



## MAIN STREET IOWA HOSTS OPEN 4 BUSINESS STATE CONTEST

The Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) hosted the Main Street Iowa Open 4 Business State Contest on August 28 in Waterloo. The event, held in conjunction with the Iowa Downtown Conference, showcased four businesses from across Iowa. Over 20 businesses entered the competition in May and competed through video and Skype interviews for a chance to advance to the state competition.

Debi Durham, IEDA director, served as emcee for the event as businesses pitched their plans in front of a panel of judges for a chance to win up to \$20,000 to execute their business plans. The four semi-finalists competing included Anne Greenwalt - Carver's Ridge, Corning; Tom & Lori Schuch - Get Branded 360, Le Mars; Anna Blanchette - Sugar Me, Marion, and Tommie Ouverson - Fuel Art and Espresso, Mount Vernon. Each semi-finalist was awarded \$8,000 prior to competing at the state level.



*Rand Fisher, Vada Grantham, Lisa Shimkat, Sandy Ehrig and Debi Durham*

Each business submitted an application and video outlining their business plan and received 15 minutes to pitch their business idea to the judges before a live audience. Judges were Rand Fisher, 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.

Carver's Ridge from Corning was selected as the 2018 Winner and received an additional \$20,000 toward their business expansion plans. Fuel Art and Espresso from Mount Vernon was named first runner-up and awarded \$10,000. Sugar Me from Marion and Get Branded 360 from Le Mars were each awarded \$5,000.



*Debi Durham - IEDA Director*

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## OPEN 4 BUSINESS, CONTINUED

All four businesses are located within a designated Main Street district. This is the fourth year of the Open 4 Business contest, which is open to businesses located in the 54 Main Street Iowa districts. Grants are administered through the Iowa Downtown Resource Center and Main Street Iowa programs. The funding will assist with business expansion projects for each of the businesses. CENEX Corporation sponsored the 2018 contest, which included prize drawings and an After-Party concert featuring country music star Jay Allen.

The Open 4 Business Competition is funded through the Challenge Grant program. Since 2002, approximately \$7 million in Challenge Grant funding has leveraged over \$37 million in private reinvestment in 120 projects in 43 Main Street Iowa commercial districts.

Applications for the 2019 Open 4 Business contest will be released in January 2019. For more information about the Main Street Iowa Open 4 Business Grant program, contact Robin Bostrom, Business Specialist Main Street Iowa, at 515.348.6176 or [robin.bostrom@iowaeda.com](mailto:robin.bostrom@iowaeda.com).



*Tyson and Anne Greenwalt - Carver's Ridge*



*Tommie Ouverson - Fuel Art and Espresso*



*Anna Blanchette - Sugar Me*



*Tom and Lori Schuch - Get Branded 360*

## 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](mailto: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](mailto:michael.wagler@iowaeda.com).

To contribute articles and photos to the "Downtown Resource", contact Darlene Strachan, 515.348.6182 or [darlene.strachan@iowaeda.com](mailto:darlene.strachan@iowaeda.com).

# IOWA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY RETAIL MODEL COMMUNITY - ELKADER

## PROJECT OVERVIEW

Elkader (population 1,213) is a friendly, quaint northeast Iowa county seat town set in a scenic valley of the Turkey River. Elkader acquired its unique name from Emir Abdelkader, the famous military and religious leader of Algeria. Elkader continues its Algerian connections to this day with its local Algerian-American restaurant, Schera's, and Elkader's sister city relationship with Mascara, Algeria. Downtown Elkader is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The community has 11 sites listed on the National Register of Historic Places, including the largest keystone bridge on this side of the Mississippi River.

In 2017, the IEDA named Elkader a 21st Century Retail Model Community for its 50+ businesses within the eight to nine block Main Street and Cultural and Entertainment District.

## NUTS AND BOLTS

As noted in national retail expert Hillary Greenberg's August Iowa Downtown Conference presentation, a great downtown plays many important roles and provides many benefits to a community.

- Property and sales tax revenue
- Jobs for local residents
- Helps differentiate the community from "Anywhere USA"
- Prerequisite for attracting new businesses and families



Photo by Jillian Webb Hermann

The city of Elkader recognizes the importance of downtown to its community, collects the data to prove it, and continuously develops policies and strategies to leverage its downtown assets. To be successful, Elkader knows it can't rest on its laurels.

Elkader is a regional draw for shoppers. What makes Elkader a regional shopping destination? Variety and purposeful planning.

Shoppers travel for miles to Elkader to shop its bakery, boutiques, grocery store, hardware store, bridal store, flower shop and antique mall amongst others.

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Photo by Jillian Webb Hermann

## ELKADER, CONTINUED

People travel for the mix of more than 65 unique service sector businesses augmenting its retail—banking, dentist, lawyer, pharmacy, chiropractor, hair salon, post office, insurance, abstract, eye doctor, etc. People visit for the restaurants and the entertainment. Contributing to Elkader's retail draw are its scenic setting along the Turkey River, its whitewater park, and its Main Street bookends of an historic opera house and first-run movie theater.

The city of Elkader, Main Street Elkader, Elkader Chamber of Commerce, and Elkader Development Corporation, in a partnership centered on teamwork, work in concert to provide a conducive environment for business. The Elkader Development Corporation oversees a revolving loan fund, seeded by contributions from existing Elkader businesses, that helped launch 10 new local businesses. Every residence and business in Elkader have access to high speed internet via a fiber optic connection. New businesses receive a welcome visit from local leadership offering assistance to help the new business succeed. Business leaders are formally recognized annually at a community awards banquet. The city of Elkader annually sets aside funding to promote Elkader as a tourism shopping destination.



Following the national Main Street Four-Point Approach®—Economic Vitality, Design, Organization and Promotion, the community of Elkader hosts many annual downtown promotions and is always looking for new ways to promote an engaging downtown experience. Examples of downtown promotions include Ladies Day Out, sidewalk sales, Witches Night Out, holiday retail open houses, Sweet Corn Days, Art in the Park, Holly Jolly Festival and holiday shopping punch cards.

### IMPACTS

A 2017 retail sales study by Iowa State University found that the average retail sales per resident in Elkader is \$20,000 higher than the statewide average. Elkader's real total taxable sales for the 123 firms reporting exceeded \$39,029,996 in 2017 for an average sales per firm of \$316,673. Elkader is not taking its success for granted nor resting on its laurels.

### NOT DONE YET—BUILDING ON SUCCESS

In early 2018, Elkader partnered with Barman Development Strategies and IEDA to develop asset, vision and market-driven transformation strategies for downtown Elkader.

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## ELKADER, CONTINUED

The community is revisiting policies, ordinances, plans and zoning, to concentrate businesses in downtown to maintain walkability and the critical pedestrian street mass to support retail business.

Elkader's 21st century retail efforts are a noteworthy model—a model worth experiencing in person. Go, visit, and experience Elkader and you'll know why so many business owners hear from their customers, "We'll be back soon."



## 2018 MAIN STREET IOWA CHALLENGE GRANTS ANNOUNCED

Thirteen Main Street programs were awarded Main Street Iowa Challenge Grants during a ceremony on November 8 in Des Moines. IEDA Director Debi Durham presented the community representatives with awards at the Greater Des Moines Botanical Gardens. A total of \$950,000 was awarded to thirteen projects across the state.

Main Street Iowa received 25 applications requesting over \$1.72M in grant funds for the 2018 round. An appropriation from the Iowa Legislature makes the grants available to designated Main Street Iowa communities. Applications included a wide variety of project types including total building rehabilitations, building stabilization and maintenance, new infill construction, building additions and upper floor housing projects.

In Waverly, the Palace Theater will receive a grant for \$75,000. This is the first Challenge Grant to be used in downtown Waverly. The recently closed Palace Theater will undergo a complete rehabilitation that will upgrade the main floor with two state-of-the-art movie screens, as well as an expanded concession area that will offer health conscious snacks in addition to traditional movie fare. The upper floor will be converted into 12 market rate apartments overlooking the Cedar River and downtown.

Overall, the 13 funded applications will add a total of 31 new residential units in historic downtown districts across the state. These projects will add diversity to the local housing stock and providing property owners with additional revenue and occupancy. One such project that will add additional downtown housing is the upper floor redevelopment of the One Office Solution building in Le Mars. The \$75,000 Challenge Grant will add four new upper level units – three 2-bedroom and one 1-bedroom unit - using existing historic features and elements. An outdoor rooftop greenspace will add a bonus amenity for the tenants in these market rate apartments.



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## 2018 MAIN STREET IOWA CHALLENGE GRANTS, CONTINUED

Guthrie Center will also receive its first Main Street Challenge grant for the rehabilitation of the Guthrie Activity Center. This former theater building currently serves as a community meeting facility and senior meal site and activity center. After a total rehab, it will be a much more functional and desirable event space with new AV equipment, improved layout, new meeting rooms and a restored façade. It should become a regional draw for trainings and workshops, as well as community events which increase traffic in downtown Guthrie Center.



A former county service garage in Newton will be transformed into a new restaurant. The National Register listed property will be transformed by a local developer into an intimate dining venue that also includes an outdoor patio. In its current state it could easily become a target for demolition due to its lack of use, deteriorated appearance and proximity to public parking should either the City of Newton or Jasper County decide there is a need for additional downtown parking. The rehabilitation of the building will provide a significant visual change for the 2nd Avenue corridor and help ensure the historic character of this building is preserved for years to come.



Saving significant historic buildings is a primary goal of the Challenge Grant program. This will be accomplished in Marion and Greenfield. In each community the oldest standing historical building will be rehabbed with \$75,000 grants. The Owen Block in Marion will undergo a complete overhaul that will restore altered historic features altered by previous misguided rehab efforts. The historic rehab also plans on using state and federal tax credits to complete the overall transformation of this key historic building. A small wooden building in Greenfield will be restored from top to bottom with the help of these funds. Severe structural issues and significant deterioration will be repaired in this small wood framed “boom town” front building on the public square.

These projects represent a small sample of the various projects occurring across Iowa. Main Street Iowa is proud to provide financial support to these projects that help transform Iowa’s historic downtown districts.

Over the history of the program, Main Street Iowa has awarded over \$8.7 million in Challenge Grants to 151 projects in designated Main Street Iowa communities. These projects represent over \$63.8 million in total reinvestment into downtown commercial properties. Main Street Iowa Challenge Grants require a dollar-for-dollar cash match and are available only to designated Main Street Communities. Grants are available on an annual basis as funding allows. If you have any questions regarding Main Street Iowa Challenge Grants, contact Tim Reinders, Main Street Design Specialist - 515.348.6181 or [tim.reinders@iowaeda.com](mailto:tim.reinders@iowaeda.com)

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## 2018 MAIN STREET IOWA CHALLENGE GRANT AWARDS

Community	Applicant	Project	IEDA Grant Amount	Match Amount	Total Project Cost
Ames	Ames Cultural District	Olde Main Brewing Company	\$75,000	\$1,025,000	\$ 1,100,000
Burlington	Downtown Partners, Inc	The Collective, 805 Jefferson	\$75,000	\$100,000	\$175,000
Cedar Rapids Urban Main Street District	Czech Village/New Bohemia	Czech Cottage	\$60,000	\$87,450	\$147,450
Corning	Main Street Corning	Primrose Upper Story	\$70,000	\$88,000	\$158,000
Davenport	Hilltop Campus Village Corporation	Brewed Book - Phase II	\$75,000	\$180,389	\$255,389
Dubuque	Dubuque Main Street Ltd.	84 Main Street/Old Main Hotel	\$75,000	\$129,848	\$204,848
Greenfield	Greenfield Chamber/Main Street	358 Public Square	\$75,000	\$87,600	\$162,600
Guthrie Center	Main Street Guthrie Center	Guthrie Activity Center	\$70,000	\$107,000	\$177,000
Le Mars	Le Mars Area Chamber of Commerce	One Office Solution	\$75,000	\$340,000	\$415,000
Marion	Marion Chamber of Commerce DBA Uptown Marion	Owen Block	\$75,000	\$1,847,766	\$1,922,766
Mount Vernon	Mount Vernon-Lisbon Development Group	Bijou Theater Expansion	\$75,000	\$700,224	\$775,224
Newton	Newton Main Street	115 West 2nd Street South	\$75,000	\$267,736	\$342,736
Waverly	Waverly Chamber of Commerce/Main Street	Waverly Palace Theater	\$75,000	\$2,873,000	\$2,948,000
<b>TOTALS:</b>			\$950,000	\$7,834,013	\$8,784,013

# MAIN STREET CORNING'S OPERA HOUSE RECEIVES NATIONAL RECOGNITION AS OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY IMPACT BUSINESS FROM THE SCORE FOUNDATION, SPONSORED BY MASSMUTUAL

Corning Opera House Cultural Center was chosen as this year's recipient for the prestigious Outstanding Community Impact Small Business award, sponsored by MassMutual and given by The SCORE Foundation. SCORE, the nation's largest network of volunteer, expert business mentors, holds 750,000+ free small business mentoring sessions, workshops and educational services annually, and honors its most successful clients at The SCORE Foundation's annual awards ceremony. The National Register's historic Corning Opera House is located in the Commercial Historic District of Main Street Corning.

De Heaton, executive director, entered the competition in early 2018 by submitting a one-minute video and essay on how the opera house makes an impact in the community. The video highlighted eight areas: volunteers, educational opportunities, community partnerships, variety of entertainment, adult and youth Community Theater, historical backstage tours,



*Tom Charla - MassMutual sponsor, De Heaton - Corning Opera House Executive Director and Sherry Bonelli - Early Bird Digital Marketing, SCORE Mentor*

rental opportunities, 2017 Chamber Business of the Year and local people. The essay described Corning's working relationship with its SCORE mentor, Sherry Bonelli, from Early Bird Digital Marketing. Sherry offered advice on improving Corning's website presence, increasing website traffic and improving its social media presence. Plus, the essay described the benefits the opera house received from SCORE webinars.

"Winners were chosen from all across the country, with diverse backgrounds and businesses in varied industries, but they share the courage and determination to make their dreams a reality," said Resa Kierstein, Vice President of Development for

SCORE. At the 2018 SCORE Awards, in September near Washington, D.C., Corning Opera House was honored for demonstrating unique vision, innovation and achievement as an Outstanding Community Impact Small Business. In addition to recognizing the 11 different businesses, SCORE thanked the mentors and businesses partners, all of whom strengthen the efforts to educate and support American entrepreneurs. "We are so excited to be recognized for our volunteer efforts and community impact. This would not have been possible without our wonderful supporters, patrons, renters and community," said De Heaton.

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## MAIN STREET CORNING'S OPERA HOUSE, CONTINUED

About Corning Opera House's journey to business success and the SCORE Awards at: [www.score.org/score-awards](http://www.score.org/score-awards).

The 1902 National Historic Register Corning Opera House is located at 800 Davis Avenue, Corning, IA. For more information about events, rentals and tours, visit [www.CorningOperaHouse.com](http://www.CorningOperaHouse.com), follow COHCC on Facebook or Instagram or call 641.418.8037.

### **About the SCORE Foundation:**

The mission of The SCORE Foundation is to support and leverage the work of SCORE by soliciting, investing and managing resources. Learn more about The SCORE Foundation at [www.scorefoundation.org](http://www.scorefoundation.org).

**About SCORE:** In 2017, SCORE volunteers provided 3.6 million hours to help create 54,506 small businesses and 61,534 non-owner jobs.

For more information about starting or operating a small business, visit SCORE at [www.score.org](http://www.score.org). Follow @SCOREmentors on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter for the latest small business news and updates.

De Heaton

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## DOWNTOWN GEM — THE CANDY KITCHEN

*310 Cedar Street, Wilton, Iowa*

The Candy Kitchen in Wilton has been a destination business for over 100 years. Gus Nopoulos, a Greek immigrant founded the Candy Kitchen in 1910. The iconic building was constructed in 1856 and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places; it's the oldest building in Wilton and a fine example of a free-standing, false front, wood-frame store, which was commonly constructed in Iowa prior to the Civil War. It has housed the IOOF Hall, a men's clothing store, tobacco shop, Wilton's Post Office and a soda fountain ice cream parlor established in 1860.



On Mr. Nopoulos' first day in business he made \$17, a hefty sum considering rent for the building was \$18 a month. At the time, Gus only knew two words of English... "thank you." The Candy Kitchen survived the Great Depression, and candy and chocolate making continued up until World War II, when sugar and chocolate became scarce due to war efforts. After the war, the business was sold to George, Gus Nopoulos's son. It has been a well-known destination for travelers across the country. Gus saw the Candy Kitchen become a favorite after school or work stop for students and adults. The tradition of Cherry Cokes and ice cream treats has been enjoyed from generation to generation.



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## THE CANDY KITCHEN, CONTINUED

And, its all still going strong. Features include walnut booths trimmed in marble and glass, beautiful mirrored walls, leaded glass lamps over each booth, a stamped tin ceiling installed by Gus in 1913, and of course, the marble soda fountain installed in 1951. The Candy Kitchen features a Museum dedicated to the history of the business, Wilton and the railroad. The business has been visited by Brooke Shields, Gregory Peck, and recently, FaceBook founder Mark Zuckerberg. New owners Brenda and Lynn Ochiltree are carrying on the tradition of serving sweet treats with old fashioned service in this historic setting.

## DIRECTOR'S COLUMN — GET IN THE GAME

City leaders frequently tell me school activities, such as athletics and band, are most important to the community. They attract people with little else in common and from every age group. Many of us that grew up in small, Iowa communities remember that high school football would bring the community together. The appeal of the downtown area was perhaps taken for granted even though it was the stage for community gatherings, walking, shopping, etc. Even the local football team's homecoming parade meandered through the downtown. What if we approach downtown development and reinvigorate something that worked with the same gusto and interest we have in the big game?



Jim Engle - IDRC Director

*Oh no. The Comets were 2-10 last year. We didn't tackle very well. And, we couldn't move the ball when needed. People are not showing up to our games. We remember the old days when we were competing for state championships. Everyone knew who we were. Our success on the gridiron helped brand our community. We were big. We were strong. We had an attitude. We were even unusual. We could change to make ourselves better. But, now, even our next door rivals are beating the Comets with regularity. Oh, do they ever annoy us!*

Uh oh. It's feeling grim in our downtown. Our storefront vacancy rate is at 30 percent. Our beautiful, historic buildings are not maintained. Our once thriving business community now lacks retail, and we have a trend of business closures. The events we used to have simply don't exist anymore. We are tired. Where did the traffic go? We are no longer the downtown people think about. There are better, nearby options for shopping, eating and walking.

*Coaching is so important, as is leadership among our players. We don't have that anymore, but we are going to work on it. We know we need a playbook and a plan that capitalizes on our player strengths. And, we want numbers. We want players and coaches to come out and help us be part of something special. We will practice and work as a team until we turn this around. Our coach constantly calls other coaches and picks up tips. We don't expect to be 12-0 this season, but we do expect progress. This could be exciting!*

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## GET IN THE GAME, CONTINUED

We have hired our first downtown director and have developed structure. Our new board of directors meets frequently, and we now have a specific downtown plan of action. Our executive committee is enthusiastic and has developed six major goals with several projects under each. We are getting the word out. Volunteers are filling committees and small action teams. Once negative business owners are starting to become involved. We are looking for advice. Our board takes trips to other successful communities to learn from them.

*The Comet Pride group had dwindled, but, the new energy from leadership is firing them up. Fund raising efforts are going once again. In fact, they have been successful enough to make improvements to our facilities. Bleachers are repaired and painted, and we have cool, new uniforms and helmets. That truly feels right.*

Our downtown board of directors and fundraising action team developed a comprehensive program to reach businesses, property owners, local government, families and even alumni. Couple this with three amazing promotional fund raisers, and we have established a healthy

budget to help reach our goals. We have learned the downtown and mission of our organization is important to stakeholders. Many of the early projects we intend to do are small but will greatly improve the appearance of our downtown. These include plantings, public art and even our first façade rehabilitation.

*The Comets are currently 3-3, including an upset victory. Attendance is up by 30 percent. The opposition takes us seriously. And, the team is getting better. We are scoring touchdowns again. We knew this wouldn't happen overnight.*

Our organization now has six action teams. The city committed \$30,000 toward a public art project. A sign grant program has funded eight new and attractive business signs. Downtown merchants are meeting monthly to plan events. Three new events are scheduled this year. We are partnering with several local service organizations. Our director has been successful with her first-ever grant application. We knew this wouldn't happen overnight.

*A winning season! Some bumps along the way. A missed field goal that would have won game. We learned from it and moved on.*

One year later...we continue to have downtown progress. Three new businesses. Three new events completed. One was not as successful as we hoped. But we know how to make it better. Two façade projects done. City-sponsored façade grant. Businesses working together. Fund raising continues to thrive.

*Five years later...the Comets are back on top. No one wants to play the Comets. Well coached and well prepared. Friday nights... and the town is at the football field! Our great senior players come and go, but we have the structure, culture, leadership and support in place to carry on.*

Five years later...Downtown is back. Vacancy rate down to 10 percent. Upper story housing is taking off. Promotions throughout the season. Noticeable increase in visitor traffic. Our executive director left for another opportunity, but we have the structure, leadership, volunteers and support to move on.

*Winner...but still have work to do!*

Winner...but still have work to do!

## DOWNTOWN DIFFERENCE MAKER

Carol Lilly, the executive director for Community Main Street in Cedar Falls since 2011, grew up in Waukon, a small town in northeast Iowa, where her family taught her the value of community service and involvement. She is a graduate of the University of Northern Iowa with a degree in Marketing with a Retail Emphasis and obtained a Business Education certification. Carol has been married to husband Chris for 26 years, and they have two sons. Jake is a Corporal in the U.S. Marine Corps, and Josh is a freshman at San Diego State University.

After career opportunities took them between cities in Iowa, Nebraska, Arkansas and Minnesota, Carol and Chris welcomed the opportunity to return to his hometown of Cedar Falls in 2008. During visits back to the area over the years, they watched the gradual positive transformation of the city. When they decided it was time for the kids to grow deeper roots, they decided to make Cedar Falls their home.

Carol said, “Encouraging growth that compliments and benefits our historic core is something I am very passionate about. The District is in the midst of a period of rapid growth. Three undeveloped sites have major projects underway, including a new 127-room hotel and two large-scale mixed-use buildings. Our vacancy rate has been extremely low, so the additional square footage these new developments create increase opportunities for more businesses to locate in our downtown. It is exciting to help the community adjust to change and appreciate the value these projects bring to not only downtown, but to the entire city.”

She also shared that each day is different from the last and finding the balance between the four points central to their developmental strategy is something she finds rewarding. Carol enjoys working with all the amazing volunteers and community partners, many who have become close friends.



*Audrey Dodd, Stephanie Sheetz, Carol Lilly, Karen Smith, Julie Shimek and Mary Taylor*

The State Street corridor has seen the most drastic change in recent years. The River Place development added four new buildings and spurred even more new construction in underutilized areas, yet downtown Cedar Falls has not lost its commitment to historic preservation. The vision for downtown is to continue to be a thriving business and residential neighborhood that is not only beautiful, but also convenient and accessible to patrons.

During the last 10 years, Community Main Street has gone from focusing on Main Street to a program of work that encompasses the entire district. Shifting verbiage began approximately eight years ago, and the community mindset has followed. Working with the city, they developed a master streetscape plan for streets parallel to Main, as well as the cross streets connecting them. Funding for the project has been pledged and work begins next spring on the four-year project.

Carol shared, “We have been encouraging our retail and restaurant businesses to be open on Sundays and two years ago, we added our first Sunday event to help generate foot traffic. The popularity of the event, a show and shine car show, wildly exceeded our expectations. It is now an annual event the first Sunday in May and both merchants and the public love it.”

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Carol found that after so many years with the kids as their focus, and especially now that their youngest has left for college, she and her husband are trying to figure out what they are going to do for fun! Right now, learning to cook for two, road trips to other communities, and hanging out downtown top their list. One of Carol's favorite activities in the fall and winter is to snuggle up under a blanket and get lost in a good book.

"Community development activities may be part of my role as the Main Street director but is also something I truly enjoy," stated Carol. She volunteers on the boards of directors for the Cedar Falls Community Foundation, Cedar Falls Community Theatre, Sartori Health Care

Foundation and is a member of the Cedar Falls Park and Recreation Commission. Additionally, she sits on the advisory committee for the Cedar Falls Public Schools CAPS program and University of Northern Iowa's Institute for Decision Making.

When asked to share something no one knows about her, Carol responded, "I'm an open book. I can't think of anything I haven't shared with at least one of my fellow main streeters!"

If you would like to learn more about the Cedar Falls Downtown District, contact Carol Lilly with Community Main Street at 319.277.0213 or visit [www.communitymainstreet.org](http://www.communitymainstreet.org)

## MAIN STREET IOWA ANNOUNCES 2019 NEW PROGRAM APPLICATION

Main Street Iowa's network of 54 designated programs will grow in 2019. New Main Street program application workshops are being planned in early April 2019 with applications being due in late June. Communities interested in applying in the upcoming round will need to first attend one of three application workshops. The workshops will be held regionally throughout the state.



Times, locations, and final agenda will be announced later this year. The repeated workshops will provide an overview of the Main Street Approach® and Main Street Iowa program, the application, competitive designation process and strategies to complete the application. Interested in learning more about the Main Street program prior to the application workshops? More information is available on the Main Street Iowa and Main Street America's websites. To receive direct email updates about the Main Street Iowa application process and program, ensure you subscribe to Iowa Downtown Resource newsletter via the Iowa Economic Development Authority website: <https://signup.e2ma.net/signup/1709396/1706008/>.

The first years of a new Main Street Iowa program can be an intense, challenging experience. As communities across the state consider the Main Street Iowa program as a next step in local economic development and revitalization strategies, the two newest Main Street communities (Clarence and Fort Dodge) begin to reflect on the startup phase.

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# MAIN STREET IOWA NEW PROGRAM APPLICATION, CONTINUED

## CLARENCE, IOWA (974)

As we reflect on Clarence's first year in the Main Street Iowa program, we think of it as if a light bulb has been turned on in the community. For some, the bulb is shining bright, and we see so many possibilities for a community that has been dim for too long. For others, the light is just starting to shine, and as successful events and new businesses highlight our downtown the glow gets brighter. Like in most communities, we have some folks that haven't even flipped the switch on yet. But, being part of the Main Street Iowa program has assisted us in making sure we are telling the story and leading the team that will revitalize our community. As we worked on building our Board and laying a foundation, we saw the importance of gathering individuals at each stage of enlightenment.

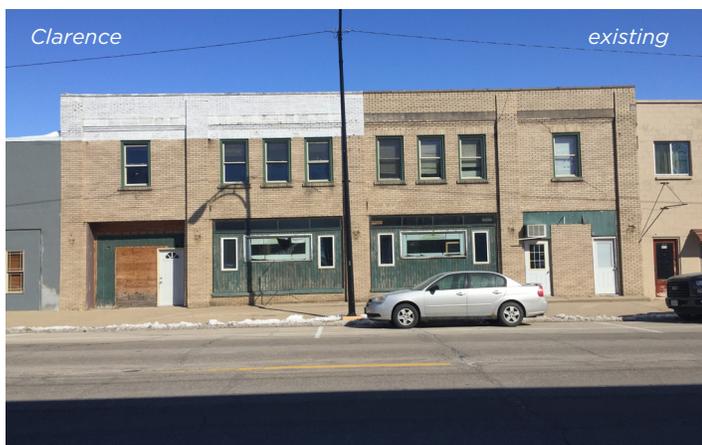
Sometimes simply having a conversation is all it takes to bring someone on board. But visual projects seem to be the piece that gather the most interest and support. As the catalytic projects progress, conversations are changing, and people are starting to discuss what the downtown could look like if we continue this successful path. We have work to do in encouraging and assisting existing businesses and building owners before they see the importance of bringing in new businesses and participating in promotions. This is, perhaps, our biggest challenge. As a small community our building stock isn't plentiful, and we are working to incorporate other parts of the district into the fold. We've championed clean up days, farmer's markets and other special events to get more people in the downtown.

As we begin our second year, we look forward to the information provided via the Market Analysis and Downtown Exchange Program. Our approach has been to take small steps that make big impact. We're working on strengthening partnerships and have some challenges to address. We think looking at the information gained will help us identify areas where groups in town can work together and will foster more respect for each team.

Now that our feet are firmly on the ground, we look forward to the future for Clarence. The Cedar County Economic Development Director told us there is talk about Clarence throughout the region. People are wondering what's happening and how tasks are getting done. We turned the light on.

— Tami Finley, Executive Director, Clarence Main Street

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# MAIN STREET IOWA NEW PROGRAM APPLICATION, CONTINUED

## *FORT DODGE, IOWA (25,206)*

Main Street Fort Dodge has experienced tremendous support from our community and Main Street Iowa during our whirlwind first year as a Main Street Community. Creating relationships and watching people collaborate to invest their time and talent in the district has been truly rewarding.

Our experience with the Better Block Foundation spurred growth in the 1100 block of Central Avenue. The site of our Pop-up Pallet Patio Party is being transitioned to another owner who is purchasing an adjoining building. Our Better Builds continue with an October Pop-up Museum in a vacant theater building.

We are addressing the housing shortage in Fort Dodge with the development of 12 market-rate townhomes in the downtown utilizing Main Street Iowa design services to encourage the developer to use brick and compatible historic elements.

This first year taught our community we can do this! We have resources and the vision to transform our downtown. Fourteen building owners are working through the façade renovation process, five businesses have moved into our Main Street District and our community lunches in the park were successful. We look forward to more façade restoration, additional music events in the district and developing an Oktoberfest event for 2019. Fort Dodge is enthusiastic about our return to the Main Street Iowa program and the supportive network of Main Street communities across Iowa.

— Kris Patrick, Executive Director, Main Street Fort Dodge



## SET YOUR SITES ON SEATTLE FOR THE 2019 MAIN STREET NOW CONFERENCE

The 2019 national Main Street Now Conference will be held March 25 – 27 in Seattle, Washington. Convened annually, the Main Street Now Conference showcases implementable best practices, time-tested solutions and innovative ideas from a national network of practitioners who share in the goal of creating economic and social prosperity in downtowns and neighborhood commercial districts.

The conference is the nation’s premier downtown and historic district revitalization conference, and the largest gathering of commercial district revitalization professionals in the nation. The annual event draws approximately 2,000 dedicated professionals, boards, municipal staff and other key decision makers from small towns, mid-sized cities and urban neighborhood business districts.

Previous conferences have been packed with cutting edge, high-level educational content addressing a wide range of revitalization issues. The conference also offers a unique opportunity to engage directly with regional and national community development professionals through activities and one-on-one facetime.

With beautiful Seattle and its surrounding communities as a living laboratory, this year’s conference will leave you feeling inspired and equipped with tools to help you in your work.

The Iowa Downtown Resource Center strongly encourages professionals and volunteers interested in commercial district revitalization to join us at the 2019 conference. Take a look at a few comments from previous attendees about what they learned at the Main Street Now Conference:

- “Each time I attend, I come back to our organization with a number of great ideas for us to implement in order to become a better program and, thereby, be able to better serve our district and the businesses/residents who call it home.” Jennifer Pruden, Cedar Rapids
- “It’s always a great opportunity to see the latest trends and network with people that have the same passion as I do.” Tim Schwartz, Ottumwa
- “I always come home with fabulous ideas from all over the country.” Sarah Grunewaldt, Washington
- “Information received at previous conferences has helped us set higher goals and to find the ways to achieve those goals.” Fred Jenkins, Ottumwa

Online registration for the 2019 Main Street Now Conference opens November 1. For additional information and to register, visit <https://www.mainstreet.org/howwecanhelp/mainstreetnow/now2019>



To contribute articles and photos to “The Downtown Resource,” contact Darlene Strachan, 515.348.6182 or [darlene.strachan@iowaeda.com](mailto:darlene.strachan@iowaeda.com).

## RESOURCE CONNECTIONS

**Iowa Downtown Resource Center** [iowaeconomicdevelopment.com/idrc](http://iowaeconomicdevelopment.com/idrc)

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

**Iowa Economic Development Authority** [iowaeconomicdevelopment.com](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://mainstreet.org)

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

**Main Street Iowa** [iowaeconomicdevelopment.com/MainStreetIowa](http://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](http://www.nps.gov/search/?affiliate=nps&query=preservation+briefs)

Guidance on preserving, rehabilitating and restoring historic buildings.

**National Trust for Historic Preservation** [savingplaces.org](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://iowaculture.gov/history/preservation)

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

**Travel Iowa** [traveliowa.com](http://traveliowa.com)

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

**Volunteer Iowa** [volunteeriowa.org](http://volunteeriowa.org)

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