



THE DOWNTOWN RESOURCE

VOLUME 2 — 2019

IOWA
economic development®

STANTON MASONIC LODGE BUILDING FIRST COMPLETED CATALYST PROJECT IN IOWA

The Stanton Area Industrial Foundation and the City of Stanton are the first to complete a project receiving funding from the Community Catalyst Building Remediation grant program. Renovation is complete on the Tarkio Masonic Lodge Building located at 312 Broad Avenue in downtown Stanton.

The program, managed by the Iowa Economic Development Authority, provides support for communities with the redevelopment, rehabilitation or deconstruction of buildings to stimulate economic growth or reinvestment in the community.

The building now has an upper-story apartment, which has already been rented to a young family. The Hair Company salon opened on the main floor, and the second space was rented to a company currently located in Woodlands, Texas.

The building, constructed in 1878, was in good condition; however, the front façade needed an uplift with a historic, yet unique appeal, and the roof needed repair. The goal was to create an upper story, moderately priced residential living unit with two commercial spaces on the ground level to expand housing options, create downtown activity, expand business opportunities and become a catalyst spark to revitalize Stanton's downtown.



"Stanton, a community of fewer than 700 people, has fostered \$39 million in investments in the past 10 years," said Jenna Ramsey, Stanton community director. "Armed with our plan, community support and a vast network of partners, we are poised to continue this momentum far into the future."

Shawnna Silvius, executive director of the Montgomery County Development Corporation, wrote and submitted the Community Catalyst Building Remediation Program application. As a result, the project was awarded the maximum amount of \$100,000 in April 2018.

"Congratulations to the leaders and residents of Stanton on the completed renovation of this historic building on Main Street," said Debi Durham, director of the Iowa Economic Development Authority and Iowa Finance Authority. "Their thoughtful planning and active community participation are key in creating an environment where businesses and people thrive."

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STANTON MASONIC LODGE BUILDING, CONTINUED

STATE AWARDS \$2.9 MILLION IN CATALYST FUNDING TO REJUVENATE DOWNTOWNS ACROSS IOWA

Governor Kim Reynolds and Lt. Governor Adam Gregg announced that \$2.9 million in Catalyst Grant funding will be awarded to 29 communities across the state.

The Community Catalyst program was initiated in 2018 by the Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) to help create fundamental, positive change in Iowa's downtowns. The grants, \$100,000 per community, assist with the redevelopment or rehabilitation of buildings to stimulate economic growth and reinvestment.

"The Community Catalyst program not only revitalizes main streets but encourages further development and future growth for years to come," said Governor Reynolds. "Empowering and investing in every Iowa community is critical for bringing success to all corners of the state."

"Each catalyst project is unique, inspiring different types of growth and development depending on the communities where they're located," said Lt. Governor Gregg. "We appreciate the engagement of local leadership and the combination of public and private investment it takes to make the catalyst projects a reality."

Coon Rapids plans to use its Catalyst funding to transform a former seed company building downtown. The community of 1,200 suffered a setback when the business moved out of town, leaving a half-block of vacant property in its wake.

New training space for an industrial biotech company and upper story rentals in the space will restore community pride and provide fresh hope for workforce growth.

The community of Slater, which is home to 1,489 residents, will use its grant to revitalize a main street building that's been vacant for 20 years. The future renovated property already has a potential buyer in a tech company that is proposing to add 25 new well-paid jobs. The project is expected to not only improve appearances downtown, but also generate excitement that high-tech is happening in small towns too.

Of the 29 communities awarded during the 2019 application round, 16 have populations of fewer than 1,500. Program rules require at least 40 percent of funds be awarded to cities with fewer than 1,500 people. Catalyst grants are awarded annually based on funding availability. IEDA awarded \$1.8 million in grants to 18 cities in 2018. Emergency Catalyst grants have also been awarded to the communities of Anamosa, Vinton and Marshalltown since the program's inception.

For more information on the Community Catalyst Program, visit iowaeconomicdevelopment.com/catalyst or contact Jim Thompson at 515.348.6183 or catalyst@iowaeda.com.

A full list of the 2019 Community Catalyst Grant recipients is [available here](#).



IOWA DOWNTOWN CONFERENCE AUGUST 27 - 29 IN DUBUQUE

The Iowa Downtown Conference is the only statewide annual conference for professionals and volunteers involved in historic commercial district revitalization in Iowa. The event will include plenary sessions with motivational keynote speakers and educational breakout sessions focusing on downtown revitalization, field sessions, tours, an exhibit hall and several networking activities in cool venues. The Conference is brought to you by the IEDA's Iowa Downtown Resource Center, in partnership with the City of Dubuque, Main Street Dubuque and Travel Dubuque.

To learn more or to register online, visit iowaeconomicdevelopment.com/downtownconference. Questions may be directed to 515.348.6177 or terry.buschkamp@iowaeda.com.



MAIN STREET IOWA RESTAURANT WEEK SEPTEMBER 20 - 29

Everyone likes to eat, especially when someone else is cooking. Nothing is tastier than a meal served in a locally owned restaurant in one of Iowa's Main Street districts. From mom-and-pop cafés to white-tableclothed eateries, restaurants in Iowa Main Street communities are a great destination for locally sourced food and drink featuring the best quality and variety found anywhere in the country.

To showcase the fresh flavors of this great state, the third-annual Main Street Iowa Restaurant Week will take place September 20 - 29. The promotion encourages Iowans to travel to and dine in Main Street Iowa districts. There's no better way to develop the taste of a community than by dining at a restaurant, bar, bistro or food truck.



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MAIN STREET IOWA RESTAURANT WEEK, CONTINUED

Look at some of the best places in America, there are certain commonalities - historic buildings in authentic commercial districts; spaces to gather for events; a variety of residential options; and a strong business economy, including a wide selection of restaurants.

"Without a vibrant restaurant community, we certainly wouldn't have as strong of a community," according to Jessica Dunker, president of the Iowa Restaurant Association. On a typical day, Iowa's restaurant and beverage industry estimates average sales in excess of \$12 million; and every \$1 spent in Iowa's restaurants generates an additional \$.76 in sales for the state economy. "If we want to continue building communities with strong foundations, we need to support family and business-friendly restaurants where we can meet and get to know our neighbors a little better."

Main Street Iowa encourages you to eat at a participating restaurant or attend a food-related event in a Main Street Iowa district during restaurant week, which is actually 10 days - one full week, plus weekends.

Restaurant week has become a popular and recognizable event capitalizing on the foodie and locavore movements in urban centers across

the country. Typically, the promotion consists of a discounted price for a three-course gourmet meal offered by all eateries in the city.

Main Street Iowa's downtowns and neighborhood districts work together to take advantage of the nation-wide trend with a bit of a different spin. The state-wide promotion is a collection of events and activities featuring local restaurants and food-related events in Main Street Iowa communities. Be prepared for eclectic eats, local lagers and delectable desserts at tasting events, "long table" or progressive dinner parties, promotions featuring unique menu items or locally grown produce, discount coupons and wine/beer or chocolate walks.

The inaugural Main Street Iowa Restaurant Week was launched in 2017 with 17 communities participating. The event nearly doubled in 2018 to 150 restaurants in 28 communities featuring a variety of special dining offers such as community-wide passports, punch cards rewarding diners for visiting local restaurants and special menu pricing. Local Main Street communities are already planning for the state-wide promotion this fall that will be bigger and better!

Stay tuned to IEDA's social media channels to learn more.



DOWNTOWN DIFFERENCE MAKER – NICK SORENSEN, JEFFERSON

The title of a recent article by Chuck Offenburger about this Downtown Difference Maker says it all: “Historic Old Buildings Don’t Scare Nick Sorensen.” As the City of Jefferson’s Code Enforcement Officer, Nick Sorensen oversees inspecting new construction, zoning requirements, and enforces nuisance regulations and property maintenance code. Facing a difficult and often controversial job, Nick approaches this challenge with passion, innovative thinking, and a vision for the future of the community and downtown.

Since high school, older buildings and construction have been part of Nick’s life. That passion for improving the community around him carried forward to his 12 years of service on the Jefferson Police Department. In 2015, Nick made the decision to use his past experiences to tackle the City’s code enforcement. In this new role, Nick, with the support of the City, immediately began forging new partnerships with the Jefferson Matters Main Street program and injecting new life into the physical improvement of derelict downtown buildings.

With the City of Jefferson’s proactive approach to downtown, his position allows him to enforce property maintenance issues with an element of creativity. In some cases, owners who do not have the means to make the necessary repairs to their property have worked through Nick to gift the building to the City.

The City then utilizes Tax Increment Finance (TIF) funds and local contractors to take care of major components of the property; new roof, tuck pointing, windows, paint, store front entry/glass systems, complete interior demolition



(relying heavily on Main Street volunteers for labor in demolition) and new HVAC. This gets a property to the point where there can be potential interest for a viable business.

“If we want others to believe in us as a community, we not only have to believe in ourselves, but we must show that we do, by taking action and investing in our downtowns.” Nick continues, “Most of the time that is tackling the problems others would not want to do and that is where the fun lies.”

Nick is quick to point out that the success of Jefferson’s downtown revitalization efforts can be attributed to a strong team of partners working together to see results. This team includes a strong commitment from the City’s elected officials and staff who believe in having someone on staff to lead building improvement efforts, as well as the dedicated staff and volunteers of the Jefferson Matters Main Street program.

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DOWNTOWN DIFFERENCE MAKER — NICK SORENSEN, JEFFERSON, CONTINUED



"Our Jefferson Matters: Main Street volunteer group is always looking for ways to improve our downtown experience whether through rooftop art, downtown sculptures, pillar planters/flowers, wayfinding signage, business recruitment, Jefferson Iowa app for your phone, to moving six tons of plaster and lathe out of the second story of a city acquired building," Nick commented.

The City currently owns eight downtown storefronts, six that will be ready for new or expanded businesses by summer. Nick is energized by the prospect of seeing these spaces full in the coming months through active

recruitment efforts additionally supported through Jefferson's current efforts of attracting tech companies to the community.

Nick is most proud of his work with the complete rehabilitation of the Kendall Building. The Kendall Building was near demolition and now houses a successful business on the first floor and an owner-occupied living space on the second floor. "It was a public/private partnership with six financing pieces to pull together to make it happen," Nick said. "The icing on the cake was the building owners and the City receiving a Preservation Iowa Award for its efforts."

Nick's advice to someone looking to make an impact in their community is not to be ashamed to not know. Nick's comment, "the more questions you ask, the more informed decision you can make. As unique of a situation you might think your city is in, there are others out there that have been in the exact same place and would love to help."

To learn more about Jefferson's downtown revitalization efforts visit: jeffersonmatters.org



IOWA DOWNTOWN CONFERENCE ... A BIG DEAL!

Yeah, yeah, yeah.... it's another conference I must attend. No! Don't look at it in that way. The Iowa Downtown Conference has great value. If you've been there, you know. If you haven't, give this a try! How else could I show the value, but with a top ten list (in no particular order):



1. Of course, attend the conference to learn. The Conference is loaded with good sessions. The agenda and content are developed splendidly by Terry Poe Buschkamp, and there is something for everyone ... small towns, big cities and in between. You are guaranteed to take away ideas you can work with in your community. Perhaps it is a cool, placemaking idea or a new way to recruit a business. Keynote sessions are always interesting. And, you may even meet someone important, perhaps Governor Reynolds!
2. Experience new activities. See new places. Take one of the tours. Will those ideas or something similar work in your community? The conference in Dubuque in 2019 will boast amazing projects.
3. Meet new people and make friends. I still know and communicate with people I met at downtown or Main Street conferences. It's good to have contact with people doing the same work as me. The Conference will have plenty of opportunities to meet new friends during networking breaks, receptions or even over a meal in one of Dubuque's great downtown restaurants. Don't be a wallflower. Step up and introduce yourself.
4. Have fun. You deserve it. Laugh a little. Forget about that street construction project back home for a few minutes. There are some interesting personalities at this conference, and many are speakers. Join a team at our first-ever evening trivia contest.
5. Make new contacts that can help you professionally. Maybe you will even pick up an idea for a speaker at your annual conference.
6. Visit the downtown vendors exhibits. How can they help your community? Match up their products and services with community needs...Awnings? Planners? Architects? Street lights?
7. Get inspired! Return home with recharged batteries, which may come from an inspirational keynote speaker or seeing an example of a really, cool project.
8. Ok...my confession. I used to go home feeling better about myself and my downtown after hearing about challenges others were facing. That could happen to you too. Be proud of your work. And, this is a good opportunity to help and counsel others. You all have something to share that works for you.
9. Learn about industry trends relating to retail, business development and fund raising.
10. Get in the loop. Familiarize yourself with grant and technical assistance programs and meet the people managing them. You can't apply for programs you don't know about. For example, there is an entire session on the Community Catalyst Building Remediation Program that is already granting dollars for downtown building rehabs across the state.

So, please join me at the Iowa Downtown Conference in Dubuque August 27-29. This conference is a winner.

DOWNTOWN ASSESSMENT FOLLOW-UP – GOWRIE, IOWA

One of the services offered through the Iowa Downtown Resource Center is a Downtown Assessment visit to help local leaders evaluate and create a plan focused on downtown development opportunities. This service brings two to three downtown development specialists to a local community for a 2½ day visit to help identify challenges and opportunities to enhance downtown development. The community of Gowrie, population 1,100 located in Webster County, received a Downtown Assessment visit in September 2017.

The assessment team helped this small, rural community identify four key areas to focus on:

- Physical Improvements
- Organizational Structure
- Bringing New Life to the Downtown
- Retaining Local Businesses

The local leaders quickly got to work and through many small efforts with a focus on the downtown, are starting to see great results! As one local volunteer said, “It was so helpful for you to bring a fresh view to the community. We simply don’t see clearly because we’re here every day.”



Several downtown buildings were in desperate need of maintenance and repairs. A matching grants fund has been created to help improve downtown building facades, and the community is researching the CDBG grant program. One building was revitalized on the front and back with new windows, siding and signage. A downtown clean-up was initiated right away to deal with garbage and weeds. The City of Gowrie also initiated a city-wide clean-up program called “Neighbors Helping Neighbors” in the spring and fall. Future goals include new lighting and a streetscape vision for the downtown.

Last year, the community partnered with Iowa State University Extension and its Developing Dynamic Leaders program to help improve local organizational structure and to enhance leadership development for

local volunteers. To bring new life downtown, they created three downtown markets held one Thursday night in August, September and October. They close the street and invite craft and produce vendors to set up, along with other fun activities to bring folks downtown; it has been a fabulous success and is planned again for 2019.

Business succession is also a major concern for the community, and Gowrie was no different. The community worked to help find a new owner for the local grocery store, securing a key business to remain in the downtown. Several vacant buildings have been renovated and are home to new businesses, including a women’s clothing boutique, gift shop and a car wash. Several small micro businesses are also sharing space to help spur more retail shopping opportunities.

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DOWNTOWN ASSESSMENT FOLLOW-UP - GOWRIE, IOWA, CONTINUED

The housing committee partnered with the City to offer incentives, identify possible infill lots and expand a new housing development to help address the need for more local housing. They expect three new houses to be built this year, which is a great accomplishment for a small community.

Gowrie has shown what can happen when a community comes together to identify and work on issues that may hinder development opportunities. By creating a plan and tackling issues with small, manageable steps, Gowrie is making great strides to improve its rural community.



DOWNTOWN GEM

Jim and Sue Mayberry never set out to open a second business in downtown Maquoketa; their appliance business kept them busy enough, but they were inspired to take the leap after seeing the impact of Maquoketa's \$4 million Main Street reconstruction project.

This downtown revitalization in Maquoketa really began with a vision planning process that wrapped up in 2014. This multi-year process highlighted three main areas of focus for the community: business and industry development, recreation enhancements and downtown redevelopment.

The downtown frankly did not show well. The street and sidewalks showed little investment, and because of that many of the buildings and



businesses made little investment as well. The underground utilities had never been replaced since installed almost a century ago. The city council decided the first step to reinvigorate the downtown was to improve this crumbling infrastructure.

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DOWNTOWN GEM, CONTINUED

The council took the first step with the Main Street reconstruction project. The \$4 million project fully replaced the infrastructure serving the downtown properties and replaced the streets and sidewalks. Additionally, the City utilized a Great Places grant from the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs to add amenities like a downtown speaker system, banners, benches and planters.

The next step was to find a way to incentivize investment in the downtown properties and businesses. The City established a local downtown incentive grant program for facades, commercial interior buildout, blade signs, etc. Sue and Jim Mayberry helped lead by example and were one of the first property owners to utilize these programs.

The Mayberrys fully rehabilitated 144 S. Main Street and opened Farmer's Creek Antiques and Mac's Wine Cellar. The building, with the restored tin ceiling, custom millwork and limestone basement truly showcases its history.

"There's a lot of history in the building, and we restored it down to every last detail," Sue Mayberry said about the restoration project.

Since opening in 2018, the Mayberrys have acquired the neighboring building and expanded its floor space where they sell jewelry, pottery and more. The bar in the basement hosts a wide variety of wine and craft beers. Sue Mayberry was awarded the entrepreneur of the year award at the Maquoketa Area Chamber of Commerce Annual Gala in January of 2019.



The City of Maquoketa is moving into the next phase of downtown revitalization as they were awarded the State of Iowa's CDBG Façade Grant. This will be an approximately \$1 million project rehabilitating 15 facades downtown. The Mayberry's buildings are among the participating properties.

"So much of the fabric of the community is apparent in the historic downtown buildings. But property owners like Sue and Jim are what make a community. Their investment and business, and others like them, are what make Maquoketa, Maquoketa," said Nic Hockenberry, Jackson County Economic Alliance Director.

Farmer's Creek Antiques is open from 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday and closed Sunday and Monday. Mac's Wine Cellar is open from 4 - 8 p.m. Tuesday through Thursday, 4 - 9 p.m. Friday and 12:00 noon until 10 p.m. Saturday.



GERALD SCHNEPF DEPARTS *KEEP IOWA BEAUTIFUL*

One of Iowa's movers and shakers stepped down. Gerry Schnepf left *Keep Iowa Beautiful* in late May. Gerry had been director since inception of the organization in 1999 and was a partner to many community development groups across the state. Gerry says, "Iowan's have a great deal of pride in Iowa, and I share that pride. Hopefully, my efforts over the past four decades helped to build that Iowa pride." Gerry was especially active in promoting and helping all Iowans understand the importance and value of small towns. He was a great partner to the Iowa Downtown Resource Center and Main Street Iowa, working with staff on a variety of projects. Gerry coordinated the efforts of the very successful Hometown Pride Program with multi-county success stories across the state. Gerry always had new ideas ready to share.

Gerry's many years of service to Iowans also includes work with the former Conservation Commission; establishment of the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation with the help of Governor Robert Ray; and with his wife Pat, initiation of programs to help people move toward retirement (Changing Directions LLC).

Gerry has volunteered time with organizations such as Silo's and Smokestacks, Blood Run National Historic Landmark, French Icarian Colony Foundation, Salisbury House and Byways of Iowa Foundation. And, of course, he's a vintage car lover. Gerry has been involved with Motorloway Vintage Car tours beginning with the Iowa Sesquicentennial. Iowa has benefited greatly from Gerry's enthusiasm and hard work, and the Iowa Downtown Resource Center wishes him well in his next adventure.



CONTACTS

For more information about the Iowa Downtown Resource Center and the services offered, contact Jim Engle, 515.348.6180 or james.engle@iowaeda.com.

To find out more about the Main Street Iowa program, contact Michael Wagler, 515.348.6184 or michael.wagler@iowaeda.com.

To contribute articles and photos to the "Downtown Resource", contact Darlene Strachan, 515.348.6182 or darlene.strachan@iowaeda.com.

RESOURCE CONNECTIONS

Iowa Downtown Resource Center iowaeconomicdevelopment.com/idrc

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

Iowa Economic Development Authority iowaeconomicdevelopment.com

Works to strengthen economic and community vitality by building partnerships and leveraging resources to make Iowa the choice for people and business.

Keep Iowa Beautiful keepiowabeautiful.com

Committed to enhancing the image and appearance of the countryside and Iowa communities. An affiliate of the national Keep America Beautiful program.

Larned A. Waterman Iowa Nonprofit Resource Center inrc.law.uiowa.edu

A center to help Iowa's charitable nonprofit organizations become more effective in building their communities.

Main Street America mainstreet.org

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

Main Street Iowa iowaeconomicdevelopment.com/MainStreetIowa

Iowa's program to work with selected communities to revitalize historic commercial districts.

National Park Service www.nps.gov/search/?affiliate=nps&query=preservation+briefs

Guidance on preserving, rehabilitating and restoring historic buildings.

National Trust for Historic Preservation savingplaces.org

The trust protects and celebrates America's diverse history.

Sidewalks

cedar-rapids.org/local_government/departments_g_-_v/public_works/sidewalk_repair_program.php

Cedar Rapids, IA, Sidewalk Repair & Reimbursement Program

como.gov/Council/Commissions/downloadfile.php?id=18599

Columbia, MO, Point of Sale Program-Fixing Our Broken Sidewalks

walkdenver.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/15.08.15-Rethinking-Denver-Sidewalk-Policy.pdf

Denver, CO, Rethinking Denver Sidewalk Policy

State Historic Preservation Office (Iowa) iowaculture.gov/history/preservation

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

Travel Iowa traveleiowa.com

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

Volunteer Iowa volunteeriowa.org

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