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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**West Plains Downtown Revitalization Inc. Awarded \$10,000
Placemaking Grant from AARP Missouri and Missouri Main Street
Connection**

Kansas City, Missouri – January 22, 2025 – AARP Missouri and Missouri Main Street Connection (MMSC) are excited to announce that West Plains Downtown Revitalization Inc. has been awarded a \$10,000 placemaking grant, funded by AARP Missouri. This grant opportunity, launched in September 2024 at the “Pop-Up or Permanent – Placemaking Makes a Difference” workshop that took place in Sedalia, MO. Community members representing nonprofit organizations that focused on revitalization gathered at this workshop to learn more about enhancing their community through placemaking and to learn about applying for funding to implement a creative placemaking project that would enhance their community. Following the workshop, AARP Missouri and MMSC received grant applications from 18 communities and selected the winner in December of 2024.

West Plains Downtown Revitalization Inc. will use the grant to complete a project initiated in July 2024, which involves permanently closing three one-way alleyways in the historic downtown district. The goal is to transform these alleyways into well-lit, pedestrian-friendly spaces that connect parking areas to shopping districts, enhancing community livability.

The redesigned spaces will prioritize safety with improved lighting and visibility, while also creating inclusive public areas where people of all ages can gather, socialize, and enjoy the downtown atmosphere. The project aims to foster a sense of community while ensuring accessibility and security for all. The grant will help cover costs for items such as armed benches, bike racks, tables and chairs, game tables, planter boxes, and sunshades. The total projected cost of the transformation project is \$10,000.

"We are incredibly grateful to AARP Missouri and Missouri Main Street Connection for their support," said Stacey Tune, President, West Plains Downtown Revitalization Inc. "This grant will enable us to continue our mission of revitalizing downtown West Plains and creating a thriving community hub."

Sheila Holm, Community Outreach Director at AARP Missouri, expressed her enthusiasm: "We are excited to have partnered with Missouri Main Street Connection on the placemaking grant opportunity and look forward to seeing the completion of the West Plains project. Placemaking inspires people to collectively reimagine and reinvent public spaces as the heart of every community."

Gayla Rotten, State Director of Missouri Main Street Connection, added, "We are thrilled for AARP Missouri's continued partnership with communities across the state, such as the Community Challenge Grant program and placemaking grant opportunities, that helps cities create livable communities."

A formal check presentation to West Plains Downtown Revitalization Inc. will take place on Friday, January 24, at 11:00 a.m. in West Plains. The presentation will feature Stacey Tune, President, West Plains Downtown Revitalization Inc.; Craig Eichelman, State Director, AARP Missouri; Sheila Holm, Community Outreach Director, AARP Missouri; Jay Hardenbrook, Advocacy Director, AARP Missouri; Keith Winge, State Community Development Director, MMSC; Sam Anselm, West Plains City Administrator; Jessica Nease, West Plains City Council; Joy Pace, Director, West Plains Senior Center; Melissa Wharton, Tourism Manager, City of West Plains; and other dignitaries. The project is scheduled for completion in Summer 2025.

AARP Missouri and MMSC are committed to supporting local communities through placemaking grants that encourage the development of inclusive, accessible, and engaging public spaces. The grant award to West Plains Downtown Revitalization Inc. underscores their dedication to fostering vibrant communities across Missouri.

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About AARP

AARP is the nation's largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to empowering people 50 and older to choose how they live as they age. With a nationwide presence, AARP strengthens communities and advocates for what matters most to the more than 100 million Americans 50-plus and their families: health security, financial stability and personal fulfillment. AARP also produces the nation's largest circulation publications: AARP The Magazine and AARP Bulletin. To learn more, visit www.aarp.org/about-aarp/, www.aarp.org/español or follow [@AARP](https://www.facebook.com/AARP), [@AARPenEspañol](https://www.facebook.com/AARPenEspañol) and [@AARPadvocates](https://www.facebook.com/AARPadvocates) on social media.

About Missouri Main Street Connection

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. Since 2005, Missouri Main Street communities have seen \$1 billion in public and private investment and MMSC has worked in over 180 communities. These Missouri Main Street communities and districts are thriving and vibrant by engaging the community members in revitalization strategies to create experiences that preserve their history and culture. Follow Missouri Main Street Connection on Facebook [@MissouriMainStreetConnection](https://www.facebook.com/MissouriMainStreetConnection) and Instagram [@MOmainstreet](https://www.instagram.com/MOmainstreet). Mailing address for inquiries: PO Box 1066, Branson, MO 65615.