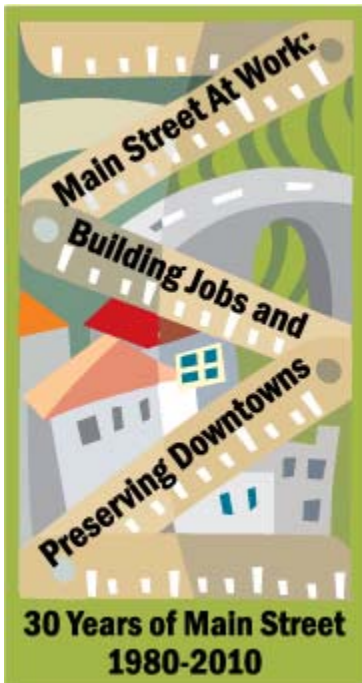


SidewalkTalk Newsletter



2010 Georgia Downtown Conference September 29 – October 1 Augusta, Georgia

The Georgia Downtown Conference, sponsored by the Georgia Downtown Association (GDA) in partnership with the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, provides educational workshops, an exhibition area, receptions, panel discussions, and the Annual Awards for Downtown Excellence. This year's theme, **Main Street at Work: Building Jobs and Preserving Downtowns**, captures the message of downtown development equals economic development. As Georgia recognizes the 30th Anniversary of the Georgia Main Street Program and the Main Street Four Point Approach®, the conference will celebrate the economic development successes on Main Street. Since the inception of the Georgia Main Street Program in 1980, over \$2.6 billion has been reinvested in the downtowns of Georgia Main Street and Better Hometown cities, resulting in the creation of over 47,000 new jobs and over 9,800 new businesses.

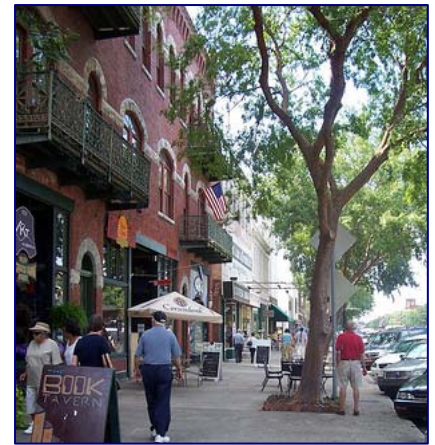
The Georgia Downtown Conference is designed to further educate individuals on issues affecting downtown development on a national and statewide level, reinforce existing downtown development efforts, and help downtown development organizations plan for future initiatives. It is a conduit to promote downtown and economic development through public awareness, governmental relations, and education.

This year's conference will take place in downtown Augusta, Georgia. Downtown Augusta is situated along a picturesque riverfront featuring paths, magnificent vistas and open spaces. It is bound by the Savannah River to the north, Walton Way to the south, 5th Street to the east and the medical district to the west. Its well-designed network of roadways and sidewalks makes downtown easily accessible. Serving as the focal point for a metropolitan population of 500,000, downtown Augusta has undergone major public and private investment in revitalization and beautification initiatives. The downtown area is home to a majority of Augusta's tourism generators, including museums, performing arts centers and professional sports teams. Downtown also includes the Augusta Canal National Heritage Area, one of only 27 designated heritage areas in the nation. A beautiful riverfront serves as a popular gathering place for daily lunches and conversation breaks, as well as a main stage for outdoor entertainment throughout the year.

In addition to providing an opportunity to experience downtown Augusta through tours and networking events, the 2010 Georgia Downtown Conference will provide the quality educational sessions that the conference has become known for. Nearly 30 sessions, tours, and networking events will be offered throughout the conference to assure attendees have an enlightening conference experience. Educational session topics will include: job creating tools; business improvement districts; energy efficiency in downtown buildings; business retention; tax credits; downtown entertainment venues;

cultural and heritage tourism; and much more. Donovan Rypkema, an industry leader in the economics of preserving historic structures, will be the keynote speaker at the conference's opening session on Wednesday, September 29th. Rypkema's firm, PlaceEconomics, specializes in services to public and non-profit sector clients who are dealing with downtown and neighborhood commercial district revitalization and the reuse of historic structures. Rypkema also teaches a graduate course in preservation economics at the University of Pennsylvania.

The highlight of the conference will be the Georgia Downtown Awards Dinner where the accomplishments of those organizations and individuals who have demonstrated outstanding achievement and improvement in Georgia's downtowns will be celebrated. Individuals who have successfully completed GDA's Professional Development Program will also be honored during the Awards Reception.



Downtown Augusta, location of 2010 Georgia Downtown Conference

Not only is the Georgia Downtown Conference the premier downtown development training and networking event in the state, but it comes at a value that cannot be matched. Special reduced rates are available for GDA members and state designated Better Hometown and Main Street cities. **The registration deadline is September 10, 2010.**

Better Hometown and Main Street

For more information and to register, visit www.georgiadowntownassociation.org. We hope to see you in Augusta September 29th – October 1st!

Georgia Downtown Association Annual Membership Meeting



The 2010 Annual Meeting of the GDA Membership will take place prior to the start of the opening session of the Georgia Downtown Conference in Augusta on Wednesday, September 29th. The meeting will be held at the Augusta Marriott Hotel & Suites from 8:30 AM – 9:30 AM. A light breakfast will be served. The Annual Membership meeting is an opportunity for you to hear a report directly from the Board of Directors concerning recent association activities and new initiatives that are underway. Topics will include: new mentoring program; new scholarship program; Georgia Downtown Development Professional Program; new cash awards program; and more. In addition, there will be an opportunity for you to provide comments and feedback

to the Board and to nominate candidates to serve on the Board of Directors. The Board hopes to see you at 8:30 AM on September 29th.

Georgia Downtown Association Board of Directors' Nominations

The GDA Nominating Committee will soon be requesting nominations for new GDA Board Members. The Board is elected at large from the general membership and shall have the following composition: twelve downtown program professionals; and three representatives from the private sector and/or government sector with an interest in downtown development programs. Board Members are elected to serve two-year terms. The Board typically meets on a quarterly basis.

If you are interested in becoming a GDA Board Member or know someone you would like to nominate, please send your nominee's name and contact info to gda@gmanet.com no later than Friday, October 8, 2010. Feel free to attach any supporting documentation you feel is pertinent. Please note that only current members of GDA may nominate or be nominated. The Nominating Committee thanks you for your time.

New loan program available for downtown projects

Business or property owners seeking low-interest financing for energy efficient and sustainable improvements for their downtown properties now have a new source of funding. The Green Communities Fund is a new revolving loan



program offered by the Georgia Cities Foundation and is made possible through a grant from the Georgia Environmental Facilities Authority (GEFA).

As with the Foundation's downtown loan program, the Green Communities Fund program will target downtown buildings. These low interest loans will range in loan size from \$10,000 to \$250,000. With energy efficiency as the objective of the program, the loans will be used for energy efficient improvements to existing businesses, renovations of existing buildings, as well as for improvements to planned new construction. The interest rate on the loans will be below market (the Georgia Cities Foundation's downtown revolving loan fund is presently at 3 percent).

To apply for a Green Communities Fund Loan applicants must first complete a comprehensive energy audit of the existing building or an energy model for a new building. The audit will identify ways to improve the energy efficiency of the building and predict the best return on investment for each improvement. The audit, which is subsidized by the Georgia Cities Foundation, will identify a list of applicable improvements that may be financed through the Green Communities Fund loan program. The various energy savings investments may include, but are not limited to, the following list:

Examples of Eligible Improvements:

- Insulation
- Lighting Retrofits
- Reflective Roofing
- Weather Sealing
- Duct Sealing
- High Efficiency HVAC
- Occupancy Sensors
- Solar Thermal Hot Water Heaters
- Tankless Water Heaters

To be eligible for the Green Communities Fund loan, the borrower must either meet a minimum of a 20 percent energy savings or have a combined return on investment for the work performed of 10 years or better. The energy audit will provide the ability to determine which combination of improvements will meet these standards.

For more information, contact Chris Higdon at 678-651-1018 or chigdon@gmanet.com, or visit www.georgiacitiesfoundation.org

City of Cartersville receives Excellence in Historic Preservation Award from the Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation

By Liz Hood
Executive Director, Cartersville Main Street Program
GDA Board Treasurer

The City of Cartersville's efforts to preserve Georgia's last known Italianate-Style courthouse from demolition has garnered an "Excellence in Rehabilitation Award" from the Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation. The city was recognized for its efforts to rehabilitate the historic 1869 courthouse at the Trust's spring meeting in Rome.

Time was running out for Cartersville's 1869 Courthouse and it seemed it would soon be a pile of rubble, another historic building the victim of demolition due to decades of neglect and the prohibitive cost of quality rehabilitation in a tight economy. City leaders, state historic preservationists, the local community, and downtown merchants all agreed it was a worthwhile project, but how to come up with an additional million dollars needed to make the project a reality?



The completed 1869 courthouse will house the Bartow History Museum when open in 2011

One by one, Georgia's grand Italianate-style courthouses had fallen victim to neglect and eventual demolition, until it was believed only one- Cartersville's - remained standing, but vicariously so. Structural engineers encouraged the city to tear it down to avoid danger to the public and advised the building was simply too far gone to save.

Completed in 1869, the courthouse was financed through pledges from the local community of \$50 to \$1,000, raising \$20,000 for construction. Once built, the courthouse was found to be too close to the train tracks for courtroom testimony to be heard; a new courthouse was constructed and occupied by 1904. In the next 90 years, the 1869 courthouse became a roller rink, furniture store, grocery store, and finally an antiques store; then vacancy and a swift decline from neglect.



Fireplaces were collapsing, and walls in danger of falling when work began on the 1869 courthouse



Thousands of bricks were repointed during the project, and balconies returned to the front and rear of the building

In 1991, the City of Cartersville purchased the courthouse with the help of the county and a state grant of \$140,000. A Transportation Enhancement Grant in 1997 somewhat stabilized the walls and roof and then it sat for the next decade waiting for additional funding. City residents approved SPLOST funding for the rehabilitation of the building, and the roof,

windows and some exterior work proceeded. Two million dollars in SPLOST monies were raised, but three million was needed, and time was running out for the 1869 Courthouse. Additional stabilization work would be massive in scale to keep the walls from collapsing. To return the building to usability: heating, air, plumbing, stairs, ceiling, flooring, and brick stabilization were needed. SPLOST collections would not cover the expenses and the decision to proceed with demolition was expected the following week.

But, this is a story with a happy ending. Innovative engineering was discovered as a method of shoring up the walls, and a Cartersville project manager, Ron Goss, Jr., owner of Cooperstown Development LLC, was hired with a commitment to coming in under budget. The project was completed in early 2010, 20 percent under budget, saving the city \$400,000. Richard L Thornton, R. A. was the architect for the project. A fundraising campaign for \$500,000 to complete the build-out of exhibit space is currently underway and the 1869 Courthouse will once more reclaim her place of honor downtown as the home of the Bartow History Museum in 2011.

The Manager as the F.A.C.E. of the Program

By Jay Markwalter
Executive Director, Lawrenceville Tourism & Trade Association
Administrative Staff, Lawrenceville Downtown Development Authority
GDA Board Member

Professional staff and administrative managers are the mortar for constructing a successful comprehensive Destination Management Program. Most communities realize that there is some sort of active Downtown Marketing office in motion when they notice events, brochures, beautification, or revitalization activity.

Sometimes elected officials and, if in place, a membership association may be more aware of the role of a Destination Management Organization, but rarely do the public and even many active participants know how to define the job description, and more importantly, the significance of the downtown director or manager. Even managers of successful comprehensive programs have trouble putting their own work into words. The manager understands that photo ops are justifiably best left to elected officials and the territory does not often come with recognition. Day-to-day managers, as the executive arm, are the **F.A.C.E.** of any group effort focusing on any or all of the Four Point methodology – Organization, Promotion, Design, and Economic Restructuring.

As the **F.A.C.E. of the city's comprehensive program or destination**, the management staff serves as the **Facilitator**, provides **Assistance**, acts as the **Communication** hub, and **Encourages** project implementation and promotion.

Staff is the essential worker-bee for the creative planning and often creative communication it takes to bring all necessary parties together for the start-to-finish project check lists and ongoing maintenance of city attributes.

In recent GDA newsletter articles, managers from great cities such as Toccoa, Cartersville, and Woodstock shared insight on economic restructuring, job growth, and sustainability as well as state-wide marketing co-op avenues. There is also no doubt that a marriage of Convention & Visitor Bureau (CVB) type organizations, or similar tourism agencies referred to as Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs), and downtown management efforts are now essential for promoting the unique, locational aspects needed to create tourism-based economic development impact. "Shop, Buy, and Support Local" campaigns are not just for residents as towns try to share local assets and capture dollars from day-trippers, mom & pop destination seekers, and overnight guests. Staff is the essential worker-bee for the creative planning and often creative communication it takes to bring all necessary parties together for the start-to-finish project check lists and

ongoing maintenance of city attributes. The manager must lead the city leaders and planners, visitor bureaus and assistance services, development authorities, chambers of commerce, event coordinators, retail and restaurant pioneers, and a support structure of community residents and volunteers to believe in the complete partnership before proceeding with the tireless efforts of place-preservation and public presentation.

On a recent personal trip to South Georgia through Sandersville, Vidalia, McRae, Ocilla, Fitzgerald, Nashville, and over to Statesboro and Savannah, it was obvious that there are managers steering the revitalization and new construction towards quality of life that certainly grabs the attention of the money in the passer-by's pocket – maybe for a brief meal or to become a transplant. For example, in Fitzgerald (on a Sunday) the Blue & Gray civil war and city museum was easily found by following a signage system where the attraction was housed in the beautifully restored train depot. The friendly staff was trained to offer a package of visitor information to reinforce the tourism office's attempt to share the local experience. One of the unique must-sees was found in a simple guide for an Architectural Tour to view the impressive rehabilitation of downtown buildings and surrounding renovation of homes and churches. Lawrenceville is in the process of implementing a way-finding signage system to help both locals and visitors explore the city's points of interest and better navigate in-town streets – visually building an attractive sign brand and sense of pride for locals, an easier experience for supporters and newcomers, and generating increased spending from the gateway areas to the vicinity of the downtown district kiosks. The Georgia Department of Economic Development (GDEcD) introduced their Tourism Product Development Grant that included Signage as an applicable qualification. The local DMO could apply for funds to benefit the DDA towards signage fabrication and installation estimated to create and sustain jobs through increased visitor spending; however, from start-to-finish, the tireless manager must provide the **F.A.C.E.** from design phase, to budget, to the unveiling.

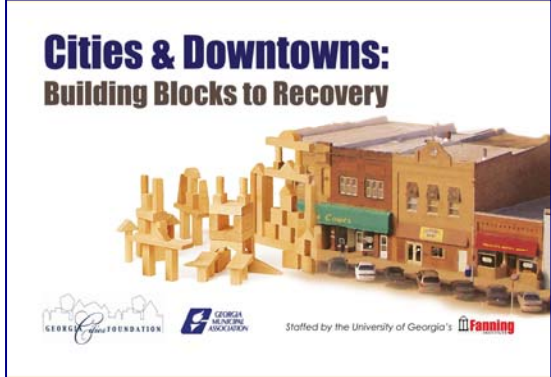
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When the visitor itinerary is crucial for the total experience, the entire downtown district plays the vital role as the packaged attraction – this is where tourism marketing and downtown development must act as one managed program. Lawrenceville's executive staff for tourism and development attributes success to more than working internally on the annual strategic work plan. The external industry networking for tourism-based economic development is invaluable. Director and staff represent the City on the local, regional, state, and national level. Staff has found it very effective to be the **F.A.C.E.** for Lawrenceville as an affiliate with the

Southeast Tourism Society and Atlanta Metro Travel Association as well as the Georgia Downtown Association and National Main Street Center. With cultural and heritage tourism on the rise, city and city-supported programs to preserve and showcase these elements need to realize or continue to appreciate the importance of the point person, board, or core task force operating as the city's **F.A.C.E.** in a myriad of arenas as a representative.

Visit any of the nine "Explore Georgia" regions designated by the GDEcD, and it continues to be obvious that tourism industry practitioners and Main Street managers already have or should have a common interest in product development; however, not many know the process and persons necessary for overseeing product development or helping the municipality recognize potential product for development. Executive staff keeps their city informed of the resources, tools, and opportunities to development product for local and visitor interests. Even if a city is not an official Main Street or Better Hometown, there is evidence in the results that Georgia's downtown destination managers are guiding the Four Point Main Street Approach with **Facilitation**, **Assistance**, **Communication** and **Encouragement**.

Cities and Downtowns: Building Blocks to Recovery



The Georgia Municipal Association and Georgia Cities Foundation, in partnership with the University of Georgia's Fanning Institute, have embarked on a comprehensive study of downtowns in Georgia. The study will include an assessment of concerns about downtowns across the state, as well as the identification of what can be done to support downtowns and to insure that they are healthy and vibrant for future generations.

At the Georgia Municipal Association's Mayors' Day Conference in January, city officials participated in a kickoff session designed to gather input on initial thoughts about the health of Georgia's downtowns. Throughout this spring and summer, representatives from the Fanning Institute are meeting with a several stakeholder groups with an interest in users of tax credits, downtown development authority directors and Main

downtowns, including community bankers, end

Street/Better Hometown managers, state legislators, mayors, developers, county officials, media representatives, the Georgia Cities Foundation Board of Directors, and others. In addition to the focus groups, components of the overall initiative include a questionnaire, a presentation during the recent GMA Annual Convention in Savannah, and a series of case studies of fifteen Georgia cities that will take place this fall. The proposed completion date for the initiative is the end of 2010, with a full report presented during Mayors' Day next January. This initiative will attempt to take the pulse of downtowns and to develop policy recommendations that will provide cities with the tools necessary to support vibrant downtowns well into the future.

Madison Developers Win 2010 Renaissance Award



Madison developers Jane and Everett Royal have been selected as the recipients of the Georgia Cities Foundation's "Renaissance Award." The Royals, who own several properties in Madison, accepted the award at the Georgia Municipal Association's Annual Convention in Savannah on Sunday, June 27.

The Renaissance Award recognizes an individual or organization that has made a significant contribution to the revitalization of one or more of Georgia's cities. The Royals, who were nominated by the City of Madison, have been involved in downtown development for a number of years. Everett was part of the team that launched the Downtown Development Authority's first project, Walker Rose Lane, an award-winning development of workforce housing in downtown. Jane is chair of the Main Street Advisory Board and has worked actively to promote and educate downtown businesses.



Everett Royal, Jane Royal and Georgia Cities Foundation President Mike Starr

In 2007, the Royals invested more than \$11 million to redevelop a large parcel in downtown Madison that included a historic gin, warehouse and vacant land. Today, the land hosts The James Madison Inn & Conference Center, which Everett operates and the Madison Markets, a shopping district located in a renovated group of turn-of-the-century cotton warehouses that Jane operates. Madison Markets has more than 20,000 square feet of shopping space and a collection of 75 antique dealers.

"Jane and Everett Royal have shown a great passion for a vibrant and healthy Madison through their leadership," said Georgia Cities Foundation President Mike Starr. "The two have worked hard to help ensure that Madison—the town General Sherman refused to burn' continues to attract

tourists from all over the world; tourist who come to marvel at the town's antebellum architecture and bustling historic district."

Downtown Development Authority Basic Training

The next Georgia Municipal Association sponsored Downtown Development Authority Basic Training classes will be held at the following dates and locations. To register, visit the Georgia Municipal Association's website at www.gmanet.com.

September 28, 2010
Augusta, Georgia
(In conjunction with Georgia Downtown Conference)

January 22, 2011
Atlanta, Georgia
(In conjunction with GMA's Mayors' Day Conference)

February 18, 2011
Tifton, Georgia
(In conjunction with GMA's Newly Elected Official's Training Program)

June 25, 2011
Savannah, Georgia
(In conjunction with GMA's Annual Convention)

Job Opening

The City of Sylvester Georgia is soliciting applications for a Marketing Specialist/Main Street Director. Sylvester is the Worth County seat with a population of 6,000 and is located between Albany, Georgia and Tifton, Georgia on US Hwy 82. The city provides governmental services to its citizens and multiple utilities including electricity, natural gas and some telecommunication services. Sylvester has the desire of becoming a Main Street city and has encouraged a successful downtown. Because of its location and leadership, Sylvester has strong potential for growth in retail and manufacturing. This new position will be expected to support the city's utility operations by improving customer communications as well as broader communication with the community at large. Additionally the position will coordinate activities to continue the revitalization of Sylvester's downtown. Close coordination with various community boards and

civic groups will be necessary to accomplish position objectives. This will include the Downtown Development Authority, Sylvester/Worth County Chamber of Commerce, Worth County EDA and others. Successful candidates will possess a minimum of a bachelor's degree in marketing or related discipline or 5 years of equivalent experience. Main Street experience is desired. Excellent verbal and written communication skills are required including a working knowledge of tools such as Microsoft Word, Excel and Power Point. Experience with desktop publishing is a plus. This position reports to the City Manager. Salary is commensurate with experience. Applications will be accepted until the position is filled. Please send cover letter and resume in care of Tommy Bozeman, Assistant City Manager, and P.O. Box 370, Sylvester, Georgia 31791.



Georgia Downtown Association Board Members

Marcia Hampton - President, Douglasville

Joel Cordle - Vice President, Dahlonega

Billy Peppers - Secretary, Woodstock

Liz Hood - Treasurer, Cartersville

Monica Callahan - Immediate Past President, Madison

Odessa Archibald - Georgia Power

Monica Coffin - Conyers

Hasco Craver - NEGA Regional Commission

Maria Jurado-Flynn - Cleveland

Lequrica Gaskins - Tifton

Josephine Kelly - Covington

Jay Markwalter - Lawrenceville

Pat Merritt - Georgia EMC

Karen Smith - Thomasville

Connie Tabor - Toccoa

Georgia Downtown Association Partners

Perry Hiott - Georgia Municipal Association

Jim Lenahan - Georgia Economic Developers Association

Billy Parrish - Georgia Department of Community Affairs

Jordan Poole - Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation

*Sidewalk Talk is a publication of the Georgia Downtown Association.
Articles can be e-mailed to gda@gmanet.com. You may contact GDA at (678) 686-6296.*