



# MainStreetNews

THE MONTHLY JOURNAL of THE NATIONAL TRUST MAIN STREET CENTER

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**NATIONAL TRUST**  
for HISTORIC PRESERVATION®

By Kathy Frazier, AIA; Kathy Moore;  
Sandy Hanger, SEG D



## COMMUNITY WAYFINDING

### CONNECTING MAIN STREET WITH ITS **MARKET**

Over the past 20 years, traditional commercial districts have made a dramatic comeback. Architectural and streetscape revitalization projects have become a source of pride. Retail stores, businesses, and restaurants have come back to downtowns and neighborhood business districts and thrived. Historic theaters have been

saved, and new uses have been found for landmark buildings. People are moving back to city centers in search of the excitement and lifestyle it offers. Wonderfully, Main Street is once again the vibrant center of our communities.

Yet there is no yellow brick road to downtown. Cities and towns are complex environments that are often confusing to a first-time visitor. How many times have you entered a new community only to become disoriented when trying to find downtown or a historic site? Perhaps you've entered a city and found a patchwork quilt of signs to local destinations — signs in different sizes, shapes, colors, type styles, and quality. What is worse, traveling along at 45 miles per hour, you can't read the signs because the lettering is too small or because there is too much sign clutter. Frustration sets in and your impression of this community plummets. If you are lucky, the one directional sign you manage to see directs you to a tourist information center.

Even worse, you may elect to stay on the major road, assuming it will take you to the heart of town. However, because road systems have been modified to move traffic quickly around or through a community, you find that you've suddenly bypassed the heart of town and completely missed Main Street!

The excitement of discovering a new community and its attractions can quickly fade if you become disoriented or lost. This confusion will consequently have a ripple effect on the duration of your stay, the number of attractions you visit, and the dollars you spend.

### Wayfinding at a Glance

Wayfinding sign systems have become popular tools to help communities guide visitors and convey a positive image. For many years now, communities have installed attractive signs at the town limits to welcome visitors. More recently, it has become evident that more is needed to direct visitors to downtown or to other important community destinations. Wayfinding signs, long used on college, corporate, and hospital campuses, are now being adapted to city environments. They are distinctive to a community and very different from the signs

we are accustomed to seeing on our roads and highways.

So what is wayfinding exactly? Wayfinding is the process by which you move through an unfamiliar environment toward a destination. It is a hierarchical system of navigational cues that you internally process while you are on the move. While wayfinding sounds like a technical or abstract concept, it directly affects the satisfaction and enjoyment of every visitor.

To some degree, wayfinding already exists in every community. Whether the wayfinding program has been designed in a coordinated way or evolved organically over time, it is important to realize that the system affects the visitor experience.

A wayfinding sign system consists of eye-catching, easily identified signs that conveniently direct visitors to attractions, particularly historic, recreational, and governmental sites. Successful systems do more than simply provide informational and directional signs; they intuitively reach out to put visitors at ease. A customized wayfinding sign system also reinforces a community's unique identity and provides a sense of place. For downtown, it gets visitors to destinations, safely parked, and on their way to a satisfying experience.

The goal of a comprehensive system is to give visitors a "seamless" experience of the community from the first time



## KIOSKS Do's and Don'ts

The kiosk continues where the wayfinding sign system leaves off. The purpose of kiosks is to provide orientation and information about the commercial district for pedestrians. After parking, visitors can go to the kiosk and decide first where they are, then where they want to go.

Downtown kiosks are simple in nature. Most provide a map and a list of businesses with a “you are here” location.

This information is relatively permanent and is updated only as new businesses are established. The

kiosk also allows the community to com-

municate other information, such as special events, restaurants, local entertainment, and current events. Because this type of information is frequently updated, local residents also use the kiosks to find out what's happening in the district.

When determining the type of kiosk for your community, it is important to consider its style or appearance. The design should match the scale and size of your commercial district. Look around at the many different architectural styles. Look at the scale of the buildings, sidewalks, and streets and their relationship to one another and pick a kiosk that will work well with these elements.

Color is an effective way to call attention to the kiosk, thereby providing a visual cue for visitors when they need

information. The wayfinding sign system can provide effective colors to use for the kiosk. Visitors have already been conditioned to look for the colorful wayfinding signs as they travel to and through the downtown area. Using a color from the sign system for the kiosk provides a natural transition from the automobile to the pedestrian level.

The materials used in the kiosk should also reflect the elements and styles found in the downtown. Kiosks can be made from many types and combinations of materials, such as metal, wood, brick, stone, plastic, and glass; they can also be illuminated. Kiosks can range from simple metal display cases attached to an existing structure to complex, independent, architectural structures. Determining the type of materials and complexity of the kiosk also depends on your budget.

The placement of kiosks at key locations plays an important role in creating a seamless, hassle-free experience, thereby giving the visitor a positive impression of the community. Think about the path a pedestrian will take to major attractions in your downtown. Try to locate kiosks in key locations along those paths, such as parking garages, parking lots, major intersections, and important landmarks located along major corridors.

Underlying the success or failure of the kiosk is its management. It must be maintained and the information kept current. Don't take on more than you can manage. Simplicity is vital to the management of kiosks. Failure to maintain the kiosks and update the information they contain can negatively influence people's perceptions of the community as well as their ability to find their way around.

they see a brochure or website to when they park their car and arrive at their destination.

### Why Now?

Tourism and downtown development groups are increasingly aware that wayfinding should be an integral part of their branding and marketing efforts to bring increased numbers of visitors downtown. All they have to do is drive through the community and pretend they are first-time visitors and here is what they generally find:

- Existing systems that are unpredictable, outdated, or lack authority;
- Standard DOT road signs that lack community character;

- Sign clutter along roadways;
- Too few signs to direct visitors to the commercial district;
- Numerous gateways and corridors leading to town;
- Multiple destinations and attractions;
- Increased traffic volumes and congestion on roads; and
- New bypasses that route potential visitors around downtown.

### Wayfinding and the Main Street Four-Point Approach™

Wayfinding is one of many available tools that support the design and function of Main

Street's “big picture.” It is part of a comprehensive marketing, design, and economic revitalization strategy. In order to succeed, a revitalization effort requires careful attention to every aspect of Main Street – including the often-overlooked arrival sequence to the district. Across the country, city planners and Main Street program directors are increasingly thinking “gateway to gateway.”

Support of Main Street's four points is essential to a community's long-term revitalization. Wayfinding is an integral component of most of these strategies:

**DESIGN.** With distinctive, strategically placed signs and maps and an elegant graphic

image, a wayfinding system provides an attractive appearance and distinctive character that is unique to your community. It gives visitors a cohesive experience, cleans up visual clutter littering the roadside, and achieves greater connectivity between attractions.

**PROMOTION.** Wayfinding reinforces your unique image, positions downtown as a destination, and markets multiple attractions. A carefully organized and executed sign system gives the visitor a positive impression of the community and cross-promotes primary and secondary attractions. Your “branding” gains authority.

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#### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

Wayfinding bolsters economic development efforts, by connecting Main Street with its market. Retaining and expanding the visitor market can measurably boost the economic success of any downtown or neighborhood commercial district.

Quite simply, a wayfinding sign system offers a high-impact, common-sense way to bring more people to traditional business districts. With great authority, it firmly reestablishes downtown as the heart and soul of the community and creates a visitor-friendly environment.

## What Are the Components of a Wayfinding Sign System?

A sign system is composed of an integrated kit of parts, including:

- Gateway signs, which announce arrival. Gateways play an important role in forming first impressions and welcoming visitors and residents alike. Both the form and the character of a gateway can influence the overall experience of a particular area.
- Trailblazer signs, which “blaze a trail” to a destination.
- Proximity destination signs, which guide visitors to specific destinations once the

trailblazer signs have steered them into the proximity of the attraction(s).

- Parking directional, regulatory, and lot identification signs.
- Pedestrian signs/kiosks.
- Banners.
- Location signs, which identify destinations.
- Special event signs.
- Community branding – websites, brochures, and maps are being used by many communities to brand themselves. The wayfinding system can be an element of the entire branding package. It is important to remember, however, that branding through print and websites can change every few years. Plan on signs being in place for 12 to 15 years.

## What Are the Guidelines for Wayfinding Sign Design?

For visibility and safety, signs can be designed according to the *Manual for Uniform Traffic Control Devices* (MUTCD) standards. The MUTCD contains standards for uniform traffic control devices that regulate, warn, and guide road users along highways and byways in all 50 states. Other guidelines for wayfinding may stipulate that:

- Signs should be simple and uniform in design, position, and application.
- Signs should employ a simple, easy-to-read typeface with

## ISSUE: REGIONAL WAYFINDING America's Historic Triangle, Virginia

As a region heavily invested in tourism, Virginia's Historic Triangle recognized the opportunity to dramatically improve the visitor experience by better welcoming, guiding, and cross-selling regional attractions. The region has multiple attractions, multiple entry corridors, heavy traffic, sign clutter, and demonstrated visitor confusion. The presence of these indicators, combined with the upcoming Jamestown 2007 celebration, prompted the region to act quickly.

The Historic Triangle Wayfinding Group was founded “to design, install, and maintain a system of highway and street directional signage to guide visitors to primary and secondary attractions and destinations located in the City of Williamsburg, James City County, and Upper York County.” This inter-municipal focus on a coordinated signage strategy was unprecedented in the state of Virginia.

By acting together, the Historic Triangle reinforced the collective tourism industry. The region now boasts an attractive, cohesive, and functional wayfinding sign system that facilitates self-navigation and leaves visitors with a positive image of the area.

All photos © Frazier Associates

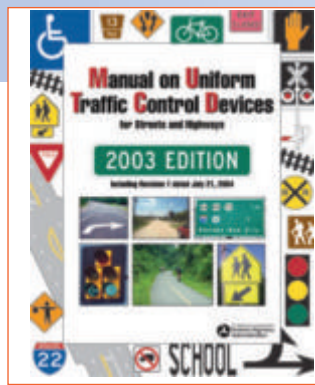


Typical sign clutter along roadway.



Above and top: Historic Triangle wayfinding signs boost the area's tourism industry by providing an attractive, cohesive navigation system for travelers.

*The Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD)*, published by the Federal Highway Administration, sets the standards for signs, signals, and pavement markings in the United States.



## What Gets a Sign and How Many Are Needed?

The answer here depends on the size of your community

and the number of important visitor destinations. Often communities will choose to “trailblaze” destinations such as the visitors center, historic downtown, a major museum or event location, college or university, or government center.

Similarly, the number of signs will depend on the size of a community. Be sure to plan for enough signs to guide your visitors through major intersec-

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## ISSUE: HISTORIC DOWNTOWN JEOPARDIZED BY RAPID GROWTH AND HIGH-SPEED TRAFFIC Leesburg, Virginia

Leesburg, Virginia, possesses a vibrant business district with small-town appeal. The town is situated outside Washington, D.C., near Dulles International Airport. Downtown’s attractiveness can be attributed to its quaint atmosphere, the human scale of its buildings and streets, and slow vehicular traffic. At the edge of the district, however, is a bypass that pulls traffic around the town, and beyond that, the scale instantly increases with large subdivisions, multiple-lane roads, and higher vehicular speeds. In creating a comprehensive sign system for the town, the community needed to address both of these issues. Most importantly, visitor traffic needed to be captured and redirected downtown.

A sign committee was created to assist in developing the design and programming of the sign system, which includes gateway entry signs, trailblazer signs that direct visitors to three primary destinations, and proximity signs that guide visitors to specific local attractions. Complementing the basic sign system are historic district gateway signs, special events signs,

celebratory signs, a kiosk for pedestrian-level signage, and additional interior parking signs for the Town Hall parking garage.

The fabrication of the different sign systems was divided into three phases based on their priority of installation.

All photos © Frazier Associates





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tions or along corridors that stretch for several miles before reaching destinations or important intersections.

## What Is the Process for Design, Approval, and Installation?

Establish a group responsible for formulating and adopting a wayfinding program and guiding the community through the design process. A single individual should be author-

ized as "project liaison." Stakeholders should include, but not be limited to, representatives of the following groups: the Main Street program; municipal or county staff, including planners, public works, engineers, and elected officials; vacation, tourism and/or visitor bureaus; department of transportation (DOT); historical commission; and the department of community and economic development.

Set clear goals and realistic budget estimates. Wayfinding sign systems are not cheap; be prepared for the price tag!

Understand the wayfinding issues in your community. Questions every community should ask include:

- What does your arrival sequence convey to a visitor? You may find that you need more than just wayfinding. Many entrance corridors are cluttered with auto-oriented development that is not attractive or inviting. Steps to enhance the streetscape may be required.
- Do visitors know where your downtown is? How far it is from the exit?
- What are your destinations? These would include tourist centers, historic districts, museums, government centers, etc.
- Can visitors easily navigate from one destination to the next?
- Is your community's identity already branded through advertising, maps, brochures, and websites?
- Who maintains the streets in the community? Will the your state's department of transportation allow signs in the right of way?

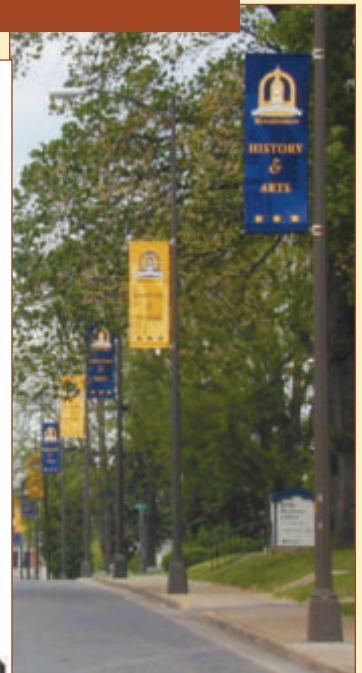
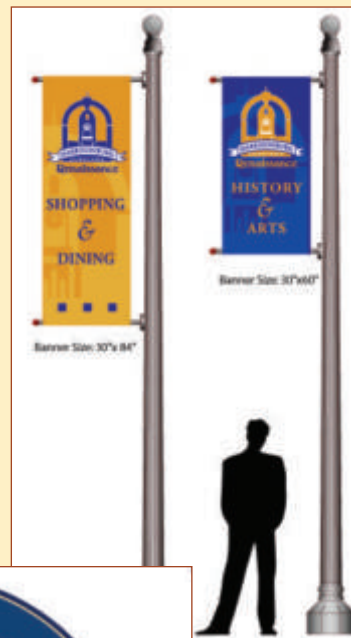
At this point, the community should consider hiring a wayfinding design consultant. Once a consultant is on board, a wayfinding task force will typically proceed with determining destinations, exploring design options, and choosing a final design for the system. In addition to the appearance of the system, the means of fabrication and installation must

## ISSUE: WHEN SPRAWL PULLS PEOPLE AWAY FROM DOWNTOWN Harrisonburg, Virginia

For decades, local development in Harrisonburg, Virginia, had occurred outside the city center in a "ring" of big-box stores, malls, and commercial strips. Downtown languished, suffering from several misguided phases of urban renewal. Adding to the challenges was a confusing traffic pattern, and an interstate that split "old" downtown away from the new retail center at the eastern edge of town.

In 2003, Harrisonburg Downtown Renaissance (HDR) was formed to unify, strengthen, and direct the revitalization efforts for downtown. The group, with the city's financial backing, was committed to improving the appearance and function of downtown, sparking economic investment, increasing tourism, and enhancing civic pride. Improving directions to and connectivity with the campus of James Madison University was also an area of focus.

An integral part of the new investment in downtown was a wayfinding system that could blaze a trail to the city's historic downtown as well as to key attractions. The new sign system, which includes gateway signs, trailblazers, parking, pedestrian kiosks, and downtown gateway banners will capitalize on the substantial growth and traffic that is occurring at the city's edges by redirecting it inwards.



All drawings and photos © Frazier Associates

be decided. After the scope of the system and the budget are finalized, construction documents are prepared for a bidding process. Then a fabricator is selected, and the signs are made and installed.

Design approval from several agencies may be needed. If the signs will be put in a local historic district, the design may need to go to the architectural review board. If the roads in your community are main-

tained by the DOT in your state, a representative from that agency should be a part of the process. Some states may require permits if the signs are in the state right-of-way.

colleagues what a nice time they had, providing the best promotion possible for any community.

*Kathy Frazier, AIA, (Principal), Kathy Moore (Marketing Director), and Sandy Hanger, SEG (Graphic Design Project Manager) are with Frazier Associates, a Virginia-based architecture, planning, landscape architecture, and graphic design firm whose mission is to strengthen communities through design. The firm has been providing design assistance to Main Street communities for more than 20 years. Learn more at [www.frazierassociates.com](http://www.frazierassociates.com).*

## Wayfinding Is Not Just For Visitors

Wayfinding also provides an opportunity to redirect the attention of local residents back to Main Street.

The signs are a visual reminder that a lot has changed, that downtown is ripe for rediscovery and fun. Your community's unique character and culture can be reinforced throughout the signing area with an array of colorful, consistent images. Think of the sign system as a permanent outdoor advertising campaign for the local audience!

For local residents or workers, wayfinding can:

- Boost civic pride;
- Reinforce recent "branding" campaigns;
- Improve community self-image;
- Simplify traffic patterns and make roads safer; and
- Create excitement through celebratory banners and special event signage, ultimately luring residents to Main Street to see what's happening.

## How Much Do Sign Systems Cost?

The cost of a wayfinding sign system can be significant. Each community must examine the level of signs that it needs and can afford. However, the payback for many historic communities can be great because of the inviting image the system can create. Visitors will leave with a memorable experience of the community unclouded by the frustration of losing their way or the hassle of not finding a place to park. Perhaps most importantly, visitors may mention to their friends and

## ISSUE: BYPASS MOVES TRAFFIC AROUND CHARMING DOWNTOWN Bennettsville, South Carolina

Bennettsville, founded in 1819, quickly grew into one of the most successful agricultural communities in South Carolina. Its downtown is reminiscent of an earlier age, offering a rich architectural heritage of Victorian and Greek Revival homes and public buildings. The State of South Carolina recognized Bennettsville's prominence by officially designating it South Carolina's first "Great Town."

Now with a population of 10,000, and an area of seven-and-a-half square miles, Bennettsville is struggling with many of the same growth, navigation, and traffic issues affecting successful small towns throughout the South. A bypass was put in to move traffic around the town toward Myrtle Beach, a destination that pulls visitors from all across the eastern seaboard. Downtown suffered when traffic was rerouted. Now the local Main Street program is working to strengthen the district's vitality and bring people back downtown.

As part of a charrette process organized by Community Builders, Frazier Associates and Arnett Muldrow Associates were brought in to brainstorm marketing and branding ideas for the town. The signage project was an outgrowth of that charrette process. The sign system aims to create awareness of the town and recapture visitor traffic. The system includes gateway signs, secondary gateway signs, a trailblazer system, and locator signs. The project was funded in part by a South Carolina Opportunity Grant.



Drawing and both photos © Frazier Associates



# DIRECTOR'S COLUMN

By Doug Loescher, Director, NTMSC

## A "Long Tail" for Main Street Retail

### Meet the ShopMainStreet.org Team!



Taking the initiative to make a good idea happen, National Trust Main Street Center Webmaster David Tully, at right above, worked with Main Street Membership Coordinator Luke VanBelleghem and Assistant Editor Andrea Dono to launch the new site in record time for the holidays. Our team will be adding more bells and whistles to the site and program as we learn from the test phase and consider a permanent site after the first of the year. For more information, or questions, please e-mail [David\\_Tully@nthp.org](mailto:David_Tully@nthp.org).

There's a massive force bullying its way through the retail industry – a mega-trend so big and relentless that it will forever transform retailing as we know it. And guess what? It's not good news for Wal-Mart. But before anyone starts cheering the potential demise of the big box, they should consider this: it could also spell doom for many Main Street mom & pops.

What's this scary new trend? It's called the *Long Tail Theory of Economics*, an idea that has gained momentum in the past few years to describe how old ideas of supply and demand are being shattered by 21st-century retailing. Popularized by *Wired Magazine* Editor Chris Anderson, whose recently released book, *The Long Tail: Why the Future of Business Is Selling Less of More*, shows how consumers, when presented with the choice, will buy far more – and different – merchandise than found in the aisles of Wal-Mart, or on Main Street for that matter.

You won't be surprised to learn that the Internet is behind all this. Amazon.com is a perfect poster child for this new model of doing business. Freed from the expense of brick-and-mortar "shelf space," Amazon can offer a

thousand times more products than even the largest chain bookseller. And what are online shoppers buying? Blockbuster "hits" of books and music, to be sure, but more interestingly, they're snapping up obscure titles and narrow-niche products you'd never see in a store.

This "long tail" of product and preference turns out to be a far bigger – and more lucrative – market than the top-sellers have ever been. Even more startlingly, the emergence of this "long tail" will actually *shrink* the market for those traditional "hit" products that have helped both chains and mom & pops do so well in the past.

And the trend is not limited to books or music. In fact, the author outlines how virtually every type of business will eventually be transformed by this theory and in the not-too-distant future, either. I highly recommend the book, by the way. And although I probably don't have to ask this audience to buy a copy from your local bookseller instead of Amazon, perhaps you should buy two, and give your *local storeowner* the second copy to read!

As I read the book, I initially became distressed over what this might mean for Main Street. The trend seems to suggest that the "specialty niche" many of our businesses occupy will be better filled by "long-tail" Internet-based businesses, leaving little room for the brick-and-mortar guys.

How can small, independent brick-and-mortar operations in our commercial districts adapt? After all, most mom & pops can only offer a small range of goods, as long as they are constrained by the expense of a real shop, and what's the point of a Main Street business if it doesn't have a physical space downtown?

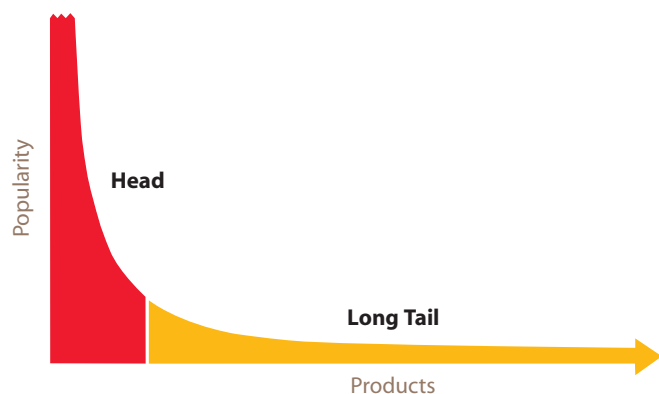
And then it hit me: Main Street businesses must aggressively develop their e-commerce business, matching the professional look, feel, and functionality of the big guys, to be sure. But the real key to turning local businesses into "long-tail" entrepreneurs will be in the collective approach to selling. That means going way beyond the borders of our districts and communities. It means making a "national Main Street district" out of thousands of individual enterprises.

That's why I'm so excited about the prospects for a new initiative we've just launched at the Center: [ShopMainStreet.org](http://ShopMainStreet.org)! Now in a testing phase for the holidays, we are looking to refine and develop a "national Main Street" retail portal that will become a permanent and growing component of our network. (For more information, see sidebar, [Why Shop Main Street?](#), on pg. 9).

ShopMainStreet can not only take advantage of the "long-tail" trend, offering a wide of unusual and niche-market goods, but it can go one step further and take what I call the "trump card" for Main Street. This trump card cannot be matched by Wal-Mart, Amazon or anything in-between. It's the "promise" of Main Street, which I think is summed up in the word: "connection." We've long known that the authentic places and people found on our Main Streets offer the chance for individuals to connect to meaningful experiences and a sense of community. But this connection happens as much in our minds as well as in a physical space.

Here's an example. Shortly after we launched ShopMainStreet.org, I spent some time checking out the businesses listed on the website. Randomly scrolling

The New Marketplace



Credit: Chris Anderson, [www.thelongtail.com](http://www.thelongtail.com)



through apparel, I came across a children's shop in State College, Pennsylvania. Called The Animal Kingdom, it sells toys and clothes. Now, there are a million sites online where I could find this type of stuff. But something about *this* place drew me in. I used to live near this town, and because of my association with the community, I felt an instant connection to this store. And long term, I think the mere association of "Main Street" can make ShopMainStreet.org an appealing site for millions of people.

Before I knew it, I was clicking my way through The Animal Kingdom's website, quickly and effortlessly purchasing several items. The pleasure of shopping on Main Street, even virtually, combined with the ease of their e-commerce site, made this a fun five-minute experience for me. But it didn't stop there. Not only did I get an instant e-mail confirmation, which every good e-commerce site will do; but just a few minutes later I got a call from the store. A certain item was out of stock; could they ship it the following week instead? That's not something Amazon is going to do for you.

And that's the real "trump card" of Main Street – the potential for a personal connection, even through e-commerce, that can be our niche. ShopMainStreet.org can create a "nationwide retail district," with a vast selection – "long-tail" merchandising – and an authentic connection to places that make people feel good.

What could be more powerful than that?



**Do you have a "long tail" or e-commerce story you'd like to share?** Write us at [mainstreet@nthp.org](mailto:mainstreet@nthp.org), and we will incorporate your comments and ideas into future issues of MSN. – Thank you!

## Why Shop Main Street?

The National Trust Main Street Center launched the website, [www.shopmain-street.org](http://www.shopmain-street.org), to support independent businesses and local economies by offering a single online directory of "mom & pop" businesses throughout the nation. All featured businesses have online catalogs or online shopping capabilities. The interactive website allows shoppers to search for Main Street businesses by state or by merchandise category.

Many people consider shopping on Main Street "experience shopping" because they interact with people and a community, instead of frantically hunting for rock-bottom prices. Shopping on Main Street means finding merchandise that reflects local heritage, products that can't be found anywhere else. It's about making a connection. It's also about keeping the entrepreneurial spirit alive and helping local businesses compete against big-box retailers and other large retail institutions. Choosing to shop Main Street lets these businesses know you appreciate them and want them to stick around.

Need ways to convince others why they should shop Main Street? Here are 10 reasons you can give to the media, public, and potential shoppers to persuade them to spend their dollars at independent businesses in Main Street districts... and online:

- **Local businesses maintain diversity and community character.** Local businesses reflect the character of their community through their unique products, services, and atmosphere and through their location in historic buildings, which preserve an authentic sense of place.
- **Vibrant Main Streets help reduce sprawl.** These districts embody smart growth principles by concentrating retail; offering housing on Main Street or nearby to create pedestrian-friendly communities; and using community resources, such as infrastructure, tax dollars, and land, wisely.
- **Historic preservation is the ultimate recycling.** When buildings are demolished, most of the materials are used for land fill. By finding new uses for historic buildings, we reduce demand for new materials and prevent unnecessary land fill. Many Main Street businesses are located in rehabilitated historic buildings.
- **Commercial districts are prominent employment centers.** Even the smallest commercial district employs hundreds of people, and often the district is collectively the community's largest employer. There has been a cumulative net gain of 331,417 jobs in Main Street districts since 1980.<sup>1</sup>
- **Main Streets are home to entrepreneurs.** Small businesses are the lifeblood of social mobility, enabling people to pull themselves up by their bootstraps. A marketplace of thousands of small businesses ensures innovation.<sup>2</sup>
- **Main Streets increase choice.** Thousands of small businesses offering products based on the needs of their customers instead of a national sales plan promote a wider array of choices for consumers.<sup>2</sup>
- **Main Street provides an important civic forum, where members of the community can congregate.** Parades, special events, and celebrations held on Main Street reinforce an intangible sense of community. Private developments like malls and strip centers can and do restrict free speech and access.
- **Everyone benefits from revitalized historic districts.** From residents to financial institutions, from property owners to local governments, everyone is better off with a vibrant Main Street district. (See a chart in the "Why Revitalize?" section of the Main Street website, [www.mainstreet.org](http://www.mainstreet.org).) Historic shopping districts also boost the community's heritage tourism potential, which can be a significant

revenue generator for Main Street. Cultural heritage travelers spend, on average, \$623 per trip compared to \$457 for all U.S. travelers.<sup>3</sup> Forty-four percent of cultural heritage travelers shop during their trips, compared to 33 percent of all other travelers.<sup>4</sup>

- **Online shopping for the holidays is rising for all businesses.** In 2005, e-commerce sites rang up more than \$30.1 billion during the weeks leading up to Christmas.<sup>5</sup> Online sales positively affect the bottom line for independent businesses, which usually operate on a thin profit margin, and can make a difference in their ability to remain competitive and stay open.
- **Community-based businesses give more time and money to local activities.** According to the U.S. Small Business Administration, small businesses give more time and money to charitable organizations than their large competitors.
- **Buying from independent businesses has a greater economic impact.** Recent studies have shown that a larger share of each dollar spent in a local business stays in the community as compared to chain stores. Furthermore, the economic impact of dollars spent at local businesses is increased through a local multiplier effect.<sup>6</sup>

By Luke VanBelleghem and Andrea L. Domo

1. 2005 Main Street Reinvestment Statistics compiled by the National Trust Main Street Center to measure cumulative reinvestment of all active Main Street communities (1900 districts throughout the nation) spanning 1980 to 2005.
2. The New Rules Project [www.newrules.org](http://www.newrules.org).
3. The Historic/Cultural Traveler 2003 Edition study prepared by the Travel Industry Association of America.
4. The Historic/Cultural Traveler 2001 Edition.
5. eSpending report produced by Goldman Sachs, Nielsen//NetRatings and Harris Interactive.
6. [www.civiceconomics.com/Anersonville](http://www.civiceconomics.com/Anersonville); [www.newrules.org/retail/midcoast-study.pdy](http://www.newrules.org/retail/midcoast-study.pdy); [www.liveablecity.org/lcfull-report.pdf](http://www.liveablecity.org/lcfull-report.pdf).

What draws people to your Main Street? Is it the streetscape or the carefully restored historic buildings? Is it the shops frequented by residents and visitors alike, contributing to the local economy? Whether it's all of the above or something completely different, there is no doubt that your Main Street is an important part of life in your community.

*By Genny Dill*

## AVERTING

# DISASTER

## Asset Protection for Main Street Businesses

Photo © Pyle Photography



All the businesses along Main Street, or even in a strip mall, depend on each other for stability. Knowing that the viability of your commercial district depends on all businesses in the area, imagine what would happen if a fire breaks out in your commercial district. Maybe disaster strikes that cool, new restaurant that everyone raves about, or the hardware store that has been a neighborhood staple for more than 50 years. Or perhaps a fire rips through a row of buildings all at once, such as what happened on Main Street in Annapolis, Maryland, when an electrical fire burned three shops and caused smoke and water damage to others, just as the 2005 holiday shopping

season was beginning. Now, a year later, two of the three heavily damaged shops remain burnt-out shells, while the third was bulldozed and an empty lot has taken its place. The intention of the owners at the time of the fire was to rebuild quickly and get back to business. But recovery has been difficult, with insurance and financial issues plaguing recovery.

How likely is your Main Street to recover quickly? Will the businesses located in the burned buildings be able to recover and come back? Will the undamaged businesses suffer because of the “holes” along the street? Will consumers be deterred by the vacancies in the district?

### ASSET PROTECTION FOR MAIN STREET

Main Street programs, merchant associations, and downtown organizations should be speaking with their local business owners and partners about asset protection. This is important insurance coverage that protects the physical structure, its contents, and the income and operating expenses of the business. It is very easy to arm your Main Street businesses and property owners with the right information to protect them, and in turn, your entire business district in the event of a catastrophe.

One of the most common holdups to recovery after a catastrophe is inadequate



insurance to cover rebuilding costs. This is where a little insurance education for Main Street business and property owners could go a long way to protecting the district as a whole. Owners should look carefully at the two most important coverages that help ensure longevity in the face of a catastrophe:

- **General liability** covers third-party claims alleging bodily injury and property damage. General liability coverage is fairly simple for most Main Street businesses. If a client slips and falls on the premises, this coverage would pay for the medical expense, loss of wage, etc., of the injured party. A business without this coverage faces financial hardship if a judgment is made against it.
- **Property coverage** is for actual physical damages to the building, contents, stock, and income.

Property coverage is the most valuable asset of Main Street. While liability claims happen, property claims are not only more frequent and more difficult to predict; they can also affect the entire commercial district. To ensure a speedier recovery after a fire or other catastrophe, property coverage must include coverage for the building, contents, stock, income, and increased construction costs necessary to comply with modern building ordinances or law.

## PROPERTY VALUES AND CO-INSURANCE

Perhaps the most important item to discuss when evaluating coverage for a historic building is the proper insurance value of the property. A fairly large number of historic building owners whom I have encountered have had insurance-to-value issues. Many of the owners were unaware of the potential consequences associated with this. If property is not insured to its replacement value, in the event of a claim, the owner will not only lack

adequate coverage but could be subject to huge co-insurance penalties as well. All of this combined will drastically reduce the individual's ability to recover after a loss. It is highly recommended that historic property owners obtain a property appraisal to determine the replacement/rebuild value of the structure, or consult with an insurance agent who is familiar with insuring historic buildings.

## HOW CO-INSURANCE WORKS

Let's say you have a building that *you think* would cost \$100,000 to replace and your policy has a co-insurance of 80 percent. You insure the building for \$80,000 thinking you have fulfilled the co-insurance clause. A fire loss causes \$60,000 worth of damage, so you submit a claim. Your insurance company subsequently determines that the replacement cost of the building is actually \$150,000.

To determine how much to pay on the claim, the insurer divides the amount of insurance you purchased (\$80,000) by the amount you should have purchased (80 percent of \$150,000, or \$120,000). The result (two-thirds, or \$40,000)

is the amount of your claim that the insurer will pay, minus your deductible. You, as the property owner, would pay the difference (\$20,000), and your deductible. If the building had been insured for at least \$120,000, the insurer would have reimbursed you for the full amount of the loss.

**Bottom line:** Co-insurance can be tricky and cost you a lot of money if you under-insure your property.

## COVERAGE VALUATION

Coverage valuation should go hand-in-hand with correct property values. There are many valuation options available in the insurance industry, although many insurance carriers will offer only one or two, and some options are rarely available for historic properties. Never insure a building for *market value*. If the building is damaged by fire, the insurance carrier cannot go to market and buy a used one to plop down in place of the old one, it must *replace or repair the damaged portion* of the property.

Insuring a property for how much you can buy or sell it is never a smart idea, and will greatly reduce your ability to recover in the event of an underinsured loss.

Here are some simple explanations of the common options found in today's insurance market:

- **Replacement Cost Valuation (RCV):** Pays the actual cost to replace/rebuild the property with the same quality and construction, without a deduction for depreciation. This is a preferred method for historic properties, as it will not utilize depreciation based upon age.

**Bottom line:** A damaged wood floor in a historic building is replaced with a wood floor that matches the undamaged floor throughout the rest of the structure.

- **Actual Cash Value (ACV):** *Replacement cost* of property damaged or destroyed at the time of loss, with *deduction for depreciation*. Actual cash value cannot exceed the applicable limit of liability shown in the declarations of the policy, nor the amount it would cost to repair or replace such property with material of like kind and quality within a reasonable amount of time after a loss. There is always a co-insur-

*continued on page 12*

*All the businesses along Main Street depend on each other for stability. Understanding how to adequately insure business and property owners can help protect the district as a whole.*



Photo © Linda S. Glisson

continued from page 11

ance clause that will accompany ACV. This method is typically not preferred for historic properties.

**Bottom line:** Stretched canvas was painted to look like leather on the walls of your historic property in the late 1980s. Water damage destroys one of the walls completely. You will receive a reimbursement for the wall covering at its current value, not for the cost to replace it. This will take into account that the covering has depreciated in value since the 1980s.

- **Agreed Value:** Optional clause for property coverage that waives the co-insurance clause on a year-by-year basis based on the filing and acceptance by the insurer of a statement of actual values on which the amount of

insurance for the coming year is based. Failing to file a new statement within the required timeframe results in reapplication of the co-insurance clause until a new statement is filed and approved.

This method is preferred by some, as it allows the client to insure the building at a limit that might be lower or higher than the insurance company's Insurance-To-Value (ITV) charts would allow, though some insurance carriers would require the client to document why they feel the property should be insured at an amount higher or lower than the ITV charts.

ITV charts are an industry standard used to determine a building's value; they are often very good determinants of the value of modern structures but less

so for historic properties because appropriate replacement materials are harder to find and the availability of skilled craftsmen varies by region.

**Bottom line:** In the event of a total property loss, you will collect the "agreed value" of the policy, regardless of the actual cost to replace the property at the time of a loss. In the event of a partial property loss, you will collect based upon replacement cost guidelines, up to the total agreed amount of coverage.

- **Functional Replacement Cost:** Minimum cost to replace the damaged property with property that performs the same functions as the original, though it may be less expensive and of lower quality than the original.

**Bottom line:** A damaged plaster ceiling could be replaced with sheetrock. An intricately carved mahogany banister may be replaced with a less intricate pine version.

- **Guaranteed Replacement Cost:** Ensures that property will be replaced even if the cost exceeds the limit on the policy (for many companies, how much the cost may exceed the policy level is limited). Virtually all companies require that clients be insured to 100 percent of replacement cost in order to obtain guaranteed replacement cost coverage.

Although this is the most preferred coverage valuation, it is not available in all areas and is often unavailable for historic properties.

**Bottom line:** Your property is replaced, regardless of the amount of coverage stated in the declarations page.

## BUSINESS INCOME AND ORDINANCE OR LAW COVERAGE

What else do business owners need to have covered? After providing for the building and contents or stock, the next items to look at are business income and ordinance or law coverage.

Business income coverage is exactly what it sounds like. After a loss, during the time it takes to get back into business (the "Period of Restoration"), a business owner will realize a loss of income that would have been generated had the loss not occurred. As with building and contents coverage, it is important for a business owner to insure his or her income to its adequate value.

Because this coverage may also be subject to a co-insurance clause, the owner must make the insurance agent aware of the correct amount of income that the organization generates in a 12-month period. Business owners must consider if they would need to continue paying their employees in order to retain them. Would they need to continue paying their vendors? What additional business operations expenses might they incur after a loss? These are important issues for business owners to discuss openly with their insurance agent so that he or she can properly advise them of their options.

Ordinance or law coverage is a three-part coverage. The first part of this coverage pays for the loss of value of an undamaged portion of an existing building that must be demolished and/or removed to conform to local building ordinance, code, or other law.

The second part of this coverage pays for the cost of demolition of the undamaged portions of the building necessitated by the enforcement of building, zoning, or land-use ordinance or law.

Photo © Micheline Phelan





The third, and perhaps most important, part of this coverage pays for any increased cost of construction incurred to replace the building with one conforming to building laws or ordinances, or to repair the damaged building so that it meets the specifications of current building laws or ordinances.

A good example of the necessity for ordinance or law coverage (also called "Building Ordinance Coverage") would be compliance requirements for the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If after a covered loss, a property owner may need to provide larger restrooms, wider doors, and other amenities to accommodate disabled people (which may have been "grandfathered" in before); this additional expense can be devastating to a small business. It is well worth the additional premium to have this protection written into a property policy.

Understanding how a property policy will react after a claim is essential to protecting small businesses and the Main Street district. Disaster for one affects us all. When you hear the term "Main Street community," it's because that is right. We are all a *community*, made up of numerous businesses, residents, and others who watch over one another and rely on each other for stability.

*Genny Dill has worked in the property and casualty insurance market for nearly 13 years, the first half in her native state of California. She joined National Trust Insurance Services in 2003 and provides technical assistance, education, and other insurance services to historic property owners, Main Streets, preservation organizations, and historic theatres countrywide.*

## Reducing Risk of Catastrophe Through Building Upgrades

Many tragedies can be avoided by taking simple steps to upgrade the historic buildings on your Main Street. In addition, most insurance companies require these updates; some will even discount your premium if the updates are very recent or exceed the local building code. The five items that insurance companies look for first are:

**Wiring.** The most common source of fire in commercial buildings is antiquated, inadequate, or faulty wiring. There is an easy, though somewhat costly, remedy. Update that wiring, get rid of those fuses, and yank out that knob and tube or aluminum wiring.

**Plumbing.** Old plumbing pipes and fixtures will leak! It's not a matter of if, it's a matter of when they will leak. Remove old iron and galvanized piping and replace it with PVC or another modern material.

**Roof.** Certain roofs may last longer than others. Metal and slate roofs, for example, can last for more than a hundred years if properly maintained. They should be inspected regularly to ensure that there are no leaks, cracks, or rusting. Flat, shingle, and tile roofs should also be inspected regularly, and flat roofs should be resealed every two to three years and

replaced every 10 or according to the manufacturer's instructions. Shingle roofs should be replaced every 20 years, or according to the manufacturer's instructions.

**HVAC.** Old heating systems can be as dangerous as old wiring. While steam boilers can last for 50 years, it is important (and in many cases the law) to have them inspected annually. Electric and gas furnaces should be inspected annually as well, and should not be expected to last longer than 30 years. Old AC units can also cause serious water infiltration to buildings. It's important that they be inspected annually and replaced according to the manufacturer.

**Fire safety.** Do you want an automatic discount on your insurance premium and kudos from your local fire department? Install sprinkler systems and/or centrally monitored fire alarms. While smoke detectors are a great start, they do not provide the protection that a monitored fire alarm system provides when the building is empty or when a fire starts in the back of the premises. Sprinkler systems are a no-brainer; however they can be expensive to install in historic buildings if the owner wishes to maintain the same interior character.



Representatives from the National Trust Insurance Services, LLC, will be available in the Expo Hall at the National Main Streets Conference to answer your Main Street-related insurance questions. For more information, please visit [www.nationaltrust-insurance.org](http://www.nationaltrust-insurance.org) or call 866-269-0944.





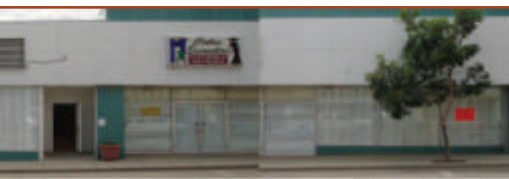
# NETWORK NOTES

"Network Notes" is compiled and written monthly by Luke VanBelleghe. If you have interesting projects or ideas you would like to read about, give Luke a call at 202-588-6231 or e-mail him at [luke\\_vanbelleghe@nthp.org](mailto:luke_vanbelleghe@nthp.org).

## Community Initiated Retail



**Carbon Merc storefront (before, below and new façade design (top).**



The foot and street traffic has been brisk since the opening of the Carbon Mercantile (Merc) store in downtown Rawlins, Wyoming. The community-owned clothing store opened its doors on Friday, September 1st, with anxious customers waiting outside. Cedar Street, the core of Rawlins Main Street, has not seen this much traffic since the early 80s.

Rawlins Main Street (RMS) Executive Director Pam Thayer rolled up her sleeves and helped prepare for the opening with many hours of steaming and hanging the merchandise. She assisted Manager Tara France with the lay-out and design of the store. She also held a training session for the store's staff on the importance of merchandising and customer service.

"The success of the Carbon Merc will have a positive impact on the Main Street program and anything that I

and Main Street can do, will be done," says Thayer.

The Carbon Merc began nearly four years ago in December 2002 with the help of previous Rawlins Downtown Development Authority Director Lindy Schmidt, and Dave Perry, pub-

lisher of the local newspaper. The concept of a community-owned store had been successful in other Wyoming communities. First, the town formed a committee, which led to the establishment of a board of directors. The board wanted to see Rawlins and Carbon County thrive once again, and they believed a downtown clothing store could help revitalize the city's core. The Bank of Commerce and Rawlins National Bank contributed major resources to the Carbon Merc, including matching employee funds. A grant through the Wyoming Business Council and the Wyoming Community Foundation funded the initial business study and plan, done by the Business Resource Group.

The capital for the store was obtained through stock sales purchased by the community. The Carbon Merc leased space downtown and incorporated on October 15, 2004.

Sales of stock followed. The stock was sold for \$25 a share with a minimum of 20 shares, or \$500 per investor. Selling the stock was more difficult than anticipated but the board persevered. Fashion shows were held by RMS for current and prospective share-holders at two different Rawlins events during the fall of 2005, and a telethon on June 5, 2005, with the city council and a local cable station, raised \$22,000.

The Carbon County Economic Development Corp. (CCEDC) offered its nonprofit status as a way to move corporate gifts to nonprofit shareholders such as service clubs. John Freeman, representative of Governor Dave Freudenthal, helped board members with fundraising ideas as well. On December 1st, the Carbon Merc closed stock sales with \$524,875 – the highest amount raised in all four of the community-owned stores in Wyoming. With this giant step done, the next phase began.

The Wyoming Business Council again stepped in to lend its advice to the board. At the council's advice, Carbon County applied for, and received, a Community Development Block Grant. The county purchased the building with the grant, made necessary repairs, and then deeded it to the CCEDC. The Merc leases the building from the CCEDC, and in turn gives the CCEDC monies to use to

strengthen Carbon County.

The last phase of the project will be façade renovations next spring. Pam Thayer is currently working with Tara France on this phase. RMS and Wyoming Main Street brought in Scott Day, who specializes in design management and retail economics for commercial revitalization, to consult with the Carbon Merc board this past August. Day produced a new façade design, which has been given to the Merc Board for review. The Carbon Merc will use funds from the CDBG and the Wyoming Main Street Revolving Loan Fund to complete the final phase. The Carbon Merc offers a great example of a business utilizing all state and federal funds available to produce an incredible outcome.

The Carbon Merc had an amazing first month with sales of more than \$100,000. France says she has a great team and gives continued credit to all of her volunteers, stockholders, and staff to get the store open and running. "It's so much more than the store, it's the vision the store brought with it," says France. "The vision of Rawlins has come full circle. If we have helped it in any way, I'm proud to be part of it."

*For more information, contact Pam Thayer at 307-238-2099 or [rawlinsdda@wyoming.com](mailto:rawlinsdda@wyoming.com).*

## Free Website, Domain Name, Web Hosting, and E-mail

Does your organization still lack an online presence? Do you want to get started but don't feel like you have the technical knowledge? Are there businesses in your district that want to get online but are afraid it is too costly?

Microsoft recently launched a new suite of services called

"Office Live" that offers businesses, organizations, and individuals free websites, a domain name, easy-to-use design tools, e-mail accounts, and 500 MB of website storage. Microsoft Office Live services allow you to create a professional online presence without the expense of buying a server, setting up a

complicated infrastructure, and hiring technical staff to maintain it. Microsoft Office Live is a hosted service. All you need is a computer and an Internet connection.

There are more advanced versions of the service that require a subscription but the basic package is free. The services are

offered at four different levels: Office Live Basics (Free), Office Live Essentials, Office Live Premium, and Office Live Collaboration.

*For more information, visit [http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/office\\_live](http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/office_live).*



## Bradford's Survives with Creative Co-op and High Quality Service



Bradford's Ace Hardware is one of the oldest businesses in Hyannis, Massachusetts, and on Cape Cod. In 1874, President Ulysses S. Grant stood in front of the hardware store to address Cape Codders. The original hardware store was destroyed by fire in 1892, then rebuilt in 1893, after which Myron Bradford purchased the business

from Alexander Cash and renamed it Bradford's Hardware. After Bradford's death in 1933, long-time employee Harry Bearse purchased the business from Bradford's estate. Today the business is run by Bearse's granddaughter, Martha, and her husband, Richard Robinson.

When Home Depot opened a store in Hyannis in November 2003, many feared the end of Bradford's. In the first 18 months business was visibly slower. Currently, however, Bradford's has successfully outlasted six other local hardware store closings, and is back to pre-Home Depot sales figures.

The business is able to do this in part because it is affiliated with the ACE Hardware co-op, which helps Bradford's prices remain competitive; but

also because, to many, the customer service at Bradford's is beyond compare. As one Bradford's shopper says, "Going into Bradford's is like visiting family or going home – you are comfortable and cared for the instant you walk in the door."

Bradford's Vice President Steve Dager, who has worked for the store since 1983, attributes its success to the fact that they are in a unique location and "people want the Main Street experience again."

Bradford's has certainly become an institution on Main Street, an inspiration for local business owners, and a devoted supporter of the Cape community.

*For more information, contact Cynthia Cole at [info@hyannis-mainstreet.com](mailto:info@hyannis-mainstreet.com) or 508-775-7982.*

## The Bonaparte Inn — A Renaissance Story

A stunning example of adaptive use, the recently completed Bonaparte Inn is a welcome addition to this historic riverfront community in Van Buren County, Iowa. Tourism is the area's leading industry and Bonaparte has attracted thousands of visitors to its unique shops, landmark restaurant, creative special events, and natural setting over the last 15 years. Now the community of 458 has a bed-and-breakfast facility unrivaled in charm and attention to detail.

The building that houses the Bonaparte Inn was originally built in 1899 with bricks made at the nearby Meeks brickyard; it was home to the Meeks Pants Factory until 1909. From 1909 to 1920 the building served as a warehouse, and from 1920 to 1999 it was used for manufacturing goods by the Fairfield Glove Company.

Jeri Angelone purchased the property in 2004 and began its transformation into the Bonaparte Inn during 2005. New to Bonaparte, Angelone was unfamiliar with the area and didn't know where to get help. "The input and participation of the town was so influential. They reached out to give me whatever help they could. It showed me

that they cared deeply about their town and its future," says Angelone. "This building had employed so many people for so many years there was hardly a resident in town who did not have a story to share."

Angelone was given information so she could contact Main Street Iowa. "My meeting with Tim Reinders was confirmation that help was available," she says, "and I had knowledgeable people that I could go to for assistance. Tim helped us develop a design and came to Bonaparte to inspect the building and offer suggestions. He helped us solve design problems."

The Inn opened in June 2006, with development of the third floor into reception facilities still to come. Iowa Lieutenant Governor Sally Pederson was the first guest to stay at the Inn during her "Re-discover Iowa Tour." The inn's 14 spacious rooms, each with a private bath, are beautifully decorated and elegantly furnished with antiques. A local chef prepares a buffet-style breakfast for guests each morning.

The Inn has become a popular romantic get-away for couples of all ages. While a great deal of



business has come from word-of-mouth referrals by people who have stayed at the Inn, Angelone has been very surprised by the amount of local business she has had.

*For more information, visit [www.bonaparteinn.com](http://www.bonaparteinn.com) or e-mail [info@bonaparteinn.com](mailto:info@bonaparteinn.com).*

## The 2007 Preserve America Grants

The 2007 Preservation America application and guidelines have been posted on the National Park Service/Historic Preservation Grants Division website at [www.cr.nps.gov/hps/hpg/PreserveAmerica/index.htm](http://www.cr.nps.gov/hps/hpg/PreserveAmerica/index.htm). The application deadline is February 14, 2007.

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The National Trust for Historic Preservation is the only national, private organization chartered by Congress to encourage public participation in the preservation of sites, buildings, and objects significant in American history. The National Trust Main Street Center provides technical assistance in downtown and neighborhood commercial district revitalization to communities throughout the nation.

We recently launched a new Members Area page on our website, [www.mainstreet.org](http://www.mainstreet.org). The new web page is designed to enhance our members' ability to manage their membership, use their member benefits, and take advantage of National Trust resources all through a central page. You can visit this page when you want to access several benefits at the same time. There are several exciting new features, including:

- Secure online contribution pages;
- Access to the National Trust's event calendar and volunteer opportunities listing;
- A link to renew your membership securely online;
- A "What's New in the Network" section to keep you updated on current events in the network;
- National Trust membership list exchanges;



- A direct link to the Main Street List Serve archives and the *Preservation Magazine* archives; and
- A "Careers & Professional Development" section to keep you connected with trainings and opportunities.

We hope to unveil several new features over the next year, including an enhanced calendar to post and read funding announcements and trainings, new salary survey results, an enhanced Press Room, and more

tools to manage your membership.

All members are strongly encouraged to visit [www.mainstreet.org/members](http://www.mainstreet.org/members) and try the new Members Area web page. Feedback can be sent to [mainstreet@nthp.org](mailto:mainstreet@nthp.org).

## NETWORK NOTES *continued from page 15*

### Call for Nominations for 2007 National Preservation Awards

Each year the National Trust celebrates the best of preservation by presenting National Preservation Awards to individuals and organizations whose contributions demonstrate excellence in historic preservation. Nominate a deserving individual, organization, agency, or project for a National Preservation Award. The deadline for nominations for all awards, including the Trustees awards, ACHP, HUD Awards, and National Preservation Honor Awards, is March 1, 2007. Those

nominations not selected to receive a Trustees, ACHP, or HUD Award are automatically considered for an Honor Award.

*Download the nomination form from the National Trust's website at [www.nationaltrust.org/preservation\\_awards](http://www.nationaltrust.org/preservation_awards). If you have questions or need additional information about the awards or the nomination process, please contact Caroline Healey at [Caroline\\_Healey@nthp.org](mailto:Caroline_Healey@nthp.org) or call 202-588-6236.*

### Hamburger Helper Announces Grant Program for Local Communities Across America

Hamburger Helper, a General Mills food brand, is looking to lend a "helping hand" to neighborhoods throughout the United States with its "My Hometown Helper" grant program.

Individuals from communities and organizations across America can visit the program's website and submit a written essay describing how the "My Hometown Helper" grant would improve their community project. Examples of possible projects include: lights or bleachers for athletic fields; repairs to a band shell; computers for the local school or library; playground equipment for a park; holiday decorations for Main Street; money for choir, band, or science trips; new uniforms for Little League teams; clean-up projects; and

training for volunteer firefighters.

Applicants can request a one-time award ranging from \$500 to \$15,000 during any single month. All requests for funding must be sponsored by a municipal or civic organization or public school. The program will award "helping hand" grants each month from online applications received through May 2007. Applications will be evaluated monthly. Funds will be awarded based on the merit of the project, including its impact on and support within the community.

*For more information on the "My Hometown Helper" program and complete guidelines, visit the program's website: [www.myhometownhelp.com](http://www.myhometownhelp.com).*

## calendar of events

January 22-27, 2007

**NTMSC**, Certification in Professional Main Street® Management Institute  
Washington, D.C., 202-588-6219  
E-mail: [NTMSCtraining@nthp.org](mailto:NTMSCtraining@nthp.org)  
Website: [www.mainstreet.org/certification](http://www.mainstreet.org/certification)

January 24-26, 2007

North Carolina Main Street Partners,  
**Main Street: It's Up to You**  
Morganton, N.C., 919-733-2850  
E-mail: [mainstreet@nccommerce.com](mailto:mainstreet@nccommerce.com)  
Website: [www.ncdca.org/mainst/](http://www.ncdca.org/mainst/)

February 7-9, 2007

Colorado Preservation, Inc., **Saving Places**  
2007: Planning, Growth and Preservation  
Denver, Colo., 303-893-4260  
Website: [www.coloradopreservation.org](http://www.coloradopreservation.org)

March 25-28, 2007

**NTMSC**, 2007 National Main Streets Conference: Building a Sustainable Future  
Seattle, Washington, 202-588-6219  
E-mail: [msconference@nthp.org](mailto:msconference@nthp.org)  
Website: <http://conference.mainstreet.org/>

April 14-18, 2007

American Planning Association,  
**2007 National Planning Conference**  
Philadelphia, Pa., 312-431-9100 or  
202-872-0611  
E-mail: [Confregistration@planning.org](mailto:Confregistration@planning.org)  
Website: [www.planning.org/2007conference/](http://www.planning.org/2007conference/)

May 8-11, 2007

International Downtown Association,  
**2007 Spring Conference**  
Anchorage, Alaska, 202-393-6801  
E-mail: [question@ida-downtown.org](mailto:question@ida-downtown.org)  
Website: [www.downtown.org](http://www.downtown.org)

May 10-11, 2007

Oregon Downtown Development Association, **Conference, Awards & 25th Anniversary Celebration**  
Astoria, Ore., 503-587-0574  
E-mail: [info@odda.org](mailto:info@odda.org)  
Website: [www.odda.org/](http://www.odda.org/)

June 3-6, 2007

Pennsylvania Downtown Center,  
**PDC Annual Conference**  
Bethlehem, Pa., 717-233-4675  
E-mail: [padowntown@padowntown.org](mailto:padowntown@padowntown.org)  
Website: [www.padowntown.org/conferences/default.asp](http://www.padowntown.org/conferences/default.asp)

Calendar entries of state, regional, and national interest may be submitted in writing by the fifth of each month for the following month's newsletter. We reserve the right to edit all entries based on appropriateness and space.

## National Main Street Center®

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