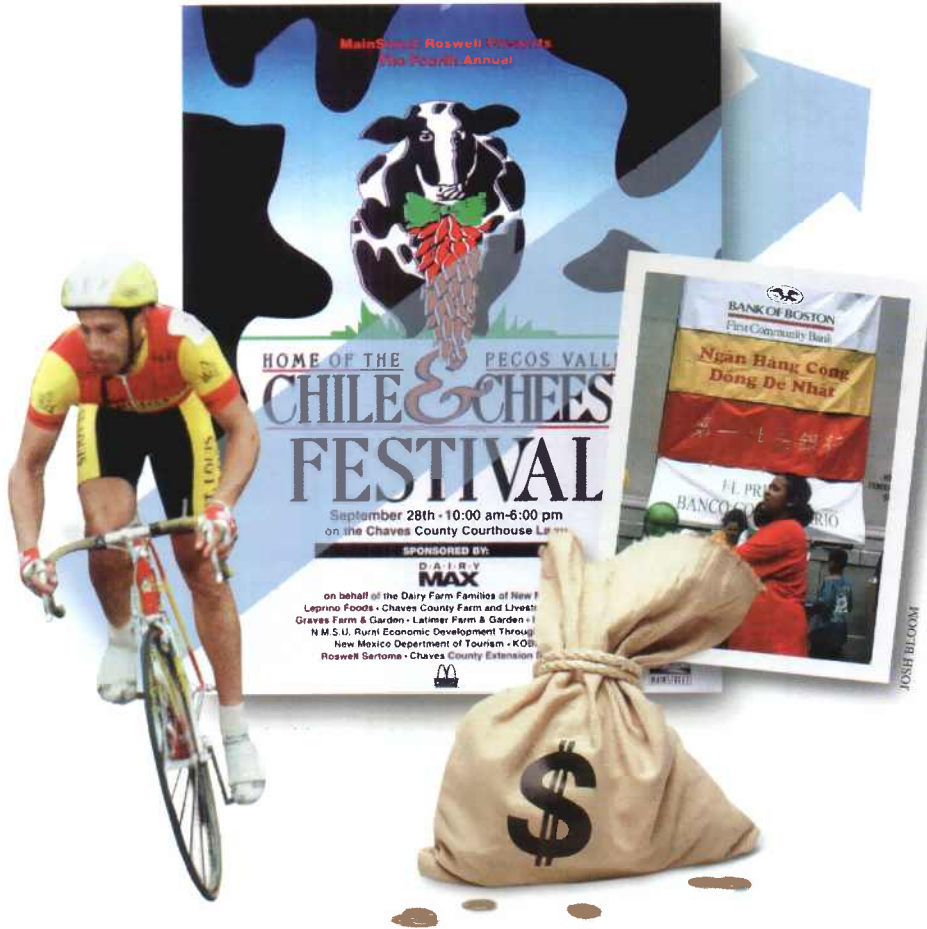


# MainStreetNews

THE MONTHLY PERIODICAL of THE NATIONAL MAIN STREET CENTER



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## How to Sell More Sponsorships

Sylvia Allen

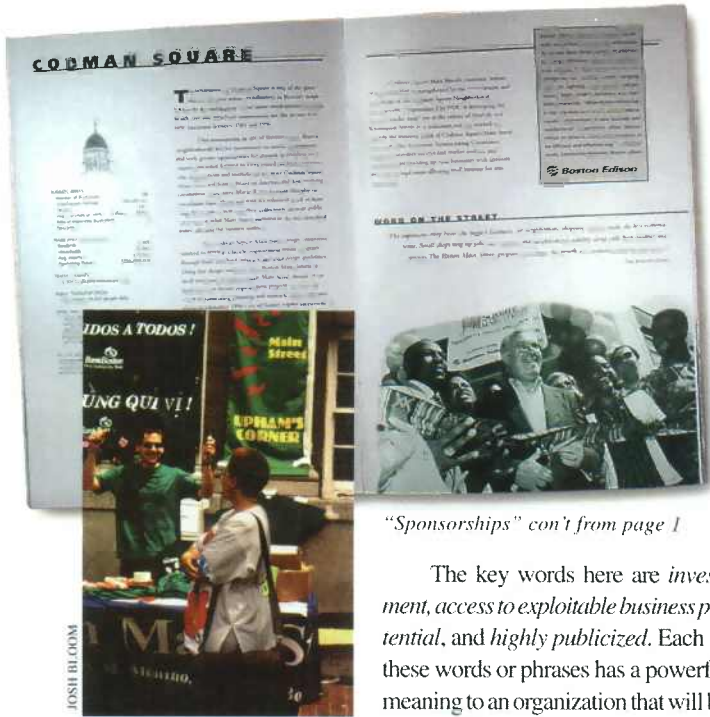
**Sponsorships are not "money for nothing." You are offering publicity and access to a specific audience so your partnership with a sponsor should reflect parallel goals.**

Sponsorship is no longer a linear relationship as it was in the 1960s and '70s, when a corporation gladly gave money in exchange for tickets to a performance or banner exposure. And no longer are charitable "donations" made in large sums. Today's sponsor is highly sophisticated and recognizes that sponsorship of sports, community events, arts, and entertainment is just another media component of his/her marketing mix. As a result, sponsorships must have a variety of compo-

nents, including media, cross-marketing opportunities, partnership recommendations, and event extensions to get the greatest return on investment.

First, a definition of sponsorship—and this is thanks to John Barr, formerly the sponsorship guru for Eastman Kodak in Rochester, N.Y.: "An investment in cash and/or in kind, in return for access to exploitable business potential associated with a highly publicized event or entity."

Continued on page 2



"Sponsorships" con't from page 1

Established in 1995 as the first citywide Main Street program in the United States, Boston Main Streets has pioneered a unique sponsorship concept to provide participating neighborhoods with additional funding and resources. Each of the Main Street districts is paired up with a Corporate Buddy. Not only do these "buddies" provide money for their Main Street partners; they are also expected to serve on the local Main Street board and to provide access to company resources to help the commercial district on the road to self-sufficiency. Among the corporations partnering with the 15 Boston Main Streets communities are BankBoston, Star Market, Boston Edison, and Gillette Company.

The key words here are *investment*, *access to exploitable business potential*, and *highly publicized*. Each of these words or phrases has a powerful meaning to an organization that will be involved in sponsorship.

First, let's look at *investment*. This implies a payback, value received or ROI (Return on Investment). When selling sponsorships, it is important to demonstrate that the value of the sponsorship will be greater than the value of time and money invested.

Second is *access to exploitable business potential*. What opportunities does your event offer a business or corporation? How can the business take advantage of the relationship and exploit (a positive word!) it? Possibilities include enhancing the business's existing advertising campaign; offering hospitality to the trade, its employees, or its customers; or one of a variety of other benefits that can lead to increased business.

Third, and last, is *highly publicized*. You must be able to offer great exposure to your sponsors through your media partners and extensive public relations and promotional activities.

Before we discuss the steps to sponsorship success, it is important to know where sponsors are investing their money and how much they are spending. According to IEG, in 1998, nearly seven billion dollars will be spent on sponsorship fees alone. Of that money, approximately 65 percent will go to sports; 10 percent each on entertainment/tours, fairs/festivals, and

causes, with the balance of 5 percent going to the arts. Considering the diversity of sponsorship offerings in many Main Street communities, you can begin to see that the opportunities for selling sponsorships are plentiful.

### Getting Started

How do you get started selling sponsorships? The following is a quick overview of the process, after which we'll take an in-depth look at 12 steps to sponsorship success:

- Take an inventory of your property—what do you have to sell?
- Solicit and secure media sponsors through barter by making them sponsors of the event.
- Incorporate media components into the sponsorships offerings.
- Develop a one-page "sell" fact sheet.
- Determine the various levels of participation that you will make available, based on the inventory. These are often assembled into "packages" that are sent to potential sponsors.
- Solicit sponsorships by
  - Researching your sponsors through annual reports, on-line data searches, etc.;

- Calling and pre-qualifying at the highest level;
- Sending a one-page fax sheet;
- Following up with a call to set up an appointment;
- Meeting with prospective sponsors to determine levels of commitment;
- Working with sponsors to integrate your sponsorship opportunity into their current marketing efforts;
- Getting a commitment and signing a contract;
- Getting an initial down payment;
- Working with sponsors on participation;
- Attending the event and managing the sponsorship;
- Sending a post-event report; and
- Following up to obtain renewal for next year.

Sounds simple doesn't it! After you've done it for a while, it will become simple—and fun. If you follow some simple rules before, during, and after your sponsorship sales, you will enjoy much better results. The following section provides a more in-depth look at how to sell sponsorships.

### Top 20 Sponsors for Any Event

Sometimes it's hard to know where to start when soliciting sponsorships. To help you get started, here's a list of the top 20 potential sponsors you can approach for almost any event:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. Local electronics retailer   | 11. Network marketing companies (Amway, Nu Skin, Mary Kay, etc.) |
| 2. Local beer bottler   | 12. Craftspeople   |
| 3. Local soft drink bottler   | 13. Antique dealers  |
| 4. Local banks (The Community Reinvestment Act requires banks to "give back" to the community.) | 14. Fresh produce dealers (mini-farmer's markets)                |
| 5. Local restaurant association   | 15. Local radio  |
| 6. Local retailers' association   | 16. Local cable  |
| 7. Car dealers  | 17. Local newspapers   |
| 8. Automobile dealers   | 18. Food vendors   |
| 9. Long-distance carriers   | 19. T-shirt vendors  |
| 10. Mobile telephone companies  | 20. Flea market vendors  |

H A P P Y S E L L I N G !

## Twelve Steps to Success

Before making an effort to sell sponsorships, take the time to thoroughly examine what you have to offer and to understand the potential sponsors for your activities. Use of that background, combined with a polished presentation and detail-oriented follow up, will make all the difference in the success of your sponsorship campaign. Here are a dozen steps to help ensure success in each of the three phases of sponsorship sales:

### Before You Sell

**1. Know your property and what you can sell.** Before you approach your first prospective sponsors, ask yourself some basic questions. Who is your audience? What benefits can you offer a sponsor? What are your objectives? Do you have your media partnerships in place? Be sure you know all the benefits available as an incentive for the sponsor to participate. Can you offer banners? Posters? Flyers? Bill inserts? On-site booth space for sampling or product sale? Have you included media in your offerings? Are there opportunities for trade, customer, or employee hospitality?

Where is your event being held? What are the restrictions on that location/facility? One overzealous sponsorship novice offered a new sponsor its choice of banner locations at an event. The facility where the event was being held, however, did not permit banners in some of the locations the sponsor chose. The result: an unhappy sponsor, an embarrassed salesperson, and a lost opportunity for the following year.

**2. Target sponsors with similar goals and audiences.** Your prospects will generally be more receptive if you can show that your sponsorship opportunity offers exposure to the people they

are trying to reach or for a cause that they support. It would be inappropriate, for instance, to target a tobacco company if your organization is involved in working with health concerns. That same opportunity may be perfect, however, for an athletic shoe manufacturer, health food store, or another company that promotes personal well-being. Take the time to learn about your sponsor's business and you will be more likely to get an appointment to demonstrate how the company's investment will have a positive business payback.

**3. Offer more than the value of the sponsorship.** After you evaluate what you have to sell, examine all the opportunities of exposure for the sponsor and assign a realistic value to each.

For instance, if you are advertising a facility or an event, offer your sponsor a logo or a mention in your ad. Then, determine what it would have cost the sponsor to get its message to the people reached by those ads. From those values, put together a sponsorship offering that reflects 150 to 200 percent of the value of the sponsorship.

Remember that sponsorships are not "money for nothing." All successful sponsorships are win-win situations. Your partnership with a sponsor should reflect parallel goals and audiences as well as a strong potential for reaching both.

**4. Pre-qualify your sponsors.** Don't rely on outdated lists or "hunches" to determine the contact in each target company. Make sure you don't waste your time speaking with someone who is not the decision maker. Not all companies have specific sponsorship departments; in many businesses, sponsorships

## The Frankfort Fighting Hot Dogs

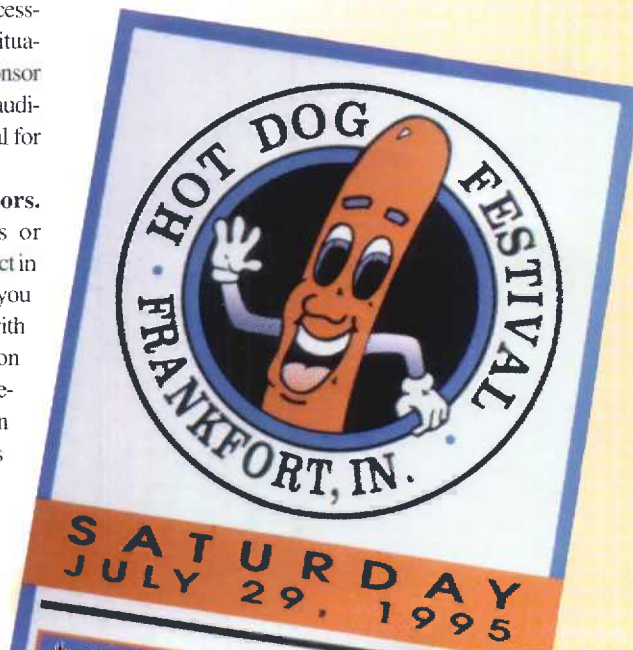
The opportunities for selling sponsorships are only as limited as your imagination. Take Frankfort, Ind., for example, a town with a great sense of pride and an even greater sense of humor. The local high

school, with tongue firmly planted in cheek, dubbed its sports teams the Frankfort Fighting Hot Dogs. Taking advantage of the community spirit gener-

ated by the Fighting Hot Dogs, Main Street organizers put together a downtown festival that played on the "hot dog" theme. The one-day festival included an obstacle course for dogs, a Wiener Classic basketball tournament, a four-mile Bun Run, a Dog Days of Summer merchants' sale, a Puppy Park full of kids' activities, entertainment from the bands Dog Talk and Frank and the Furters.... and loads of national sponsors! Frankfort's ingenuity and willingness to poke fun at itself brought Pepsi, Frito-Lay, and the Oscar Meyer Wienermobile and its Talent Search Contest to town as sponsors for the event. The result: statewide media coverage, 15,000 visitors, and the start of an annual festival that celebrates a community's pride and resourcefulness.



DICK WITTHROW



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# The Role of the Main Street Executive Director

The executive director of a Main Street program is the central coordinator of the organization's activities. The director oversees the program's daily operations, provides the hands-on involvement critical to success, and serves as liaison for all the committees, ensuring that activities in all four points are synchronized. Like a shopping mall manager, the director initiates and coordinates a wide range of projects, from supervising promotional activities to assembling market information. Most important, though, is the director's role as a full-time advocate for the downtown and as an authority and single source for information, resources, and activities related to the revitalization initiative.

As is true of the board's responsibilities, the director's duties evolve as the program's goals and opportunities change, but two characteristics remain constant: the director is a full-time coordinator whose only focus is the downtown or commercial district.

## The Director's Broad Tasks

The tasks of a Main Street director are many, but limitations should be set on what the components of the position are. In broad terms, the following are the tasks of the Main Street director:

- **Develop downtown strategies based on the Main Street Approach with the board of directors.** Identify and use the community's human and economic resources, partners and interest groups that are directly or indirectly involved with the commercial district. *Assist* the board of directors and committees in developing a work plan based on program goals and objectives and the Main Street Four Point Approach, then *assist* the board and committees in implementing that plan.
- **Coordinate activities of the Main Street committees.** Ensure that communication between committees is constant, and *assist* committees with implementation of work plan activities.

- **Manage the administration of the Main Street organization.** This responsibility includes purchasing, record keeping, budgeting, and personnel supervision. Preparing reports to state and national programs, and assisting in reports to funding agencies.

- **Develop and conduct ongoing public awareness and education programs** designed to create appreciation and awareness of the downtown district and its architecture, and to foster awareness and understanding of the Main Street program's goals and objectives.

- **Assess and develop capacity of downtown businesses, institutions and groups to carry out joint improvement activities,** such as uniform store hours, good business practices, promotional events, advertising campaigns, parking management, and business recruitment. Provide advice and information about successful downtown management. Encourage development of a cooperative climate between downtown interests and local public officials.

101  
MAIN STREET 101

• **Help build strong, productive working relationships with and between partners**, such as local and state public agencies, chambers of commerce, merchants associations, schools, local nonprofits, civic groups, the media and others.

• **Develop and maintain systems to track the progress of the Main Street program.** To prove the economic and intangible success of the initiative, meticulous records must be kept on rental rates, dollars invested by building owners and the city, and the number of jobs and businesses created. Photographic documentation of all physical changes downtown is essential as well.

### The Director and Volunteers

Full-time program management is essential to a successful revitalization program. Keep in mind, however, that the director cannot — and should not — take the place of volunteers in the organization. Main Street programs rely on the mobilization of an army of volunteers from all parts of the community. Thus, the director's major role is to expand and develop volunteer capacity and ensure that committee activity is moving smoothly. The director should serve as a facilitator, coordinating people and resources, to help volunteers work efficiently and productively. ✦

*By Amanda B. West, with material from The Board Members Handbook*

JAMES L. BALLARD

## The Director's Skills

Skills — as opposed to *qualifications*, such as experience and education — are the intangible assets of a director. They can be acquired from past experiences, or may simply be the individual's natural talents. Past educational and job experiences are important to the performance of a director, but the following skills are tools the director will use everyday:

• **Self-Initiative** — being able to work in independent situations. Directing a Main Street organization can be a self-starter's dream, but in some cases, the director may be left hanging to make decisions or initiate activity if the board is lax or focusing on other activities. The director must be capable of and comfortable working independently.

• **Diplomacy** — being able to work well with a wide variety of people and situations. Directors will always have to deal with cranky business owners, territorial chambers, pompous mayors, pessimistic bankers, absentee landlords, and clueless volunteers, even in the best, most successful Main Street programs. These are the players in the field of downtown revitalization, so diplomacy and careful long-term relationship building will always be necessary.

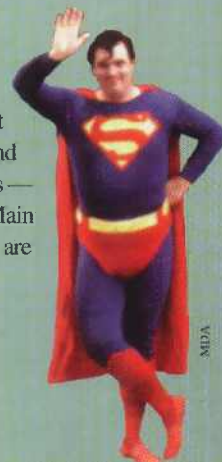
• **Communication** — being skilled in verbal and written communication. As a central figurehead for the Main Street program, directors will be approached by everyone for information and answers. Developing relationships with individuals is the key to success. Presentations to groups are essential to disseminate information and clear up misconceptions about program goals. Writing proposals, newsletter articles, press releases, and annual reports are equally vital. Fortunately, communication skills can be learned, developed, and improved upon through formal and informal training and practice.

• **Flexibility** — being able to adapt to different situations. This is one of the most important skills a director needs: he or she may be blowing up balloons for an event in the morning and meeting with a banker about an incentive program in the afternoon. Schedules and project goals have a tendency to shift, so going with the flow will cause a lot less stress and a lot more productivity if the director can respond to changing situations. Dealing with a huge variety of tasks and situations is a hallmark of being a Main Street director, so inflexible persons who dislike change need not apply.

• **Organization** — being able to coordinate many projects and people. Going hand-in-hand with flexibility, organization is paramount. That doesn't mean your desk has to be clean, but juggling multiple projects, deadlines, people, and activities means you've got to keep on top of things, and keep tasks moving along in order to accomplish goals. Remember, the director's job is not to do all the activities in a work plan, but make sure they get done.

• **Confidence** — being able to "stick to your guns." The director must be capable of moving forward in thought, word, and deed without hesitating or seeking to be liked by everyone. Main Street directors will face many situations in which they may be in the minority: while presenting new ideas, for example, approaching naysayers, or working on an unpopular project. Although the director's activities should always have the backing of the board, uncomfortable situations will arise and the director must be able to deal with them.

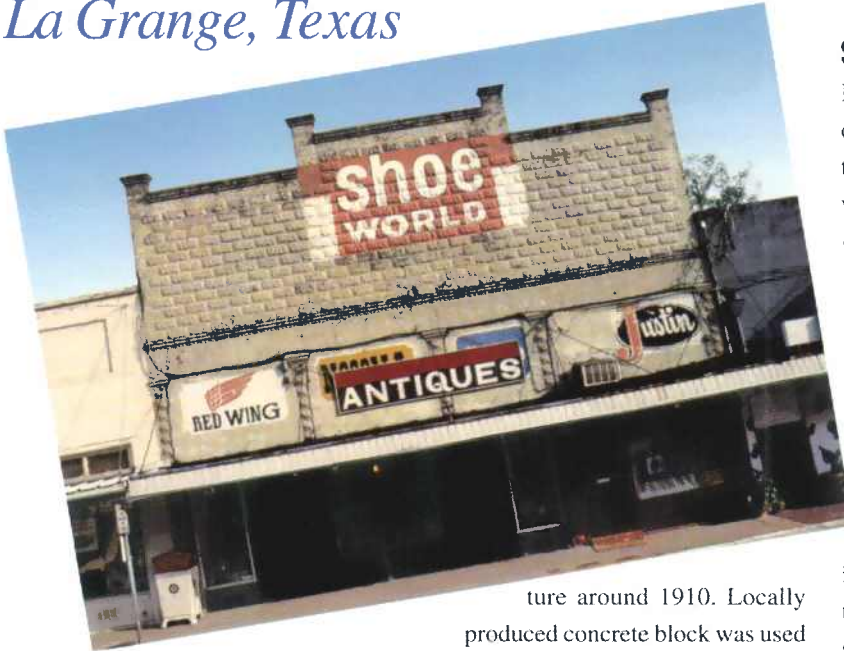
• **Being Superman or Wonder Woman** — Not really, of course, but Main Street directors sometimes feel they should be wearing a big "S" on their chests. Many boards will openly expect the director to wear it as part of the job, and, at times, he or she may have to. The pressure to be everything to everyone and complete every task oneself will be great and will come from many directions — from the board, from business owners, and from the public. The successful Main Street director will resist the temptation, and delegate — that's what volunteers are there for. Remember, one gains power by actually giving it away.



MIDA

# La Grange, Texas

## La Grange, Texas



### Building Profile

The Gage Building is located at 227 W. Travis in downtown La Grange, Tex. A town of 3,900 people, La Grange has been a Main Street town since 1996. Owned by Cliff and Susan Gage, the Gage Building now houses a branch of the Edward Jones financial services firm and The Book Nook.

### Building History

Built in 1885, the Gage Building was originally home to the Lange Saddlery Company. The wooden building was torn down and replaced by a concrete block struc-

ture around 1910. Locally produced concrete block was used in Texas around the turn of the century to simulate stone. The new building housed a furniture and hardware store. In the 1940s, the facade was "modernized" by changing the display windows to create an inset entrance and a small office to one side of the building front. In recent years, the retail half of the building housed a number of businesses, including a shoe store and an antiques shop.

### Date of Rehabilitation

September 1996 to January 1997

### Cost of Rehabilitation

\$100,000

### Scope of Rehabilitation

In 1996, Susan and Cliff Gage purchased the building with the intention of rehabbing it to house an Edward Jones office. The Gages decided to eliminate the remodeled display windows and office and restore the front of the building to its original design. Acting on the advice of the Texas Main Street architect, the new owners reconstructed the original concrete block columns, rebuilt the transom windows to let light inside, and restored the storefront to the original wood and glass design. After looking at several color schemes proposed by the state architect, the Gages decided to retain the original flat canopy instead of replacing it with an awning that would hide the transom windows.

On the interior, Texas Main Street recommended that the owners divide the building in half to create room for another business since they did not need all the space for the Edward Jones office. The Gages restored the pressed-metal ceiling, salvaged the wooden floor, and restored the plaster walls. Main Street La Grange was able to recruit a new business for the additional space. Today, the Gage Building houses The Book Nook, a coffee bar and book store, as well as the Edward Jones office.



**Significance of the Project**

The rehab of the Gage Building contributed significantly to revitalization efforts in downtown La Grange. First, it demonstrated the commitment of a property owner who recognized the need for additional retail space downtown and

was willing to invest in the district's future. Secondly, it encompassed the entire range of revitalization activities—from rehabbing and adapting a building for mixed-use to recruiting a new business. And, last but not least, because of its high-visibility location, the building has dramatically improved the image of the south side of the downtown square. ✨

Contact:  
Cliff Gage (409) 968-9494

by Scott Byler, with additional material provided by Texas Main Street Architect Dick Ryan

Building owners Cliff and Susan Gage divided the interior of the building (left) in half to house not only an Edward Jones office but also a book store.



## Chippewa Falls gets discovered by the movies

Ever since its mention in the blockbuster film *Titanic* as the home of the main character, Jack Dawson (Leonardo DiCaprio), Chippewa Falls has become a familiar name to people around the globe. Capitalizing on its newfound fame, Chippewa Falls Main Street held a Leonardo DiCaprio look-alike contest in conjunction with its regularly scheduled Boat, Camping, and Fishing Swap Meet.

The winner of the contest, Andy Heinlein, was interviewed on Discover Wisconsin Radio, which airs over 42 radio stations and reaches 300,000 listeners. Andy also will be featured this January in *Discover Wisconsin Magazine*; the article will show him posing in front of 12 historic structures that were standing in Chippewa Falls at the time of Titanic's maiden voyage.

*Chippewa Falls Main Street manager Jim Schuh can tell you all about the film's impact on the community. Give him a call at (715) 723-6661.*

## Tennessee's First Lady speaks out for Main Street

The Tennessee Main Street Association has announced that Martha Sundquist, Tennessee's First Lady, has accepted the role of spokesperson for the Tennessee Main Street Association. Mrs. Sundquist will act as the official representative of the Association and its efforts to spearhead the revitalization of downtowns throughout the state.

"I am so excited to be a part of this worthwhile organization," says Mrs. Sundquist. "Saving our historic downtowns and communities is vitally important to our future.



MICHAEL SCOTT EVANS

Preservation and economic development does indeed begin at home, and together we can invite our children, our friends, and our neighbors to come back ... to main street."

*For further information, contact Cate Hamilton or Fay Fisher Jones of the Tennessee Main Street Association at (615) 591-9091.*

## Rite Aid Respects Downtown Plymouth

Main Street Plymouth (N.H.) was recently awarded a \$3000 grant from the Rite Aid Corporation. This contribution, pledged over three years, will help Plymouth's efforts to reinvigorate the downtown business district by improving the community's facilities and landscaping. Also, Rite Aid is helping revitalize South Main Street by constructing a new anchor store that will be aesthetically appealing to the New England downtown.

"We are proud to continue our partnership with the people of Plymouth by participating in the town's thoughtful revitalization efforts," says Suzanne Mead, Rite Aid vice president for corporate communications. "We hope our involvement will serve as a catalyst for others to become actively involved in supporting this worthwhile organization."

*To learn more about Rite Aid's collaboration with Plymouth Main Street, call program manager Rob Riley at (603) 536-2700.*

## Made in Illinois



Prairie State Mercantile recently opened in downtown Genoa, Ill. The store, which sells only products made in Illinois, is the brainchild of Rich and Maria Mamoser, who drove all over the state in search of Illinois goods. Currently, the store carries 23 different categories of merchandise, including food, wine, baskets, ironwork, and woolens; two product items are added each week to keep the selection expanding.

"We are really pleased with our first two months in Genoa," says Maria Mamoser. "There has been a lot of interest and support for new businesses in town. Food and wine sales are doing especially well, and we want to expand our literature and music lines. We are now shipping anywhere in the United States to improve our customer service."

*To get a line on selling products unique to your town or state, give Ms. Mamoser a call at (815) 784-4540.*

## Greetings from Virginia Main Street

The Virginia Main Street Program (VMSP) has created two postcards highlighting the nine National Main Street Communities among the state's 20 designated Main Street programs. Each card features landmark buildings, architectural details, special events, and colorful street scenes from the selected towns: Bedford, Culpeper, Elkton, Franklin, Lexington, Manassas, Marion, Martinsville, and Staunton.

"We wanted to do something special to recognize the efforts of the National Main Street Communities in our state and also provide our contact information to people interested in Main Street," explains Assistant State Coordinator Amy Yarcich. "It is a kind of calling card for Virginia Main Street. When we have our display at conferences we can give away the cards as souvenirs; then people can get in touch with us to find out more information about who we are and what we do. We can also use the postcards as follow-up notes to people we've spoken to about Main Street."

The postcards also dovetail nicely with a long-term goal of having each community professionally photographed. Several of the images on the postcards were shot by a professional photographer, and in the next year the remaining VMSP communities will also be professionally photographed. The pictures will be archived for future projects, including Virginia Main Street brochures, and will be made available to the communities and the state tourism office.

*Interested in getting your Main Street message out to a wider audience? Contact Amy Yarcich for details at (804) 371-7030.*





### Oklahoma holds hands-on rehab training

Oklahoma recently held its first Hands-On Rehab training in Perry, Okla. Approximately 45 downtown managers, state Main Street staff, and volunteers worked on five building rehabilitation projects downtown. Volunteers removed aluminum slipcovers from two buildings, chemically stripped another of paint, and painted two others in appropriate colors.

"The impact the rehab projects had on Perry was incredible, and we got great [media] coverage," says Melody Kellogg, state coordinator for the Oklahoma Main Street Program. "The Perry Main Street volunteers were incredibly organized, and most of the equipment and supplies were donated. Building owners agreed to complete the project within 30 days after we left, and the building owners were ecstatic with what was accomplished. Perry is already seeing the snowball effect!"

Oklahoma Main Street architect Barry Williamson, who organized the training, would be happy to discuss what worked and what they plan to improve for next time at (405) 815-5115.

### Eureka! TV! and other media

Eureka (Calif.) Main Street turned to television to promote its '97 holiday season, launching a campaign that targeted TV, print, and electronic



media. The theme, *Make history this holiday season in Downtown and Old Town, Eureka. It's all right here!*, incorporated Eureka's history by combining images from the town's past with a recognizable design format. The television ads were offered to business owners at two price levels. The print ads promoted the whole district through the use of 15 business categories, and Eureka Main Street paid to run the ads in the local paper and in *The North Coast Journal*, a local magazine about people, places, and the arts, from December 8 through the 22. Electronic media was used to promote individual stores.

A merchant's survey indicated a favorable response to the image/advertising campaign, which will now be continued year-round.

To learn more about putting your town's history to work, contact Mary Smith at (707) 442-9054.

### A Brighter, Cleaner Brighton



Brighton (Mass.) Main Streets is working to clean up the business district by kicking off the Brighton Main Streets Anti-Litter Campaign. A small "parade" of Brighton activists and business owners took to the streets last March; they pushed a barrel full of brooms down the district's main thoroughfare, passing out brooms to business owners as they went. A total of 70 brooms were handed out to area merchants.

The anti-litter campaign is multifaceted, targeting business owners through the broom distribution, people on the street through the parade, and school children through a "Don't be a Litter Bug! Keep Brighton Clean!" art contest. The clean-up ended with a Saturday Street Sweep.

Regular street sweeping now takes place throughout the year to keep the business district cleaner.

For tips on starting your own clean-up campaign, give program manager Ann Griffin a call at (617) 779-9200.

### Darlington adapts to flood plain

Darlington, Wis., was hit hard four years ago by a flood, and it is still recovering. Instead of abandoning downtown for higher ground, however, the town rebuilt it and took steps to prepare for the next flood by retrofitting the buildings in two ways.

The first strategy allows some flood water to flow in on the ground level, but not into the main showrooms. The basements were filled with gravel and the first floors were removed and reconstructed

at a new height, above the 100-year flood level. Display windows, on the other hand, remain at the old level in the front of the store. Stairs or a ramp provides access to the new retail floor above. However, there is one restriction: the store must have a high enough ceiling to allow the floor to be raised about five feet.

If that option is not feasible, some retailers have chosen to build a new concrete floor at the original grade and install waterproof finishes inside the building. The interior walls are made of waterproof drywall with baseboards that can easily be removed so air can flow behind the walls and dry them out. Molding in the middle of the wall and along the ceiling can be removed to let more air flow behind the walls. All utilities, including electrical outlets, are installed above the flood level.

For a flood of constructive ideas, contact Todd Barnam, Darlington Main Street's program manager, at (608) 776-3067.



"Network Notes" is compiled and written monthly by Bill McLeod. If you have interesting projects or ideas you would like others to read about, give Bill a call at 202/588-6219.

## Cities Back from the Edge - New Life for Downtown

*Roberta Brandes Gratz with  
Norman Mintz*

Preservation Press,  
John Wiley & Sons, 1998  
360 pages, index  
ISBN-0-471-14417-7

"It's about time!" For years I have read articles and publications touting the rebirth of America's cities and downtowns and yet did not get the sense that the writers had a clue about why certain cities have been successful while others still spend lots of money for little results. Finally, two people who understand the real problems, issues, and needs of downtowns — Roberta Brandes Gratz, author of *The Living City*, and Norman Mintz, from New York City's Grand Central Partnership and a pioneer in the Main Street movement—have combined to produce a "must read" volume on the underlying reasons for downtown's initial decline and what it takes to bring cities back.

The book begins with an all-too-familiar story of downtown Mansfield, Ohio, and its decline. The descriptions of the ills of this city's downtown could have been written about hundreds of cities. The innovative renewal of Mansfield's downtown offers object lessons about innovation, volunteers, and the incremental nature of revitalization. From this case study, the authors shed light on national trends and policies.

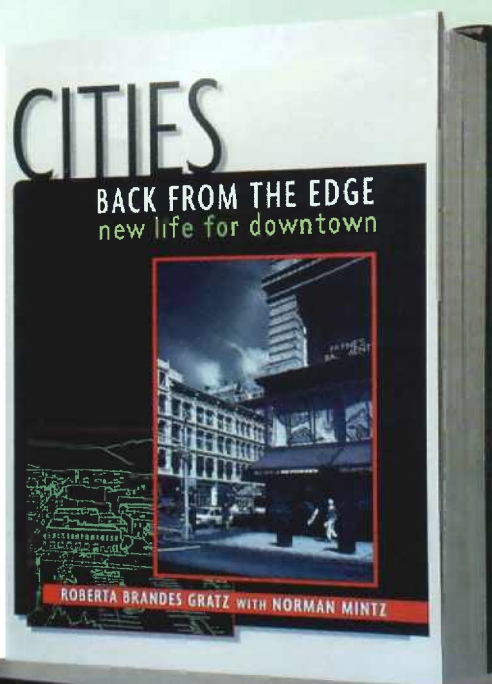
From transportation planning, America's love affair with the "Big Project," sprawl, and pedestrian-oriented urban spaces, Gratz and Mintz explain the causes and effects of decades of decisions about urban development. Their message is clear —

people, and the market, prefer authentic places that are designed on a human scale. Transportation, development, and land-use policy should be developed to support the growth of civic, and civil, spaces. Using examples ranging from major urban centers to small, rural Main Streets, the authors show that there is no specific "answer" to the problem, no formula. Instead, they demonstrate how local citizens working together can achieve what the "experts" designing the "big fix" cannot.

Although the authors engage in interesting philosophical arguments, don't think them impractical. The book acknowledges the role of a competitive marketplace. Gratz and Mintz examine the impact discount mega-stores have had on downtowns and the development of our cities. They also provide examples where smart business people have incorporated the unique qualities of downtown into their business concepts and met with success.

I often hear downtown revitalization directors asking for "good arguments" for downtown. Well, look no further. This book has plenty of arguments, anecdotes and some sound, common-sense philosophy. Inspirational as well as practical, the book gives heart and vision, as well as practical examples, to those laboring in downtown. It has information for the downtown practitioner as well as local officials and citizens. Here's a suggestion—get two copies of *Cities Back from the Edge*. One for yourself and one for a key community leader or decision maker (Mayor, councilmember, planner, editor, or banker). You'll be inspired and he/she may be converted. 🍷

—Reviewed by R. McDuffie Nichols,  
senior program manager, NMSC



## New from the National Trust

The National Trust recently published the following titles in its ongoing series of *Information* booklets.

### Public Relations Strategies for Historic Sites and Communities: Offering a Press Tour

Press tours for groups of journalists are an effective way to provide regional and national coverage for historic sites and tourist destinations. This booklet explains how to organize a press tour and suggests ways to evaluate its success. How do you determine if your town is a good candidate for a press tour? When should you schedule a tour? How many writers should you invite? Who should be involved at the local level? Get the answers to these and many other questions. Also included a sample media tour timeline, press tour “do’s and don’ts”, and other useful check lists. #2127

### Rescuing Historic Resources: How to Respond to a Preservation Emergency

Your historic courthouse is about to be torn down and replaced by a nondescript office building. A parcel on the edge of town is about to be converted to a parking lot for a new big-box retailer. At some point, every community

faces a threat to a historic site. This booklet covers the basic steps to take when faced with a preservation crisis and reviews the tactics and strategies used by several organizations to tackle a preservation controversy. #2151

### Fund-Raising Ideas for Your Preservation Organization

As every nonprofit organization knows, money doesn’t grow on trees. With the right planning, however, it can come from special events, products, tours, and auctions. Funds can also come from members, foundations, corporations, and individuals. Most organizations rely on a combination of these money sources to operate. Learn from other preservation and nonprofit organizations about innovative fund-raising events, products, and programs. #2180

The cost of each *Information* booklet is \$6.00. Order from: **Information Series**, National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1785 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20036. For a complete catalog listing of other preservation titles, please call 202/588-6296 or visit the National Trust web site at [www.infoseries.com](http://www.infoseries.com).

## WEB WATCH



companies, from “bootstrap” businesses, such as an at-home mom who started a greeting card company to niche-filling creative enterprises like “Takeout Taxi”—a restaurant food delivery service. The show’s creators

pride themselves on the fact that everyone involved in *Small Business 2000*—on air and off—is a small business owner. The result is a program that looks and feels different.

“This is not a traditional public television production,” they proclaim proudly. “You will find no journalists, no academics, and no gurus sitting around conference tables. The focus of every program is a small business owner filmed in the setting of his or her own business.”

*Small Business 2000*’s web site, located at <http://www.sb2000.com>, has become an extension of the show, delivering information presented in the series, with the same up-front, no-nonsense approach. It contains an index of topics of past episodes; names of all the businesses profiled (including contact information), along with their mission statements; and updates since the episode first aired. The site also lists small business assistance resources, such as a mentor program that can partner new entrepreneurs with successful business owners, SCORE members or Small Business Development Centers.

One gets the impression, however, that the site is much more than a marketing strategy for the television show; it is a personal message from series creators Bruce Camber and Hattie Bryant who are determined to impart their knowledge about successful small business development to all prospective and current small business owners. The site includes a quiz to help you determine what your priorities should be before embarking on your own business, tips

on identifying “your own personal magic,” and mission statements about “being small.” It also offers advice about determining what business you should be in, (if at all), as well as eight steps for starting your own business, from the initial idea to strategizing for long-term growth. The site also has a number of interactive features: Camber and Bryant solicit suggestions of successful businesses to profile in upcoming shows, even offering their selection criteria. They also request feedback on past shows from viewers and offer to respond to viewers’ questions about getting a business started.

Along with pragmatic advice, the site includes inspirational bits for prospective entrepreneurs, including such mantra as “We profoundly believe in business. And we profoundly believe that we all have an idea for a business. We take the risk, believing that this idea will work.” But they also offer other pearls of wisdom drawn from experience, such as, “Start your business on an ethical foundation. Have integrity. You will have more energy and a free mind.”

By Amanda B. West

## Small Business 2000 Hits the Airwaves and the Web

*Small Business 2000* is a syndicated, public television show that has gained attention over the past two years for its quality profiles of enterprising small businesses. A great educational tool for anyone involved in Main Street, *Small Business 2000* provides information on what makes these businesses successful, such as location, market analysis, capitalization strategies, marketing, and planning. It profiles a wide variety of

## What Goes into a Sponsorship Proposal

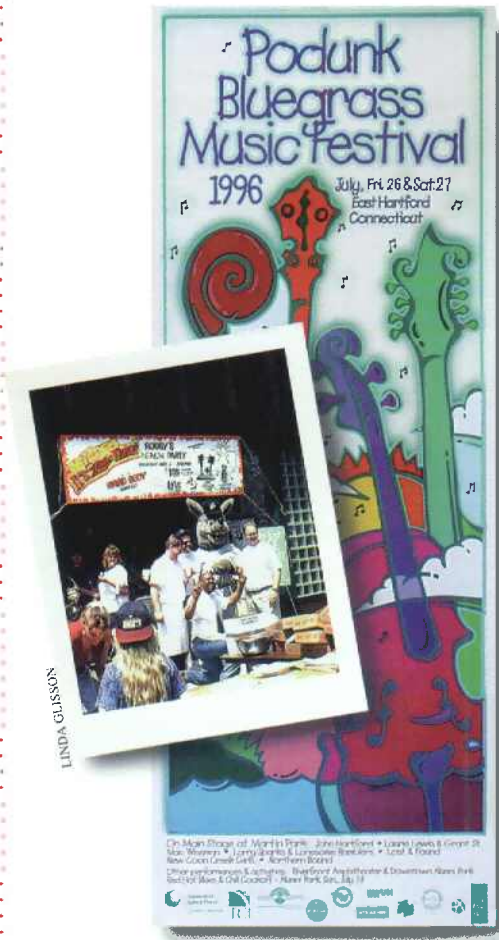
Placing sponsorship dollars is a business decision. The CEO of a company still exerts influence on sponsorship involvement but no longer are these decisions made emotionally. They are business decisions that have measurable objectives. Nor are they made on the spur of the moment. Depending on the dollar amounts involved, a sponsorship decision can take years and can involve a number of different people at different levels of the company, each assuming responsibility for a specific part of the process. Each of these people will want to study your sponsorship proposal to determine what elements, if any, affect his/her department's goals.

When selling sponsorships, keep in mind that the prime objective of the proposal is to whet the sponsor's appetite. Before putting together a sponsorship package, be sure to contact the potential sponsor and discuss the company's needs, then send a brief summary of the proposal, highlighting issues previously discussed and emphasizing how the various marketing/sales/promotional opportunities dovetail with their current strategies in these areas. Finally, make an appointment with the sponsor to discuss, in detail, how your program works and what sponsorship opportunities it offers.

When putting together your sponsorship package, be sure to include the following.

1. Media exposure—dollar value; ratings; readership, etc.;
2. Marketing, merchandising, and sales opportunities;
3. Hospitality rights, including tickets, VIP parking, etc.;
4. Product exclusivity;
5. Signs, on-site exposure—audio billboards, banners, etc.;
6. Listing of other participating sponsors;
7. Brief history of the event/sport/venue/facility; and
8. Testimonial letters from previous sponsors.

The proposal should be typed, double-spaced, and no longer than eight pages. Remember, the person receiving your proposal gets hundreds, if not thousands, of these proposals annually. The time spent on each one will be minimal, so your proposal must stand out if it is to be noticed. If it is brief and well written, with the sponsor's objectives in mind, you will quickly get to the next step.... meeting and discussion.



*"Sponsorships" can't from page 3*

may be the responsibility of the public relations, advertising, marketing, or human resources department, to mention just a few.

Because each company is different, you need to pick up the phone and call your target companies to find out who handles sponsorships for that organization. Talk to that person before you send your proposal to make sure you are dealing with the right person. On the local level, you will probably deal with a store or restaurant owner, general manager, or field representative. And don't underestimate the value of your Main Street sponsorship; with the trend toward grassroots marketing, many major corporations are looking for local opportunities to enhance their national sponsorship strategy.

### *Selling the Strategy*

**5. Put together an offering with the right information.** Your package

should include a cover letter that concisely communicates key advantages of the sponsorship, a fact sheet with a range of sponsorship possibilities and target audience information; potential reach within the sponsor's market; and contact information.

Don't overwhelm the sponsor. Be sure to include just enough information to interest the company and generate a further dialogue. Don't supply too much information; it bogs them down. Your package should be typewritten or laser-printed, neat, and free of typographical errors. And, make sure you don't misspell your contact's or the company's name. There is no faster way to get tossed into the round file! Also, don't send material unsolicited; always call first and pre-qualify the account.

**6. Get there early.** When you speak to the decision maker, try to find out what time of year the company allocates sponsorship dollars and be sure to get your proposal in at least a few months before the budget is set. Call the decision maker to ensure that the package was received. Continue to follow up on a regular basis, including at budget allocation time. Your chances of being considered decrease dramatically if you send your proposal just before the deadline—

many will have gotten there before you.

**7. Keep in touch.** Don't expect great results if you simply send the package and then drop out of sight. Send your target sponsor information and newspaper

clippings about the event, and updates on appropriate projects in progress. Include a hand-written note to the prospect. Communication throughout the year will apprise the sponsor of the advantages of being linked with your event. Pick up the telephone once in a while and keep the prospect involved in *all* of your Main Street activities.

**8. Ask for the sale.** One of the primary rules of sale is to always ask for the sale at the end of your presentation. Once you have done your home-

**With the trend toward grassroots marketing, many major corporations are looking for local opportunities to enhance their national sponsorship strategy.**

## Where to Place Sponsorship Dollars

When developing your sponsorship proposals, keep the sponsor in mind. Understanding the company and the questions it will ask will pave the way for a more effective, and more successful, sponsorship presentation. Here are nine questions that companies will be asking to determine where to place sponsorship dollars. Asking these questions about each prospective sponsor will help you decide which companies to approach:

1. Will the sponsorship drive sales?
2. Will it enhance or reinforce brand image?
3. Will it increase awareness of the company's product, brand, or service?
4. Will it provide retail and trade tie-ins?
5. Will it drive volume and long-term profitability?
6. Will it increase share of the market?
7. Will it provide a vehicle for entertaining clients?

8. Can it differentiate the product or brand from a competitor's?
9. Will it give the company a competitive edge, i.e., exposure in a market the competition isn't reaching?

Once these questions have been answered, screen and grade the choices to select the companies you will approach by asking the following:

1. Is the objective corporate or brand specific?
2. Is it a one-time event or a long-term commitment?
3. Do the locations and dates fit company needs?
4. How many attendees can be expected (total exposure of brand/product)?
5. Will there be co-sponsors?
6. Will the company be lost in a crowd of other sponsors?
7. What is the cost relative to the expected return?

work, found the sponsor, and presented everything you have to offer, ask for the sale! Some salespeople use an assumptive approach, such as "I'll reserve the cocktail hour sponsorship for you." Others use a value-added approach to create a sense of urgency, such as "If you reserve your sponsorship now, we can include you in the upcoming advertising campaign." There are many ways to close a sale; and, as you develop your personal selling style, you'll discover the approach that works best for you and learn how to evaluate the right close for each customer.

**9. Put it in writing.** Once the sale has been closed, formalize it with a letter of agreement and contract. The contract should specifically document all of the activities that will take place, the sponsor's responsibilities,

your organization's responsibilities, and any agreements that were discussed as part of the sponsorship. The more accurate and precise the contract, the less chance for "misunderstanding" before, during, and after the event. Both parties should receive signed copies of the document. Keep in mind that changes to the agreement should be added as addenda and signed by both parties.

**10. Be flexible.** Sponsors come in many forms, and not all are title sponsors. Consider the benefits of partial sponsorships or barter arrangements. Don't take an "all or nothing" approach. For instance, a local restaurant may not be interested in paying for a title sponsorship, but may offer to provide catering services for a preview party or luncheon. Also, a sponsor may want to buy some promotional opportunities, but not all of them.

Work with the sponsor as much as you can, but be sure you are still achieving the goals you established in the beginning. Often, when someone has consistently said no to involvement with your events, you can sell them on a very small involvement—banner display or an on-site booth, for instance—to get them started. If the event is a success, you will be able to involve them at a higher level the following year.

### Bringing Them Back

**11. Follow-up is the key.** You have done all of your homework and sold

the sponsorship. That's just half the work. Now, you must make sure that everything you promised the sponsor takes place. On-site management of sponsorships is critical to happy sponsors. Make sure banners are hung in the right location, that logos appear in ads, and that all of the other pieces are in place. Do everything you can to help the sponsor reach its goal and, in turn the sponsorship will help your reach your goals. Dropping the ball now could mean losing the sponsor forever.

**12. Report your results.** At the end of the project, or at periodic intervals during long-term sponsorships, submit a wrap-up or update report. Spell out the goals you set, how those goals were achieved or are being achieved, and activities that took place. Include survey information, news clippings, etc. Issue the report within 30 days after the event or at predetermined quarterly or monthly dates during long-term sponsorships. Follow up with sponsor to make sure that the report was clear and to get feedback. When sponsors feel uninformed, they may begin to question their investment. Make sure they

**Most sponsorship sales are made after the fifth "no" ...so just keep asking and sooner or later you will succeed.**



**Sponsorships come in many forms. Some companies may not be interested in paying to sponsor an event but may donate equipment or services instead.**

Continued on page 14



"Sponsorships" con't from page 13

know how important their sponsorship is!

The keys to success in sponsorship sales are to research your prospects well and thoroughly understand what you have to offer. Be thorough, informed, and flexible and you have the potential to make virtually anything happen. Keep in mind that many sponsorships can take a long time to develop and that most good salespeople are successful because they are tenacious; they don't give up. Most sales are made after the fifth "no," so don't be discouraged if a company doesn't say "yes" right away. Just keep asking and sooner or later you will succeed. ❁



**Sylvia Allen is president of Allen Consulting, Inc., located in Holmdel, N.J. She has taught sponsorships at New York University for the last decade, has helped many Main Street programs develop successful sponsorship programs, has offered her sponsorship strategies at the last five National Town Meeting on Main Street™ conferences (to rave reviews) and publishes *The Sponsorship Newsletter*. Ms. Allen can be reached at 732/946-2711 or via e-mail at [sylvia@allenconsulting.com](mailto:sylvia@allenconsulting.com).**

## JOB ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Main Street Manager

The Borough of West Reading, Pa., located in the heart of outlet country is seeking an individual to direct a newly established Main Street program. Responsibilities include business recruitment, marketing and promotion, nonprofit/volunteer management, and project coordination. Self-motivated applicants must be able to work independently and cooperatively with business people and volunteers. Excellent verbal and communication skills and grant writing experience a must. Applicants should have related experience and demonstrated leadership abilities in a like position. Send resume, letter of interest, professional requirements, and salary requirements by November 15, 1998 to: West Reading Main Street Foundation, c/o West Reading Borough Hall, 500 Chestnut Street, West Reading, PA 19611.

## For More Information

### Periodicals

*Advertising Age*, Crain Communications, Inc., 740 North Rush Street, Chicago, IL. (312) 649-5200.

*Outwalk's Brand Week*, A/S/M Communications, Inc., 49 East 21st Street, 12th Floor, New York, NY. (212)529-5500.

*Amusement Business*, BPI Communications, Inc., Box 24970, 49 Music Square West, Nashville, NT 37203, (800) 999-3322.

*CableVision*, International Thomson Communications, Inc., 825 Seventh Avenue, 6th Floor, New York, NY 10019. (212) 887-8400.

*Electronic Media*, Crain Communications, Inc., 740 North Rush Street, Chicago, IL 60611. (312) 649-5200.

*Entertainment Marketing Letter*, 160 Mercer St., 3rd Floor, New York, NY 10012. (212) 941-0099.

*Promo*, 11 River Bend Drive South, P.O. Box 4225, Stamford, CT 06907-0225. (203) 358-9900.

*Sponsorship Report*, IEG, 213 West Institute Place, Suite 303, Chicago, IL 60610. (312) 944-1727.

*The Sponsorship Newsletter*, The Sponsorship Newsletter, Inc., 89 Middletown Road, Holmdel, NJ. 07733. (732) 946-2711.

*The Sponsorship Report*, 555 Richmond Street West, Suite 504, Toronto, Canada M5V 3B1. (416) 360-3894.

*The Sports Marketing Newsletter*, 1771 Post Road East, Suite 180, Westport, CT 06880. (203) 255-1787.

### Books

Allen, Sylvia. *How to Be Successful at Sponsorship Sales*. Available through Allen Consulting, (732) 946-2711.

Association of National Advertisers. *Event Marketing: A Management Guide*.

Ernst & Young. *The Complete Guide to Special Event Management*. John Wiley and Sons, Inc.

Schreiber, Alfred. *Lifestyle and Event Marketing*. McGraw-Hill.

### Executive Director

The Historic Salisbury (N.C.) Foundation, a 26-year-old historic preservation organization, is seeking an executive director. Candidates must have three years' minimum experience in preservation advocacy and leadership, revolving funds management, fund raising (both direct solicitations and grants), and property management (the foundation owns two historic museums, a community events center, and rental properties). The director supervises four full-time staff members and works with an active board and volunteers. Those interested should submit a resume, three references, and salary requirements by October 31, 1998 to: Patricia Rickard, Search Committee, Historic Salisbury Foundation, Box 4221, Salisbury, NC 28144.

### Economic Development Specialist

Lower Merion, Pa., (pop. 60,000) an affluent, first-ring suburb of Philadelphia, is seeking an experienced professional to plan and implement business enhancement programs for six distinct commercial districts, based on

local resources, needs, goals, and market opportunities. Position requires degree in urban planning, economic development, or a related field, and experience in the development of older commercial districts. Advanced degree/certification preferred. Must also have strong communication, interpersonal, presentation, planning, and computer skills. Salary DOE, plus excellent benefits. Position open until filled. EOE/M/F/H/V. Send resume to: Township Manager, 75 E. Lancaster Avenue, Ardmore, PA 19003

*Job announcements should not exceed 150 words and should be mailed or faxed to the editor of Main Street News by the 5th of the month for the next month's issue (i.e., November 5th for December issue). Mail to Editor, Main Street News, National Main Street Center, 1785 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, DC 20036 or fax to (202) 588-6050.*

## Main Street News

Main Street News is published 11 times a year as a benefit of membership in the National Main Street Network, an organizational membership program of the National Main Street Center®, National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1785 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20036. Tel: 202/588-6219  
Fax: 202/588-6050  
E-mail: [mainst@nthp.org](mailto:mainst@nthp.org)  
Website: <http://www.mainst.org>  
Annual dues are \$195.  
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### Richard Moe

President  
National Trust for Historic Preservation

### Peter Brink

Vice President  
Programs, Services & Information

### Kennedy Lawson Smith

Director  
National Main Street Center

### Doug Loescher

Assistant Director  
National Main Street Center

### R. McDuffie Nichols

Senior Program Manager  
Special Projects, NMSC

### Stephanie Redman

Program Manager  
Technical Services, NMSC

### Linda Glisson

Editor  
Main Street News

### Amanda West

Senior Program Associate  
Information Resources, NMSC

### Bill McLeod

Program Assistant  
Information Resources, NMSC

### Stephen Hsieh

Program Assistant  
Information Resources, NMSC

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 Main Street Center®, a program of the National Trust, provides technical assistance in downtown and neighborhood commercial district revitalization to communities throughout the nation.



## DIRECTOR'S COLUMN

### Paradigm Lost

I met a community development guy at a conference recently who told me that he thought the reason so many communities let developers build new malls and discount stores is that it's just too hard to revitalize an existing main street. It's easier, he said, to just start from scratch.

HELLO? Is this the state of community development these days? Like, does this guy think that if communities just ignore their main streets and build malls and discount centers to take their place, they'll just pack up their buildings and head out of town or something?

I think this weird paradigm under which some of these wacko community development folks are operating has something to do with having a *property* development, not a *community* development, orientation.

It's no wonder they think like this, since the federal government has focused so heavily on property development programs for so long, although it has consistently called them "community development" programs. In the 1950s and '60s, for example, the federal government gave our communities lots of "urban renewal" money — money which, basically, paid for the

demolition of tens of thousands of historic buildings, but which didn't do much to renew communities. In the 1960s and '70s, the feds gave us a whole slew of programs that made it easier for developers to finance shopping mall construction. The "accelerated depreciation" tax benefit, for example, meant that mall developers could write off a huge chunk of the value of their malls over the course of just a few years and offset what would otherwise be tax liability on income earned from other sources (like, say, their day jobs). It stimulated the development of malls in communities, but I wouldn't exactly call that "community development."

"Community development" has, unfortunately, become more a term of convenience than a term that reflects what one might think the term implies. Nowhere is the danger inherent in this (mis)interpretation more obvious than in the revitalization of main street districts, where investing too much money in property development before businesses have figured out how to increase their sales can drive up the rent structure beyond their reach.

The hardest work in revitalizing a commercial district isn't necessarily

the property development (although it, of course, has its challenges) — it's coaxing the district into a higher level of economic performance, which can in turn support higher rent levels, which in turn supports the redevelopment of the district's buildings (or the development of new ones, if the district is in the enviable position of complete occupancy and needs more space). But very few federal, state, or local *community* development programs recognize this sequence and, instead, offer financing and financial incentives right at the point where they're likely to do the most harm.

One would think that *community* development would take into account all the factors that make up a community's viability — which is certainly more than just the buildings. If we're going to call it *community development*, let's dump the old paradigm and make sure that the program really fits the phrase.



**Kennedy Smith, Director  
National Main Street Center**

## In Memory Of

### Sheri Gordon, Perkins, Oklahoma

The first time I met Sheri Gordon, it was obvious she was going to be a good program manager. She just had that "it" factor: an inherent talent for and understanding of Main Street that promised great things from her in the near future.

What wasn't so apparent at first, but what I quickly came to know, was what an impact Sheri already had — and still has — in her community of Perkins, Okla. Long before her title of Main Street program manager came along, Sheri served on her local school board, was a leader in the local educational foundation, and was an integral part of the life of Perkins. Her quiet nature was coupled with strength, depth, and dedication.

Though Sheri is gone, the victim of a tragic car accident, her influence remains. In the days following Sheri's death, her board chairman wrote a letter to her Main Street friends. In that letter, he promised, "We fully intend to make Sheri's dreams (for Main Street) come true." So, for years to come, Sheri Gordon will still be making a difference. That's the way she'd want it. — Beverly White, Woodward, Okla., and NMSC

### Michael LaDouceur, Egleston Square, Boston Main Streets

Mike LaDouceur, program manager for Egleston Square Main Streets in Boston, died of a heart attack in September, three weeks shy of his fortieth birthday. His sudden death was a loss to numerous communities, most profoundly to the Egleston neighborhood where he had lived for many years. Although he was trained as a lawyer, Mike's focus was primarily on social change and justice. He was a community activist in addition to working for the Main Streets program and had recently run for state representative. He was also involved in work with the homeless and with his local church.

"Mike was one of those people you call when you feel most discouraged about your district," noted one of his colleagues. "He was always sympathetic and supportive, and he was an inspiring, yet very humble, role model of someone devoted to revitalization over the long haul. He was one of the quiet people in life who make a difference."

The annual "Hands Around Egleston" festival will be dedicated to his memory.

— Jennifer Rose, Allston Village Main Streets

# Safer Main Streets: Reducing Real and Perceived Crime in Your Commercial District

*What are the most successful and cost-effective techniques for controlling crime?*

*How do you deal with persistent negative public impressions?*

*Who must be involved to solve the crime issue?*

These questions have become increasingly important issues to managers in both small-town downtowns and large-city commercial districts. As you focus on improving main street's image as a center for shopping and community life, the increasingly negative effect of crime statistics, street people, and vacant buildings work to undermine the positive downtown you have strived to build. This innovative two-day workshop uses the streets of Philadelphia as a learning laboratory for effective crime prevention strategies that are ideal for both revitalization professionals and municipal leaders.

The lead faculty are Stacy Irving, Crime Prevention Services Director and Paul Levy, Executive Director of Philadelphia's Center City District. Presenters will include such noted authorities as Jack Greene, Dept. Of Criminal Justice, Temple University; Thomas Seamon, Vice President, University of Pennsylvania Police Department and former Deputy Police Commissioner Philadelphia Police Department; Robert Teir, Esquire, Center for Livable Cities; Bill Hughes, Director, Community Service Representatives; Rob Rabena, Vice President, SpectraGuard and a Police and Crime Reporter, *Philadelphia Inquirer/Daily News*.

These experts will offer information and insight on the following topics:

## **Wednesday, November 4, 1998**

*Making Main Streets Safe, Clean and Attractive*

*Identifying Crime and Safety Issues*

*Partnerships in Crime Prevention*

*Preventing Retail Crime*

## **Thursday, November 5, 1998**

*Managing the Public Environment Through Ordinances*

*Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design*

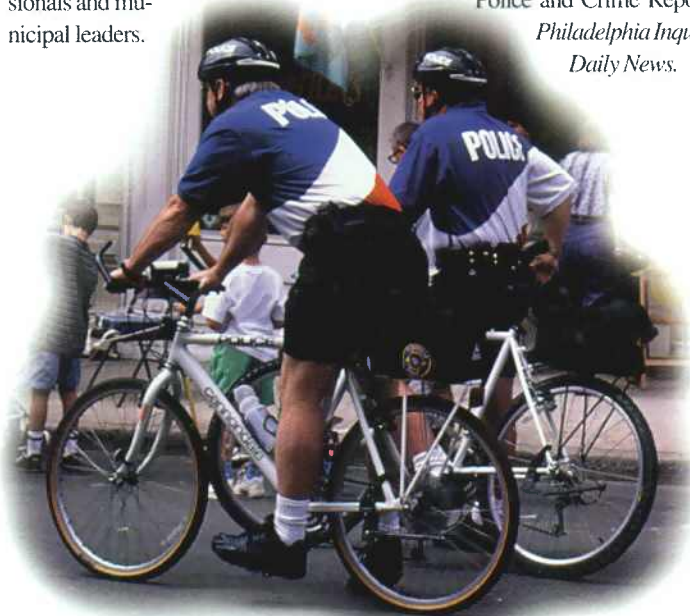
*CCTV and Security Technology Safety Teams (Panel of Public and Private Citizens)*

*Media Relations and Crime Prevention*

*Strategies for Promoting Safer Main Streets*

The registration fee is \$195.00 (members)/\$260.00 (non-members). Lodging reservations can be made at the Clarion Suites in downtown Philadelphia (seminar site) by calling (215) 922-1730.

LINDA GLISSON



## Calendar of Events

*Oct. 8-9, 1998*  
Tennessee Main Street Association, Annual Conference, Franklin, Tenn.  
(615) 591-9091

*Oct. 8-9, 1998*  
**NMSC, Revitalizing Main Street**  
Roanoke, Va.  
(202) 588-6219

*Oct. 12-14, 1998*  
Scenic Byways Coalition,  
America's Scenic Byways '98  
Monterey, Calif.  
(202) 682-9530

*Oct. 15, 1998*  
California Main Street, Revitalizing Main Street, Fresno, Calif.  
(916) 322-3536

*Oct. 15-16, 1998*  
**NMSC, Advanced Fund Raising**  
Washington, D.C.  
(202) 588-6219

*Oct. 19-21, 1998*  
S.C. Downtown Development Association,  
Lovable Communities Conference,  
Charleston, S.C.  
(803) 933-1231

*Oct. 20-25, 1998*  
**NTHP, 52nd National Preservation Conference**, Savannah, Ga.  
(202) 588-6100

*Oct. 29-30, 1998*  
**NMSC, Main Street Study Tour**  
Georgetown, Tex.  
(202) 588-6140

*Nov. 4-5, 1998*  
**NMSC, Safer Main Streets**  
Philadelphia, Pa.  
(202) 588-6219

*Nov. 5-7, 1998*  
Maryland Downtown Development Association, Annual Conference  
Annapolis, Md.  
(410) 514-7264

*Nov. 12-13, 1998*  
Great American Main Street Showcase  
Illinois Main Street, St. Charles, Ill.  
(217) 557-1274

*Nov. 12-14, 1998*  
Waterfront Center, Urban Waterfronts 16  
Toronto, Canada  
(202) 337-0356

*Feb. 8-12, 1998*  
**NMSC, Certification Institute in Professional Downtown Management™**  
Washington, DC  
(202) 588-6140

\*Calendar entries of state, regional, and national interest may be submitted in writing by the 1st 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

National Trust for Historic Preservation  
1785 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20036

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## The Role of the Main Street Executive Director

The executive director of a Main Street program is the central coordinator of the organization's activities. The director oversees the program's daily operations, provides the hands-on involvement critical to success, and serves as liaison for all the committees, ensuring that activities in all four points are synchronized. Like a shopping mall manager, the director initiates and coordinates a wide range of projects, from supervising promotional activities to assembling market information. Most important, though, is the director's role as a full-time advocate for the downtown and as an authority and single source for information, resources, and activities related to the revitalization initiative.

As is true of the board's responsibilities, the director's duties evolve as the program's goals and opportunities change, but two characteristics remain constant: the director is a full-time coordinator whose only focus is the downtown or commercial district.

### The Director's Broad Tasks

The tasks of a Main Street director are many, but limitations should be set on what the components of the position are. In broad terms, the following are the tasks of the Main Street director:

- **Develop downtown strategies based on the Main Street Approach with the board of directors.** Identify and use the community's human and economic resources, partners and interest groups that are directly or indirectly involved with the commercial district. *Assist* the board of directors and committees in developing a work plan based on program goals and objectives and the Main Street Four Point Approach, then *assist* the board and committees in implementing that plan.
- **Coordinate activities of the Main Street committees.** Ensure that communication between committees is constant, and *assist* committees with implementation of work plan activities.

- **Manage the administration of the Main Street organization.** This responsibility includes purchasing, record keeping, budgeting, and personnel supervision. Preparing reports to state and national programs, and assisting in reports to funding agencies.

- **Develop and conduct ongoing public awareness and education programs** designed to create appreciation and awareness of the downtown district and its architecture, and to foster awareness and understanding of the Main Street program's goals and objectives.

- **Assess and develop capacity of downtown businesses, institutions and groups to carry out joint improvement activities,** such as uniform store hours, good business practices, promotional events, advertising campaigns, parking management, and business recruitment. Provide advice and information about successful downtown management. Encourage development of a cooperative climate between downtown interests and local public officials.

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- **Help build strong, productive working relationships with and between partners**, such as local and state public agencies, chambers of commerce, merchants associations, schools, local nonprofits, civic groups, the media and others.

- **Develop and maintain systems to track the progress of the Main Street program.** To prove the economic and intangible success of the initiative, meticulous records must be kept on rental rates, dollars invested by building owners and the city, and the number of jobs and businesses created. Photographic documentation of all physical changes downtown is essential as well.

### The Director and Volunteers

Full-time program management is essential to a successful revitalization program. Keep in mind, however, that the director cannot — and should not — take the place of volunteers in the organization. Main Street programs rely on the mobilization of an army of volunteers from all parts of the community. Thus, the director's major role is to expand and develop volunteer capacity and ensure that committee activity is moving smoothly. The director should serve as a facilitator, coordinating people and resources, to help volunteers work efficiently and productively. 🦸

*By Amanda B. West, with material from The Board Members Handbook*

JAMES L. BALLARD

## The Director's Skills

Skills — as opposed to *qualifications*, such as experience and education — are the intangible assets of a director. They can be acquired from past experiences, or may simply be the individual's natural talents. Past educational and job experiences are important to the performance of a director, but the following skills are tools the director will use everyday:

- **Self-Initiative** — being able to work in independent situations. Directing a Main Street organization can be a self-starter's dream, but in some cases, the director may be left hanging to make decisions or initiate activity if the board is lax or focusing on other activities. The director must be capable of and comfortable working independently.

- **Diplomacy** — being able to work well with a wide variety of people and situations. Directors will always have to deal with cranky business owners, territorial chambers, pompous mayors, pessimistic bankers, absentee landlords, and clueless volunteers, even in the best, most successful Main Street programs. These are the players in the field of downtown revitalization, so diplomacy and careful long-term relationship building will always be necessary.

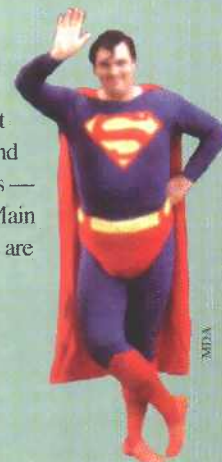
- **Communication** — being skilled in verbal and written communication. As a central figurehead for the Main Street program, directors will be approached by everyone for information and answers. Developing relationships with individuals is the key to success. Presentations to groups are essential to disseminate information and clear up misconceptions about program goals. Writing proposals, newsletter articles, press releases, and annual reports are equally vital. Fortunately, communication skills can be learned, developed, and improved upon through formal and informal training and practice.

- **Flexibility** — being able to adapt to different situations. This is one of the most important skills a director needs: he or she may be blowing up balloons for an event in the morning and meeting with a banker about an incentive program in the afternoon. Schedules and project goals have a tendency to shift, so going with the flow will cause a lot less stress and a lot more productivity if the director can respond to changing situations. Dealing with a huge variety of tasks and situations is a hallmark of being a Main Street director, so inflexible persons who dislike change need not apply.

- **Organization** — being able to coordinate many projects and people. Going hand-in-hand with flexibility, organization is paramount. That doesn't mean your desk has to be clean, but juggling multiple projects, deadlines, people, and activities means you've got to keep on top of things, and keep tasks moving along in order to accomplish goals. Remember, the director's job is not to do all the activities in a work plan, but make sure they get done.

- **Confidence** — being able to "stick to your guns." The director must be capable of moving forward in thought, word, and deed without hesitating or seeking to be liked by everyone. Main Street directors will face many situations in which they may be in the minority: while presenting new ideas, for example, approaching naysayers, or working on an unpopular project. Although the director's activities should always have the backing of the board, uncomfortable situations will arise and the director must be able to deal with them.

- **Being Superman or Wonder Woman** — Not really, of course, but Main Street directors sometimes feel they should be wearing a big "S" on their chests. Many boards will openly expect the director to wear it as part of the job, and, at times, he or she may have to. The pressure to be everything to everyone and complete every task oneself will be great and will come from many directions — from the board, from business owners, and from the public. The successful Main Street director will resist the temptation, and delegate — that's what volunteers are there for. Remember, one gains power by actually giving it away.



## Cities Back from the Edge - New Life for Downtown

*Roberta Brandes Gratz with  
Norman Mintz*

Preservation Press,  
John Wiley & Sons, 1998  
360 pages, index  
ISBN-0-471-14417-7

"It's about time!" For years I have read articles and publications touting the rebirth of America's cities and downtowns and yet did not get the sense that the writers had a clue about why certain cities have been successful while others still spend lots of money for little results. Finally, two people who understand the real problems, issues, and needs of downtowns — Roberta Brandes Gratz, author of *The Living City*, and Norman Mintz, from New York City's Grand Central Partnership and a pioneer in the Main Street movement—have combined to produce a "must read" volume on the underlying reasons for downtown's initial decline and what it takes to bring cities back.

The book begins with an all-too-familiar story of downtown Mansfield, Ohio, and its decline. The descriptions of the ills of this city's downtown could have been written about hundreds of cities. The innovative renewal of Mansfield's downtown offers object lessons about innovation, volunteers, and the incremental nature of revitalization. From this case study, the authors shed light on national trends and policies.

From transportation planning, America's love affair with the "Big Project," sprawl, and pedestrian-oriented urban spaces, Gratz and Mintz explain the causes and effects of decades of decisions about urban development. Their message is clear —

people, and the market, prefer authentic places that are designed on a human scale. Transportation, development, and land-use policy should be developed to support the growth of civic, and civil, spaces. Using examples ranging from major urban centers to small, rural Main Streets, the authors show that there is no specific "answer" to the problem, no formula. Instead, they demonstrate how local citizens working together can achieve what the "experts" designing the "big fix" cannot.

Although the authors engage in interesting philosophical arguments, don't think them impractical. The book acknowledges the role of a competitive marketplace. Gratz and Mintz examine the impact discount mega-stores have had on downtowns and the development of our cities. They also provide examples where smart business people have incorporated the unique qualities of downtown into their business concepts and met with success.

I often hear downtown revitalization directors asking for "good arguments" for downtown. Well, look no further. This book has plenty of arguments, anecdotes and some sound, common-sense philosophy. Inspirational as well as practical, the book gives heart and vision, as well as practical examples, to those laboring in downtown. It has information for the downtown practitioner as well as local officials and citizens. Here's a suggestion—get two copies of *Cities Back from the Edge*. One for yourself and one for a key community leader or decision maker (Mayor, councilmember, planner, editor, or banker). You'll be inspired and he/she may be converted. ✨

—Reviewed by R. McDuffie Nichols,  
senior program manager, NMSC

