Riverfront Market, Manifolds on Main Street, Riverfront Fall Festival, and cleaning and beautifying the river wall. He has taken initiative and leadership in finding solutions to problems, raising funds, and securing new investors for Old Town Cape. He always has the health of Downtown Cape at the top of his mind and wants to make it the best it can be.

Danny is a difference-maker and he once said, "I volunteer because I want to make a difference and typically volunteer in areas, I am passionate about, like Downtown Cape, where I want to make it the best it can be." And he has certainly made a difference. Because of his efforts, Downtown Cape has become more vibrant, attractive, and prosperous. He has brought hundreds, if not thousands, of people to the downtown area, supporting Old Town Cape's mission to promote the district.

Danny likes to take on projects that are challenging and gets a lot of satisfaction out of finding solutions to problems that seemed unsolvable at first glance. He has inspired all with his enthusiasm, creativity, and perseverance. He has shown us that nothing is impossible when you have a vision and a passion. He motivates people to join him in his quest to make Downtown Cape the best it can be.

For more information on this award contact Old Town Cape's Liz Haynes at 573-334-8085 or lizhaynes@oldtowncape.org.

Best Downtown Housing Project Awarded to Chillicothe's Central School Apartments and Lee's Summit Elevate 114 Apartments

The Zabka family renovated the historic Central School of Chillicothe, a building that educated children since the late 1800s, slated for demolition. The Zabka family turned the 58,000 square foot building into residential and commercial housing units, creating 11 two-bedroom units, 12 one-bedroom units, and a Daycare Center. The housing and childcare needs are essential for a growing small town, and the preservation of the town's history and memories is important for many Chillicothe residents.

The project preserved many features of the old school, such as the

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playground and the original school bell from the 1800s. They gave a special tour of the renovated building to the retired teachers, who reminisced about their classrooms and students. They marveled at their old classrooms that were now spacious apartments.

The Zabka family is committed to Chillicothe and its downtown revitalization. Nathan Zabka is inventive and courageous in finding solutions to save old buildings and make them useful and enjoyable for generations to come.

For more information on this award contact Main Street Chillicothe's Tomie Walker at 660-646-4071 or director@downtownchilli.com.

Elevate 114 Apartments is a multi-family housing development that supports the economic growth and vitality of Downtown Lee's Summit. The development was created by Cityscape Residential, a developer who worked closely with the church, the downtown community, and the City staff to redevelop a four-acre property that had been on the market for over five years.

The development preserved the historic church sanctuary, built in 1922 and is architecturally unique and beloved by many Lee's Summit residents. The sanctuary was converted into the leasing office and tenant amenities, such as co-working and meeting spaces. The development also includes over 400 parking space garage, which ensured that new residents did not take away any public parking from the existing downtown businesses and customers.

Elevate 114 Apartments features 270 new housing units in a mix of studios, one-bedrooms, and two-bedroom market rate apartments. The development represents the largest single one-time private investment in Downtown Lee's Summit history at \$52 million. The annual economic impact of the new residents is estimated to be over \$5 million to the downtown community.

Elevate 114 Apartments is more than just a housing project, it is an integral part of the downtown community and has influenced the priorities of the Main Street program. The new residents support the downtown businesses, volunteer at events, and serve as downtown ambassadors. The management and staff of Elevate 114 embrace downtown and have sponsored events, such as the Downtown Wine Walk. It is a development that celebrates downtown Lee's Summit, its heritage and invites people to discover and appreciate its charm and potential.



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For more information on this award contact Downtown Lee's Summit Main Street's Donnie Rodgers at 816-246-6598 or donnie@downtownls.org.

Outstanding Public Official, Accredited/Associate Tier Awarded to Warrensburg's Stormy Taylor.

Stormy Taylor is a local go-getter and an outstanding person in the Warrensburg community. She is the Johnson County Recorder of Deeds and a former Executive Director of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Johnson County. She has been involved with Warrensburg Main Street since 2013, helping bring back the local fall festival, Burg Fest. She has been a key community partner for other Main Street events, such as the Downtown Spooktacular, the Wedding Walk, and the Art Walk. She has been recognized as the community partner of the year in 2021 for her initiatives in decorating and creating a haunted house with the courthouse. She also helped create a stronger connection between the county officials and Main Street, resulting in more communication and financial support.

Stormy is also a member of some of Main Street's subcommittees, such as the art committee and the Burg Fest committee. She is an advocate for bringing positive change through art to downtown and has a vision for its future. She also volunteers her time during the festival to ensure its success and organizes the Chalk Walk Competition. Stormy is always looking for ways to support and promote Main Street and downtown. She attends every event and encourages the community to do the same.

Stormy is a pillar of Warrensburg and a cheerleader for Main Street. She has a heart for the community and brings energy, enthusiasm, and ideas to everything she does.

For more information on this award contact Warrensburg's Jill Purvis at 660-429-3988 or director@warrensburgmainstreet.org.

Cape Girardeau's River and Rails awarded Best Façade Rehabilitation, over \$20,000.

River & Rails is a historic brick warehouse that was built in 1916 and revived in 2021 by Brennon Todt of Todt Roofing & Construction, Inc. The building, dormant for 20 years, is now a vibrant retail hub in the heart of Cape Girardeau's downtown. Using Tax Increment Financing incentives and historic preservation tax credits, Todt transformed the

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13,470 square foot building into five attractive and modern storefronts housing various businesses, such as an olive oil and vinegar retailer and a hot sauce shop. The project created jobs, increased tax revenue, and enhanced the appeal of the downtown district.

Located at a strategic intersection of Main, William, and Water streets, it serves as an anchor for Main Street connecting the nearby historic buildings, park, and parking lots. The building has a red brick facade with large door openings and small windows reflecting its original character with interior features like cement floors and wooden piers and rafters adding charm and warmth to the spaces. Todt preserved these features while updating the windows, doors, lighting, and HVAC systems.

The project was inspired by the collaboration of the former owner and students at Southeast Missouri State University, who developed prospective plans for the building's reuse. They showed how to preserve the building's historic features, divide the space efficiently, and made a case for incentives and tax credits. Todt used many of their recommendations while adding his own vision and expertise to make the project a success.

River & Rails is a shining example of how historic preservation can revitalize a community's identity and economy. River & Rails is a landmark that celebrates the past and embraces the future.

For more information on this award contact Old Town Cape's Liz Haynes at 573-334-8085 or lizhaynes@oldtowncape.org.

Creative Place Making Project Awarded to Warrensburg Main Street

In 2019, Warrensburg Main Street wanted to add more art to the historic downtown district and created an art sub-committee to generate ideas and visions. In 2021 the committee planned to create a selfie trail with small pops of art that people could interact with. During the planning, the committee received a bid from a local artist, Christian Culter, who proposed a graffiti style mural using the Warrensburg rising sun logo.

The committee liked the mural idea but decided to make it a separate project from the selfie trail. The mural was approved by the Warrensburg Art Commission and the City Council. It was painted on a 75-foot wall on the north side of City Hall. The mural used bright colors of spray paint and a stencil of the rising sun logo, creating a striking contrast with the brick wall.

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The mural was completed in 2022 for a cost of only \$600 and a huge impact on the downtown district. It welcomed train passengers from Amtrak and downtown visitors and became a popular spot for portraits and senior photographs. The mural showcased the creativity and identity of Warrensburg, and its rising sun logo. The mural is a creative new promotion that showcases Warrensburg's culture and potential. It attracts visitors and residents to the downtown district and fosters a sense of community and pride among the participants. It is a promotion that celebrates Warrensburg and its heritage while inviting people to discover and appreciate its charm and vitality.

For more information on this award contact Warrensburg's Jill Purvis at 660-429-3988 or director@warrensburgmainstreet.org.

**Best Façade Rehabilitation Project, under \$20,000 Awarded to
Maryville's MTE Office Center Façade Improvement Project**

MTE Office Center is a family-owned business that started in 1935 as Maryville Typewriter Exchange, servicing and selling typewriters for the region. The business grew and adapted to the changing times, now providing office supplies and equipment to the community and the government. The business also changed its name to MTE Office Center, reflecting its evolution and legacy. The business is now run by the fourth generation of the family, Elizabeth Christiansen.

In 2022, MTE Office Center updated its exterior with the help of the City of Maryville's Façade Improvement Grant Program. The program reimbursed 50% of the eligible project expenses, which totaled \$19,500. The project involved removing old awnings and signage, cleaning and repainting the brick, installing new light fixtures, and adding new signs and window decals. The project included improving the back of the building with new stairs and paint. The project gave the building a clean, modern, and progressive look that matched the dedication and quality of MTE Office Center.

MTE Office Center is a creative new development that showcases Maryville's culture and potential. It attracts customers and visitors to the downtown district and fosters a sense of community and pride among the participants. It is a development that celebrates Maryville and its heritage while inviting people to discover and appreciate its charm and vitality.

For more information on this award contact Downtown Maryville's DeAnn Davison at 660-582-0344 or ddavison@maryville.org.

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Accredited/Associate Tier**

The Clocktower Scavenger Hunt is a creative new promotion that Old Town Cape launched in October 2022 to increase engagement with the community and support local businesses. The promotion involves hiding a miniature clock tower, modeled after the iconic downtown landmark, in a different downtown location each month. The clue to the location is given in the weekly “What’s Up Downtown” email newsletter, which subscribers have to sign up to participate. The first person to find the clocktower is encouraged to take a photo and post it on social media, tagging the business where it was found.

The promotion was conceived by Old Town Cape’s Promotion Committee, who wanted to enhance the newsletter and attract more visitors to the downtown area. They chose the clocktower as the object to hide because it represents Old Town Cape’s mission of promoting the downtown district. They partnered with Kent Library at Southeast Missouri State University, who volunteered their time and skills to 3D print eight miniature clocktowers. The promotion has been a huge success, with many participants expressing their excitement and enjoyment of the scavenger hunt which helped increase the newsletter subscribers by hundreds in just a few months. It is a promotion that celebrates the downtown area and its landmarks while inviting people to discover and appreciate its charm and potential.

For more information on this award contact Old Town Cape’s Liz Haynes at 573-334-8085 or lizhaynes@oldtowncape.org.

**Outstanding Public Official, Affiliate Tier Awarded to Smithville’s
Damien Boley**

Damien Boley is the Mayor of Smithville. He has been instrumental in revitalizing downtown Smithville, which was struggling with poor infrastructure, vacant buildings, and limited retail opportunities. He has helped transform the downtown into a thriving community on the rise by assisting and advocating for affiliation with the Missouri Main Street Program in 2020, which created a progressive organization that works on the four-point approach to downtown development.

He has provided unwavering support and active participation to the Smithville Main Street District and its events, lending his resources and leadership skills to make them a success, providing resources and guidance to young entrepreneurs who have started businesses in the

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Smithville Main Street District, including a coffee shop and a fitness studio. Under the mayor's administration, improvements have been made to the design of downtown Smithville by securing new roads, sidewalks, and parking spaces, as well as commissioning murals around the downtown area, and lastly, helping enhance the promotion of Smithville by working with the Parks and Recreation department and the Main Street district to market their events, as well as using his extensive network to create contacts and attract volunteers.

Damien Boley is a compassionate and hardworking public figure who has made significant contributions to the growth and development of downtown Smithville.

For more information on this award contact Smithville Main Street District's Alyssa Sanders at 816-343-4805 or alyssa@smithvillemainstreetdistrict.com.

Joplin's Muir Block Awarded Best Historic Preservation Project

The Muir Block is a historic brick building built in 1891 and renovated in 2021 by Lori and Jeremy Haun, who are passionate about preserving downtown Joplin's heritage. The building, which had been neglected and damaged for decades, is now a vibrant mixed-use property housing a bakery and coffee shop, two first floor residential units, and six upstairs apartments. The project used federal and state historic tax credits to restore the building's original features, such as the oriel windows, the skylights, and the trim and doors. The project added modern amenities, such as concrete flooring, granite countertops, and stainless appliances. The project created jobs, increased tax revenue, and enhanced the appeal of the downtown district.

The Muir Block is part of the Main and Eighth Street Historic District, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The district has lost many of its historic buildings due to fire, neglect, and urban renewal. The Hauns realized that saving the Muir Block and neighboring Willard building was crucial for maintaining the integrity and connection of the downtown and midtown areas. Their vision and dedication have inspired other developers to invest in the 800 and 900 blocks of Main Street, where new buildings have been built or are planned.

The Muir Block is a shining example of how historic preservation can revitalize a community's identity and economy. The project has brought new life and energy to downtown Joplin and has celebrated its past and embraced its future. The Muir Block is a landmark that offers comfort,

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convenience, and charm to its tenants and patrons.

For more information on this award contact Downtown Joplin Alliance's Lori Haun at 417-529-3888 or lori@downtownjoplin.com.

**Creative New Promotion, Affiliate Tier Awarded to
Smithville Main Street District**

The Smithville Whiskey Event and Vendor Market is a creative new promotion that showcases Smithville as a charming town with diverse events and supports the local distilling community. The event features whiskey tastings from various distilleries, live music, food vendors, and yard games. The event attracts whiskey enthusiasts from all over the region and provides an opportunity to explore whiskey's history and culture.

The event was planned and executed by Cara Braithwaite, the Promotion Committee Chair of Smithville Main Street District, with the help of the Executive Director and volunteers. She contacted local distilleries and invited them to participate in the event, with distilleries from the community and Kansas City attending. She turned the courtyard into a hub of activity and excitement for the event, with some family friendly games, music, and vendors. The event was a huge success, selling over 300 tickets and had an economic impact. The event was held at a time when the downtown businesses were open and could benefit from the increased traffic. A win-win for both the organization and the businesses.

The Smithville Whiskey Event and Vendor Market is our nomination for the Creative New Promotion Award because it showcases the creativity and innovation in creating an event that benefits both organization and community. The effort, hard work, and creativity in planning this event were incredible, especially after you discover that Cara was only 19 years old at the time.

For more information on this award contact Smithville Main Street District's Alyssa Sanders at 816-343-4805 or alyssa@smithvillemainstreetdistrict.com.

**Outstanding Economic Impact Project Awarded to Washington's
Waterworks Building - WashMo on the Go and Joplin's Harry M.
Cornell Arts & Entertainment Complex Awarded**

The Waterworks building was built in 1888-89 by the Interstate Gas and Waterworks Company. A superintendent lived in the building until 1973.

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From that time the building housed many businesses including an art gallery and an antique store. In 2019 the building became unoccupied for the first time in 25 years.

The City of Washington put out a tenant search in June of 2021, but they knew improvements needed to be made before any business could occupy the space. In 2022 a \$426,400 renovation was approved. Repointing, capping the chimney, refurbishing exterior doors, replacing windows, and painting the wood trim on the outside were some of the improvements made to the building. In the summer of 2022, the city agreed to a lease with Downtown Washington Inc. board member, Toni Cavin.

Toni saw a need for a place in Washington that showed off not only Washington's history but nature and commerce as well. Toni opened her new business WashMo on the Go on August 27, 2022. One of Toni's visions for the space included a "hands-on" children's museum. It features a 2,000-gallon fish tank with Missouri River fish, a Lewis & Clark replica boat, a small train car to sit in, a touchable table with locally sourced furs, bones, insects, and rocks and a local animals' diorama.

WashMo on the Go carries products from 46 businesses and artists in the Washington area which includes antiques, vintage clothing, and seasonal décor. WashMo on the Go has become a staple in Downtown Washington for visitors using the train, trails, and river.

In October of 2022, WashMo on the Go became a stop on the Lewis & Clark National Historic trail and is a member of the Junior Ranger Program. This venture took a vacant building in need of some love and turned it into a must stop in Washington, Missouri.

For more information on this award contact Downtown Washington, Inc.'s Tyler King at 636-239-1743 or tyler@downtownwashmo.org.

**Joplin's Harry M. Cornell Arts & Entertainment Complex Awarded
Outstanding Economic Impact Project, Accredited/Associate Tier
Community**

Downtown Joplin was once the cultural heart of the tri-state district, with many theaters and music halls that hosted world-class performers. However, urban renewal and the decline of small businesses led to the loss of these gathering spaces and the notion that downtown was no longer the place to be.

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Connect2Culture, a group dedicated to enhancing community through culture, opened the Harry M. Cornell Arts & Entertainment Complex in November of 2022, after more than 10 years of planning and fundraising. The complex is a 46,000 square foot building that includes a performance hall, gallery space, an outdoor plaza with an amphitheater, and more. The complex is located on the site of the former Shubert Theater, one of the most glorious theaters in downtown Joplin's history.

The opening of the complex was celebrated with a weekend of performances and gallery openings for donors, supporters, and the community. The complex has hosted or scheduled over 18 live performances for the spring and summer already. The complex is a boost to the downtown economy, as patrons visit restaurants and bars before and after the shows.

The Cornell Complex showcases downtown Joplin's cultural heritage and potential, attracts world-class visual and performing artists from all over the world, and fosters a sense of community and fun among the participants.

For more information on this award contact Downtown Joplin Alliance's Lori Haun at 417-529-3888 or lori@downtownjoplin.com.

Premier Partner Awarded to City of Excelsior Springs

The City of Excelsior Springs has been a creative and supportive partner for the Downtown Excelsior Partnership, Inc. (DEP). The city has used its ARPA funds and other resources to help with various projects and activities that benefit the downtown district and the community. Some of these include securing \$850,000 in Clay County ARPA funding to create a watershed masterplan for Downtown Excelsior Springs and to manage stormwater in relation to the Community Center aquatics facility and the City and DEP entered into an Economic Development Agreement to use Placer.ai, a location analytics company that collects geolocation data from mobile devices. This agreement has helped DEP better understand the behavior and origin of visitors, as well as the feasibility of hotels and road improvements.

The City provided \$50,000 of ARPA funds to DEP to administer a façade grant program for the businesses and property owners in the Historic District. The program is designed to improve the physical appearance and structural integrity of historic buildings, restore historic character, make downtown more attractive, and encourage additional business investment. DEP received 18 applications and awarded 14 grants, which



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resulted in a private building investment of nearly \$150,000...a great return on investment!

The two organizations partnered to complete a Real Estate Redevelopment Strategy with Joe Borgstrom through the Missouri Main Street Downtown Strong Grant Program. The strategy provided market data, retail gaps, opportunities, market segmentation, and district strategies for redevelopment. It also provided property specific market data and reports that are helping DEP rehabilitate some of the white elephant buildings in downtown. Lastly, the city helped DEP add custom bike racks to the streetscape of downtown, promoting biking to the growing biking community.

The City of Excelsior Springs supports DEP as an economic development organization and believes in its mission of downtown revitalization. The city has been instrumental in strengthening DEP and advancing its projects and activities.

For more information on this award contact Downtown Excelsior Springs' Lyndsey Baxter at 816-637-2811 or exec@visitesprings.com.