

THE WORD ON THE STREET

OFFICE OF LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR PAT QUINN

October & November, 2006

Lt. Governor Quinn Designates Hardin County Main Street



Lt. Governor Quinn, Hardin County Board President Todd Carr and Representative Brandon Phelps

Hardin County Designation Ceremonies were held August 10th at the historic Rose Hotel in Elizabethtown. This State Historic Site sits on a bluff overlooking the Ohio River and was also the scene of a memorable Director's Workshop in July, 2005. A year later, the lawn held a crowd of proud community members as Lt. Governor Pat Quinn presented Hardin County with their Designation Plaque. Hardin County is the first county in Illinois to become a Main Street program. Three towns are included; Elizabethtown, Rosiclare and Cave in Rock.

With a modest county-wide population of 5,000 the individual communities could not sustain a Main Street program on their own. This didn't stop this dedicated group of volunteers, they simply banded together for the welfare of all. Besides hosting a portion of the 2005 Summer Director's Workshop, Hardin County Main Street has been recognized as a Governor's Hometown Award recipient; has secured over \$150,000 in grant funds; purchased their own building to utilize as an office, tourism

information center and antique mall; partnered with Main Street Golconda to receive Champion Community status for Hardin and Pope Counties through USDA Rural Development; produces the annual Heritage Festival; and partnered with Southeastern Illinois' College's Workforce and Small Business Development Center to bring the services of the college to Elizabethtown



including community education and business planning services. Hardin County Main Street is also known for their exceptionally good food served at every meeting.

HARDIN COUNTY we are proud of you, welcome to Illinois Main Street!



Remember to register online at www.IllinoisMainStreet.org by November 6th!

The Holidays are coming, the Holidays are coming! The National Retail Federation has compiled holiday trend information in its 2006 Holiday Survival Kit, available now as a free download at www:nrf.com. The kit includes release dates of NRF holiday research, historical holiday spending information, insights from last year's consumer surveys and a list of frequently asked questions. Great information for you and your downtown businesses!

Aledo, Batavia and St. Charles "Ladies" Events Receive National Recognition

The following has been edited from an article that will appear in the 2006 November issue of *Downtown Promotion Reporter*. Find the *Reporter* at www.downtowndevelopment.com.

Targeting Groups

Girl-power events court the fairer sex

"Girls just want to have fun," as a song went, and many downtowns are pursuing ladies young and older as a market ideally suited to their business mix. Downtown businesses often participate by offering girly things like wine, beer, and chocolate tasting, and spa pleasures like massages and paraffin dip treatments. Some downtowns are finding the "ladies living large" theme a good way to promote the assets that distinguish them as places for fun. For example, Batavia Main Street introduced Girls Day Out last April in downtown Batavia, IL, (pop. 23,870). One of the more unusual things that Batavia has downtown is a theatrical costume, makeup, and accessory shop - all the props necessary for Hollywood souvenir photos. "They could dress up in any of the costumes and get a free digital picture with their group," says Britta McKenna, executive director, Batavia MainStreet. She emailed attendees their dress-up photos after the event and thanked them for coming. "They actually [wrote] back with a lot of nice testimonials, so now we can use those for next year," she says. Batavia Main Street made several miscalculations in preparing for the debut of Girls Day Out that organizers learned from. For one, the event drew some attendees from out of the area but began at 10 a.m. with a one-hour continental brunch, which didn't please attendees who arrived late. Once the brunch let out, the roughly 50 attendees tended to follow one another and cluster, which meant businesses were either overwhelmed or neglected. This year, Batavia Main Street will issue Batavia Bucks that attendees can put toward lunch when and where they please, at any of 24 downtown restaurants. The time range will be shifted later as well, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. to noon to 5."We're going to move registration to the middle of the downtown area, and give them this coupon so they'll spread out right away. We learned not to give them their food and say 'Go!' McKenna says. Next year, attendees will convene at the end of the day for a style show at the First Street Playhouse, utilizing the fashion expertise of downtown's merchants. Batavia Main Street is also looking to partner with a women's not-for-profit organization. Tickets for the package of activities will be priced \$20 in advance and \$25 for on-site purchases. "[Another mistake] that we made is we didn't contact the merchants early enough to get [enough of] them on our planning committee," McKenna says. "You really need to get the buy-in of merchants before you even start planning it. Find out what they want to do. And get it in writing!" she advises. "We thought we had a really nice ladies boutique shop [on board as an event host], and she backed out. She said she was going to do a little style show in the store, and [then] she said, 'No, I never said I was going to do that.'"

Once-a-year weekend getaway

Sisters Weekend, presented by the Downtown St. Charles Partnership, St. Charles, IL (pop. 27,900), is billed as "an indulgent getaway weekend for sisters of all sorts." And these sisters come from "all over. We have women from Texas, New Jersey, and of course a lot of women from Illinois," says Bethany McFarland, marketing coordinator, Downtown St. Charles Partnership. The third annual 2006 Sisters Weekend was considered the most successful since the event began in 2003. The Downtown St. Charles Partnership achieved a \$4,600 profit on this \$22,000 event without a title sponsor. A record 300 registrants attended at a fee of \$50 each, and an additional 416 concert-only tickets were sold at \$25 each, creating additional revenue and selling out The Arcada Theatre.

There was a 10 percent increase in participation of downtown merchants from 2005, and most reported a significant increase in sales. Seven of ten hotel properties in town enjoyed room sales from Sisters Weekend participants, and 84 percent of registrants stayed in local hotels. The 55 rooms of the Hotel Baker, downtown headquarters for the event, sell out well in advance. The Hotel Baker was already booked for the 2007 event by the end of the 2006 weekend. For \$50 per person registrants received a weekend package that included: Sisters Weekend shoulder bags full of discount offers and goodies provided by downtown St. Charles merchants, wine and cheese art gallery reception, pajama Party with PJ Contest, spa treatments, portrait sessions, sister-tini drinks, handwriting analysis, henna tattoos (Indian body painting), cash bar, cake and ice cream, morning yoga and meditation session, Salsa dance workshop, seminars including self-defense, skin care, and budgeting, take-home craft sessions, pub crawl with special cocktails, a concert, trolley transportation and entry in a grand prize raffle for a three-night resort stay for two! The advertising budget for last year's Sisters Weekend was around \$5,000, and the print budget for brochures, posters, and postcards was \$3,000. Postcards and posters are distributed to all local hotels, downtown retailers, neighboring town retailers and restaurants, and St. Charles Convention & Visitors Bureau centers. Postcards are also distributed at events in town like October's St. Charles Scarecrow Festival and the I Am Woman Expo. "Work with your retailers to find out what will benefit them! Get some retail and restaurant representation on your event committee," McFarland advises other downtowns.

Ladies on the Loose!

Finally, a marketing award should go to the board member of Aledo Main Street, Aledo, IL (pop. 3,610), who came up with the name of its annual girly event, Ladies on the Loose. Years ago, downtown Aledo had a chocolate festival for couples around Valentine's Day. "We quickly realized that our target shopper was not going to be the men in a rural, small downtown," says Pam Myers, executive director, Aledo Main Street. Ladies on the Loose begins with a brunch and guest speaker. The rest of the Saturday, ladies truly are "on the loose" to shop. A Scavenger Hunt for a Hot Pink Daisy gets women to explore the stores, and a raffle with one ticket entered per \$10 spent is designed to stimulate spending. Brunch is \$8 for adults and \$5 for girls 12 and under.

Main Street Day at the Illinois State Fair

The first Saturday of the Illinois State Fair has become a tradition - Main Street Day. The event was an even greater success than last year.



Thanks to the Main Street communities of Pontiac and Vandalia who joined us for the day. Marshall Main Street brought unique lemonade

stands for the Main Street staffers to serve cool drinks from. Period light poles provided by Sternberg Lighting graced the patio area where the "Kick to the Curb" band featuring Southside Johnny played a mixture of folk and jazz. Our own Michelle Merker, Executive Director of Taylorville Main Street was the featured vocalist.

Main Street Max was again on hand to greet every visitor and passed out Main Street website postcards. We had over 4,000 visitors see our display and 500 plus people entered the



Max & Michelle

Great Illinois Main Street Giveaway drawing. There were 19 prizes awarded from Illinois Main Street towns. Communities participating were: Crystal Lake, Prophetstown, Mt. Vernon, Pittsfield, Marshall, Elgin, Galesburg, Momence, Carbondale, Mascoutah, Springfield, Waukegan, Vandalia and Pontiac.

Springfield will benefit from a \$10,000 grant provided by the American Institute of Architect's "AIA 150 - Blueprint for America" initiative that celebrates AIA's 150th Anniversary in 2007. The project will be implemented by the U of I urban and architecture design students and faculty during the spring 2007 semester. It will incorporate current responsible thinking in planning and design, including the AIA's Ten Principles for Livable Communities,.

The great aim of education is not knowledge but action.
- Herbert Spencer

"Hartig Drug is coming to Prophetstown"

was the headline in the Prophetstown Main Street Matters Summer 2006 issue. Hartig fills a hole in the downtown created when the former drug store closed November 18, 2005. The new store opened September 21, 2006. At that point it was real; Prophetstown had done what seemed impossible.

A downtown is dead without foot traffic. Service businesses like drug stores, dry cleaners, small groceries as well as libraries and municipal services all provide pedestrians vital to other retailers. When Prophetstown lost their drug store, they immediately made inquiries to stores in surrounding towns but no one was interested in expanding. There is an extreme shortage of pharmacists and the market is highly competitive. Then they began to cast a wider net. Prophetstown had three things going for them. They had a pharmacist who wanted to come to town, the building which had been a pharmacy was empty and Prophetstown is a terrific town, practically perfect in fact.



Working together was the key. The Main Street Economic Restructuring Committee, the Mayor, City Council, the Moore Foundation, and the Farmer's National Bank all played major roles. Richard Hartig, CEO of Hartig Drug was the target. Persistence was the key to success. Both the Mayor and Farmer's Bank President called Hartig repeatedly to arrange for a visit to the community. Richard Hartig came in June and by July Prophetstown had a deal. Because the building is in a TIF District the town could buy the store. The Moore Foundation, a local foundation established by Ken and Arletta Moore for the benefit of Prophetstown, agreed to donate half the of the purchase price of the building to the city. The Farmers National Bank put together a financial package to enable the city purchase the



**Mr. Hartig & Mayor
 Bud Thompson**

building. The city in turn leases the building to Hartig Drug. Hartig Drug has invested heavily in building utilization and technology improvements, and provides employment for seven people. Most importantly, residents in the area can once again buy locally and foot traffic is up!

2006 Illinois Main Street Conference

The Show with 1000 Stars



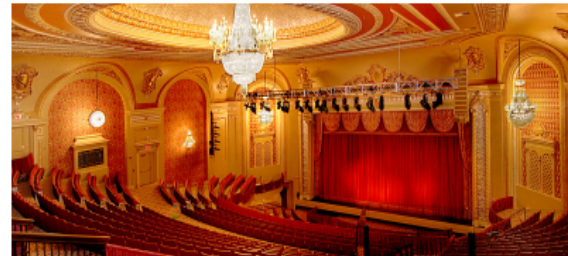
November 14th & 15th, 2006
Genesee Theatre
203 North Genesee Street
Waukegan, Illinois

About the Conference: This exciting training opportunity brings together outstanding specialists in the field of downtown revitalization. Participants learn about the Main Street™ approach with sessions for the novice and experienced alike. A variety of topics within the areas of organization, promotion, design and economic restructuring will be covered. The format includes keynote address, workshops, tours, networking time and concludes with the *Lt. Governor's Awards for Downtown Revitalization and Awards Banquet*.

Who Should Attend: Illinois Main Street invites all staff and volunteers of organizations focusing on downtown economic development, downtown business and property owners, government leaders, and others with an interest in the future of downtown to attend the annual conference. Illinois Main Street programs are required to send a minimum of three participants.

Registration: Register online by Monday, November 6th. Registrants from Illinois Main Street Introductory Towns, Associate Programs, Designated Programs and Premier Programs receive a discounted registration.

Our Hosts: Waukegan has been selected as this year's host community. The recently restored Genesee Theatre will serve as headquarters for the Conference.



The vision of three Waukegan men, A.L. Brumund, H.C. Burnett and D.T. Webb, the *Genesee Theatre* was an impressive venue for its times. Chicago architect Edward Steinberg planned a 1,799 seat movie house capable of features, music and live entertainment; adorned with 1,200 yards of lush tapestries and seven tons of marble. The building also included forty apartments and retail space. It was constructed for around \$1 million.

The Genesee Theatre premiered to the public on December 25, 1927 to rave reviews. It ran a regular schedule until October 1982 when the last first-run picture was shown, and closed its doors in 1989.

After sitting vacant for twelve years, the Genesee Theatre began its \$23 million renovation in July of 2001 as part of the City of Waukegan's downtown renovation project. With the help of over 120 volunteers, the Genesee was brought back to its original splendor. Every care was taken in the restoration to ensure the integrity of this great venue. A one-of-a-kind, 18 foot, Baccarat crystal chandelier has been added to the grand lobby. The 2,200 pound chandelier originally hung in Seattle's Orpheum theatre, and is valued at \$350,000.

The Genesee Theatre re-opened its doors on December 3, 2004 to two sold out performances of Bill Cosby, and will continue to be the centerpiece of a city poised for a dramatic comeback.

HIGHLIGHTS

Keynote Address: Kennedy Smith, of the Community Land Use and Economics Group



(CLUE Group), will present the "The Road Ahead". The keynote address will focus on the challenges and opportunities for downtowns in the next decade. Kennedy Smith is one of the world's leading experts on downtown revitalization. She served as director of the National Trust for Historic Preservation's National Main Street Center for more than 13 years and has won numerous awards for her work in downtown development, including "Fast Company" magazine's "Fast 50 Champions of Innovation" award and a Loeb Fellowship at Harvard University. In addition to her work for the CLUE Group, she teaches preservation economics for the graduate program in historic preservation at Goucher College and is a columnist for "Planning Commissioners' Journal".

Opening Evening Reception:



Join your counterparts for a social gathering at the Waukegan Yacht Club. Hors d'oeuvres, cash bar, and comedy by Sonya D of Juz' Jokkin' Comedy Club; as seen at DEF Jam Comedy Clubs, BET and Comedy Central.

Downtown Leader's Connection: *First time offered – a package just for Local Officials!*

Mayor Richard Hyde will host an exclusive luncheon on Wednesday at the Waukegan Yacht Club. Meet Illinois Main Street staff and discuss how the program works in your community. Followed by "Getting Down to Business and Making it Work – A Downtown Manager Turned Mayor's Perspective", an educational session at the Genesee Theatre presented by Mayor W. Ted Alexander of Shelby, North Carolina. Complete your day with the Lt. Governor's Awards for Downtown Revitalization to learn from success and celebrate your community.

Lt. Governor's Awards for Downtown Revitalization:



You won't want to miss this year's Awards event rivaling the Oscars and the Tony Awards! The sounds of the Harrison Bankhead Trio will serenade you during the reception with hors d'oeuvres and cash bar. Then you'll be escorted to your seat in the theatre where the celebration will continue. Lt. Governor Pat Quinn will present the Awards for Excellence in Downtown Revitalization and recognize new and outstanding Main Street communities. Everyone is a star this night when the curtain rises and dinner is served on the Genesee Theatre stage. *Semi-formal attire requested.*

Small Retailers Profitably Adopt Online Selling

excerpted from the Kansas City Business Journal 9/25/06

Vincent Flumiani saw his business's Web site begin to pay off 17 days before it launched in January 2005.

A \$50 order for blue jeans suddenly appeared while Flumiani was doing in-house testing one evening.

"It was sort of top-secret," he said. "We weren't on any search engines or anything, and some random person found the Web site and bought something."

Flumiani, co-owner of **Standard Style Boutique**, now sees 35 percent of the clothing retailer's revenue come from Internet sales.

The site receives more than 50,000 hits a month and more than 220 orders a month, primarily from California, New York, Texas, Florida and New Jersey -- not bad for a company with just two physical locations, both in the Kansas City area.

As the e-commerce industry has matured, some best practices and security features have emerged that allow small local retailers like Standard to gain a loyal online following despite competition from large national retailers.

Online retail sales, excluding travel, accounted for more than \$110 billion and 4.7 percent of the total U.S. retail market in 2005, according to the **National Retail Federation**. The NRF has projected online retail sales will increase to \$138 billion and 5.5 percent of total retail sales this year.

ILLINOIS MAIN STREET

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