

Albany Downtown Association Bi-Annual Report:

January 1, 2020 – June 30, 2020

If it's happening in Downtown Albany, the Albany Downtown Association is likely a part of it! ADA was formed in 1982 and includes about 20 blocks of our historic downtown (Water to 4th and Calapooia to Baker). The goal of ADA is to help make Historic Downtown Albany a great place to eat, shop, play, live and visit!

ADA receives much of its funding through the City of Albany in two separate grants - an operational grant in the amount of \$46,300 (Fiscal year 2019-20) and a grant of \$48,400 (Fiscal year 2019-20) to run the Downtown's Main Street Program. These funds come from the City of Albany's Transient Lodging Tax (TLT). This report will focus on these two areas. The COVID-19 pandemic hit in spring 2020 with a negative impact on TLT income.

ADA also receives additional revenue through an ADA Membership program, a voluntary Economic Improvement District (EID) and administration of the ParkWise program.

- The ADA Membership program includes 137 area businesses and individuals called Friends of Downtown. Many members volunteer to help support our revitalization efforts.
- Through a strong effort by ADA and excellent administrative support from the City, the EID was renewed in June 2018 for another 5 years.
- The ParkWise program provides funding through the management of leased parking spaces, parking permits and citations.

Our mission:

*“Promote the heart, vitality and uniqueness of Downtown Albany’s
historic buildings and businesses”*

How does the Albany Downtown Association accomplish our mission?

Following the proven track record of the four-point Main Street Approach, ADA staff and countless volunteers work together in the following areas:



ORGANIZATION:

The Organization Committee oversees the ADA budget and communications. This committee works to show property owners the value of ADA and positions us for successfully Economic Improvement District (EID) renewals every five years. They also prepared the 2019-20 ADA budget and plan our annual fundraising cocktail event, Mixology Madness.

DESIGN:

The Design Committee works throughout the year to make Downtown Albany a favorite destination for locals and visitors. Some of the ways they accomplish this in winter and spring are an annual Downtown Clean-up Day, the Downtown parklets, and our annual hanging basket program. Visitors regularly utilizing the pedestrian Wayfinding Signage. It was great to see the larger signs for motorists installed. Design also partners with the Landmarks Advisory Commission and Albany Visitors Association on activities for National Historic Preservation Month. Some activities were modified due to COVID-19.

ECONOMIC VITALITY:

The Economic Vitality Committee champions our Revitalization Awards program, plans our business/building owner mixers, develops welcome packets for new Downtown businesses, and holds educational workshops that we offer to Downtown businesses. This committee works with building owners to find tenants, helps businesses with relocation and partners with City of Albany's Economic Development and Community Development departments on grant opportunities, location pre-planning and other business support. During COVID-19, we have provided information and special support.

PROMOTION:

The ADA spends a great deal of time planning and promoting events and activities that draw local residents and visitors from outside the area. Their ultimate goal is to get people to come Downtown to spend time and money in our locally-owned restaurants, retail shops and service businesses. This has been challenging with COVID-19. Another important goal that the ADA works toward is to bring the Downtown together as a community to help cross-promote and work together as a whole with the same common goal. This is something we have worked on diligently during the pandemic.



DOWNTOWN ALBANY

Operational Grant Expenditures

The majority of the ADA Operational Grant is primarily devoted to maintaining the office and payroll expenses.

The ADA is staffed by a full-time Executive Director, Lise Grato (started April 2017), a 34 hour per week Office Manager Debi Wahl (at the ADA over 21 years) and a 35 hour per week ParkWise officer, Robert Zuniga (9 years with ParkWise and nearly 11 years with ADA).



Payroll expenses for 100% of the ParkWise Officer, 50% of the Office Manager and 33.3% of

the Executive Director come from the ParkWise Program.

After office expenses (rent, equipment, supplies), a portion of this grant is used for payroll expenses for the Executive Director and Office Manager.

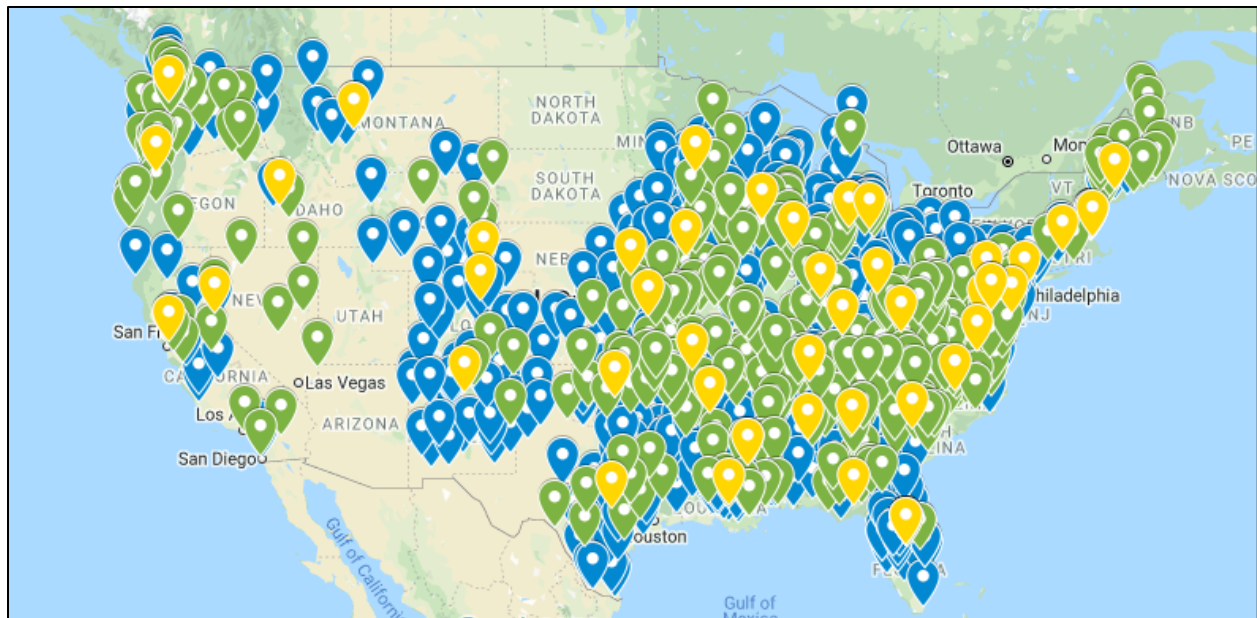
Main Street Grant Expenditures

In 2020, The Albany Downtown Association was again certified as an Accredited Main Street Program. Albany is one of just ten Performing Main Street programs out of 94 Main Street communities/districts in Oregon. ADA is among 1,100 Main Street America communities in 44 states across the country that follows the proven Main Street 4 Point Approach.



The Main Street Approach is a time-tested framework for community-driven, comprehensive revitalization. Under the direction of Oregon Main Street, we have the guidance and support needed to keep improving our Downtown.

Local Main Street America programs are helping to improve local economies and enhance quality of life across the country.



What sets Main Street America™ apart is the powerful network: the unique combination of grassroots dedication to comprehensively improving quality of life at the local level, integral support and expertise provided by Coordinating Programs at the city, county, and state level, and leadership and direction from the National Main Street Center (NMSC).

Main Street America is also a special mark of distinction. It is a seal, recognizing that participating programs, organizations, and communities are part of a national movement with a proven track record for celebrating community character, preserving local history, and generating impressive economic returns.

Main Street America has been helping revitalize older and historic commercial districts for more than 35 years. Today it is a network of more than 1,600 neighborhoods and communities, rural and urban, who share both a commitment to place and to building stronger communities through preservation-based economic development. Main Street America is a program of the non-profit National Main Street Center, Inc., a subsidiary of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Without the Main Street Grant, none of the following events, programs or activities could continue. Here is a snapshot of some of the great things we do with this funding for our Historic Downtown Albany.

DOWNTOWN STREET TREE LIGHTS: To highlight the charm of Downtown, for many years the Design Committee has added Downtown Street Tree Lights on First Avenue. In 2019, we expanded the program to include 2nd Avenue and sections of Lyon and Ellsworth Streets. We were able to do this through the implementation of a new Adopt a Block program. Downtown businesses “adopted” a block or two and installed the lights.



The tree lights add a festive atmosphere throughout the winter and spring months that is missed when they are removed in summer. The lights bring a significant positive impact for drivers and pedestrians heading Downtown in the evening and make a dark time of the year feel more alive.

DOWNTOWN AMERICAN FLAG PROGRAM: Again in 2020, we partnered with the local Scout troops to have nearly 100 American flags displayed along our Downtown streets on ten holidays. The display now reaches corners along the length of Lyon and Ellsworth as well and as on First, Second and Third Avenues in the heart of Downtown. With the Scout expansion to girl's troops, a new Troop joined the rotation to commemorate flag holidays in 2020. On school days, other volunteers help install the flags.



ALBANY TAPS AND CAPS: The 3rd annual Albany Taps & Caps was a big success. On March 7, over 100 participants enjoyed a great evening and raising over \$5,100 help get kids off the floor and sleeping in their own beds.

The “tastes” and door prizes are donated by our five breweries and tap houses - Growler Garage & Tap House, 3 Sheets Brewery & Tap Room, No Rails Ale House, Deluxe Brewing and Calapooia Brewery. The first 65 participants were given a commemorative growler. The Trolley was a big hit again making it easy to get to Calapooia and Deluxe.

This fun event is an Albany Downtown Association partnership event sponsored by Co-Energy Propane and is a fundraiser for Furniture Share, helping families in crisis, Beds for Kids and Veteran Welcome Home Kits. We plan to hold the event again next year.



MIXOLOGY MADNESS: Our major fundraiser for the year, Mixology Madness, was moved from spring to fall for 2020. There are so many spring fundraisers that we were looking for a time of year that wouldn't force sponsors to pick between supporting their favorite non-profits. That was before the pandemic. Currently, event plans are undefined due to COVID-19 restrictions.

DRIVE-UP DOWNTOWN: With the shutdown of indoor dining on March 16, most Downtown restaurants quickly changed their model to curbside pickup. ADA and ParkWise were fast to react installing signs to establish Curbside Pickup zones. We created signs to designate the Curbside Pickup parking only spaces and drew yellow “loading zone” parking places with chalk.

With the re-opening of indoor dining in June, some restaurants returned to dine-in or a hybrid model. Many restaurants were continued to exclusively offer curbside.



DAILY COVID FACEBOOK POSTS: Each day the ADA posts a list of the member businesses that are open that day along with their hours and business model (walk-in, curbside, take-out, delivery, etc.). ADA supported the 14 restaurants and tap houses offering takeout on **Great American Take-Out Day** held March 24.



DRIVE UP DOWNTOWN TAKEOUT CONTESTS: Albany Downtown Association asked Facebook readers "How many Downtown restaurants did you patronize?" and invited them to join "Drive Up Downtown Takeout Contests" for a \$20 prize in Downtown Dollars. One drawing entry was awarded for each unique restaurant and bonus entries for pop-up events and reaching goals like patronizing 5, 10, and all restaurants. Non-diners could comment to receive one entry. Random winners were selected. Like Downtown Restaurant Week, the contests created awareness of the numerous restaurants in Downtown. The contest was repeated over multiple dates.



RESTAURANT WEEK: Our 5th Annual **Restaurant Week**, originally scheduled for April 20-26, was canceled due to COVID-19.

FLOWER BASKET PROGRAM: The Design Committee continued our annual hanging flower basket program in 2020. This year we ordered 100 hanging baskets from Bauman's Farm & Garden, a 4th generation family farm in Gervais. Our baskets are even larger, fuller than last year. We receive compliments daily.

With a successful test of four EarthPlanter self-watering hanging planters last summer, we purchased an additional 96 planters in 2019 to replace the rest of the traditional containers. They allow us to water every 2-3 days and are working out very well. The planters save time, water, fertilizer and avoid watering bikes parked under planters. Also, they allow us to maintain our normal once a day watering plan even on hot days.

We are very grateful to the Republic Services volunteers who hung the baskets this year. We have two watering attendants, Galen McGuire and Robert Zuniga, who share the responsibility to water daily and fertilize the baskets weekly along with watering the 18 baskets that the City purchased to hang at City Hall and the Senior Center. Our team spends approximately 3-4 hours daily watering the baskets from May to September. The standard pots took SIX HOURS EVERY DAY and required watering twice a day when temperatures exceed 88-degrees. The new pots provide great savings and also prevent our staff from having to work in extreme temperatures.

The hanging baskets and merchants' doorways potted plants and flowers bring a lot of joy during the COVID pandemic. Our watering team provides complimentary watering service to members. The small pickup truck we purchased in June 2018, with the help of Dick Mulligan and Brian Holmes at M&M Auto Sales, continues to serve us well.



DOWNTOWN PARKLETS: Since Fall 2018, the ADA's Design Committee has kept the two Downtown Parklets out year-round. Throughout the winter and spring, the Parklets were enjoyed by many people who like playing a game of checkers or chess (bringing their own playing pieces due to COVID-19). We see families and individuals eating their lunch, musicians playing and others using the space.



The Broadalbin Parklet is located between 1st and 2nd Avenues. It features tables, additional seating, checkerboards and plants. The First Avenue Parklet is located in front of the "Old Wells Fargo" parking lot. Refinishing is planned for Summer 2020.

DOWNTOWN CLEAN UP: Each April, a group of ADA volunteers, Design Committee and board members join forces for our Annual Downtown Spring Clean Up. Due to COVID-19, the committee determined a large group gathering was not suitable. Instead, we used Facebook to encourage individuals to do Self-guided Clean Ups.

Here are some of the folks that helped in May and June. Keith Kolkow brought together a group to pull the knee-high weeds at the Old Wells Fargo parking lot. The newspaper covered the volunteer effort. Oscar Hult and The Natty Dresser team championed a



Burkhart Square event called “Spiff Up the Square” on June 14. City Delivery’s Melinda Martin and her sister, Brenda Daigle, pulled a truckload of weeds at the Wells Fargo lot.

Two great kids at The Crow’s Foot Gallery took on the weeds in the tree wells at 3rd & Broadalbin. Barbara Doolan weeded The Venetian Public Parking lot planters. Mike Martin, wearing his CaresINC volunteer hat, pressure washed the Carnage Library stairs and sidewalk. Groups are planning more cleanups of the Downtown area.

MARKETING SUPPORT: Downtown restaurants and businesses have been featured in the Mid-Valley Newspapers and Hasso Hering’s HH Today blog numerous times since the start of COVID-19. ADA frequently connects area reporters to the types of business they are seeking for specific topics. Articles featured our Curbside Parking, Downtown restaurant models, the City’s SEAT program (sidewalk dining), cleanups and more.

In addition to the daily Facebook posts, the Albany Downtown Association helped promote the various models that businesses developed to adapt during the COVID-19 pandemic. We utilized Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Snapchat. We also published key posts for individual Downtown member businesses and Nation Day theme posts on our Facebook page. These methods of business marketing are on-going.

From the start of the COVID restaurant closure on Mar 16 to June 30, the Albany Downtown Association has published 732 posts with a total reach of 641,483. That’s an average of seven posts per day with an average daily reach of 5,995. Total impressions for the period was 713,149 (nearly 1,000 per post). We have over 7,000 FB followers.



Highlights of partnership Downtown Activities from January through June:

1ST FRIDAY: In September 2018, Downtown businesses participated in a special First Friday as part of Gallery Calapooia's 5th-anniversary celebration. That partnership has continued monthly ever since with businesses staying open until 8 pm. A group called "1st Friday in Historic Downtown Albany" champions the event with a different theme and marketing sponsor each month. In April, 1st Friday went virtual! COVID-19 changed the landscape and retailers moved to Facebook LIVE events. In April and May, ADA hosted a **Virtual Happy Hour** encouraging locals to pick up food and their favorite beverages from Downtown businesses to enjoy at home. A random winner received \$20 in Downtown Dollars "at" each Virtual Happy Hour.



FAMILY TREE RELIEF NURSERY-DIAPER DRIVE: April is Child Abuse Prevention Month and the ADA and Family Tree Relief Nursery partnered together for a Downtown Diaper Drive each year. The 2020 event was canceled due to COVID-19

PROCESSION OF THE SPECIES: Every year we partner with Albany Parks and Recreation to celebrate Earth Day. The 2020 event was canceled due to COVID-19

NATIONAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION MONTH: Each May, ADA partners with The Natty Dresser to help residents and visitors celebrate Historic Preservation Month by participating in a fun architectural scavenger hunt! As a self-guided activity, it was perfectly suited for social distancing. From May 1-31, participants strolled along the streets of Downtown Albany looking for historic architectural features pictured on an entry flyer then submitted their entry for a chance to win a fun prize.

This year the popular Tweed Ride was held as a Facebook live event on May 9th and a map was posted later so individuals could ride at their leisure in a socially distanced fashion. The annual Downtown architectural tours were held in person by Oscar Hult, who made use of a megaphone to allow for social distancing. He also hosted a SE Young and Son Department Store Tour. ADA assisted with the promotion of these events.



DOWNTOWN WINE WALK: Usually, hundreds of wine enthusiasts strolled 1st Avenue enjoying samples of wine and shopping in Downtown businesses at this event hosted by the Rotary Club of Albany. The 2020 event was canceled due to COVID-19.



Some of our annual events such as, Crazy Daze, Movies at Monteith, Downtown Trick-or-treat, Small Business Saturday, the Downtown Twice Around Parade and Community Tree Lighting, and the Free Holiday Movie, take all year to plan. With COVID-19, modified plans and alternate plans are being considered.

The Executive Director also spends time partnering with other non-profits on upcoming events that are not ADA events such as Antiques in the Streets & Classic Car Show, Greater Albany Rotary's Craft Brew Smackdown, and the Boys and Girls Club of Albany's Mid-Valley Brewfest. We are hopeful some of these events will still happen in 2020.

BUSINESS SUPPORT:

- **Downtown Newsletter** has evolved to highlight more Downtown events and business happenings. We have a monthly "Meet the Neighbors" feature that introduces readers to a different Downtown business each month. During COVID-19, this feature highlighted all open businesses. These articles are also featured on the ADA website news blog and Facebook. The newsletter hardcopy circulation has increased and is now available for visitors at the carousel, City Hall and Albany Visitors Association as well as at ADA. Electronic subscriptions continue to grow.
- We continue our partnership with the City of Albany Police Department and helping keep our downtown safe. We continue to utilize a private Facebook page, **Albany Downtown Business Watch**, to help businesses discuss issues or incidents that might have occurred in their business. This is a great asset to the Downtown.

VOLUNTEERS: We are very fortunate to have such amazing volunteers. Our many activities and events couldn't be possible without our volunteers putting in countless hours giving their time in the sun, heat, rain and cold.

Here are some of the great friends, family and community volunteers who help make things happen at the ADA:

- Promotions Committee volunteers welcomed guests to Albany Taps & Caps.
- Sponsors, Design Committee volunteers and their families removed the lights from the Downtown Street Trees.
- Dedicated volunteers from Republic Services put up the hanging baskets in May.
- Community volunteers held multiple self-guided Downtown Clean-Up events.

DOWNTOWN ALBANY

In 2018, the completion of the Streetscape was a major accomplishment and key in the revitalization of the Downtown. Visitors passing through Albany heading to Corvallis or back from the Coast now see how the trees have grown and the great improvements along Lyon and Ellsworth. The Albany Downtown Association works very hard to make sure the on-going transformation of the Downtown Albany stays on track so that the new businesses that are opening have the opportunity to succeed.

Since mid-March, ADA has focused on supporting businesses through the challenges of the pandemic. We have provided information on COVID funding, directed owners to resources and aided individuals with SEAT applications. We have provided individual marketing and logistics consultations, shared best practices, kept business owners up to date on Linn County's Phase status and shared links to industry-specific rules.

So that the beautification of Downtown stays a priority, all of this is done with very little staff and a lot of volunteers. With the significant reduction of hotel stays and TLT funds, we are looking at ways the Albany Downtown Association can maintain our efforts with substantially lower funding in 2020-21. We at the ADA are passionate about the historic beauty and economic development of our unique downtown and will continue to strive to make Downtown Albany a favorite destination in the Willamette Valley.

The Albany Downtown Association takes great pride in the work that we do for the community, the businesses and the visitors that come to Downtown Albany. We care about the look and the vibrancy of the Downtown and know that we couldn't do what we do without the support of the City Operational Grant and the Main Street Grant.



Any questions or comments are welcome and greatly appreciated. Lise Grato, Executive Director, can be reached at director@albanydowntown.com or (541) 928-2469.