

Main Street Memo



Brought to you by the Organization Committee

Vol. 2 , No. 6

Calendar

March 8: DOT Bypass Signage presentations (12pm, Old Fort Players and 5pm, Alpha's)

March 10: Promotions Committee meeting, 6:15pm, Fort Madison Partners

March 12: Get a Green Thumb! Gardening Workshop, Session 2, 10am-12pm, Public Library

March 14: 4th of July meeting, 12pm, Fort Madison Partners

March 15: Business Improvement Committee meeting, 5:30pm, Ivy Bake Shoppe & City Council, 7pm

March 17: Happy St. Patrick's Day May the luck of the Irish be with you today.

March 19: Get a Green Thumb! Gardening Workshop, Session 3, 10am-12pm, Public Library

March 21: Organization Committee, 8am, Ivy Bake Shoppe

March 26: Get a Green Thumb! Gardening Workshop, Session 4, 10am-12pm, Public Library

March 28: Design Committee, 6pm, FMAAA

April 1: 3/50 Project Campaign Kick-Off & Iowa Main Street Awards in Des Moines

Annual Meeting Report

A big thank you to the Moose Lodge who hosted our Annual Meeting on February 26th. We had a great turn out and appreciate all of the support and hard work by our volunteers and community members. Everyone participated in the Pipe Cleaner Competition, providing very imaginative and hilarious creations. Congratulations to the winner of our fabulous Las Vegas Vacation raffle, Dr. Christopher & Sarah Youngman! Also announced that evening was Fort Madison Partners' (FMP) new Executive Director, Tim Gobble. Please help us welcome Tim during his transition into the FMP family!

New Board Member

We look forward to having Maggie Abolt "on Board" as she will bring her passion and knowledge of historic preservation to our effort. Welcome, Maggie!

Snowed Out

Mother Nature really dealt us more than our fair share of the white stuff the first week of February. In spite of close to 20 inches of snow, our Main Street merchants did well at keeping a clear path in front of the shops and our overloaded city snowplows took good care of downtown Fort Madison. If March brings us a late winter storm, please remember to keep all pathways clear and salted. Fingers crossed for no more record breaking snowfalls or blizzards, one is enough for this year.

March is Spring Break Month!

The Promotions Committee is bringing the fun of Spring Break downtown for March! Help us decorate as we all get ready for the much anticipated Spring after a long winter. It's time to bring out those beach balls, umbrellas, and other "Spring Break" themed decorations to your windows. While we're asking all downtown businesses to participate during the entire month of March, we are especially encouraging participation during the week of March 21st. You never know who may bust out the Hawaiian shirts and flip-flops!

Main Street & the Fort Madison Area Arts Association (FMAAA) are partnering again in 2011 to plan Artssippi with co-operation from Nauvoo, from May 28-June 4th. If you'd like to be a participating location, please contact Mary soon!

Did you know?

That Main Street volunteers devoted approximately 6,000 hours to our local program in 2010? That's \$125,100 according to the national valued average, as announced in 2010!



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Landscaping & Grant Update

The Design Committee is gearing up to work on landscaping downtown! We'll try to keep everyone updated on the progress, and hope to have some changes in effect as early as April but we need your help! We like to remind ourselves that many hands make little work! Please contact Mike Brockman if you would like to join our downtown efforts.

The CDBG Downtown Revitalization grant application is underway and will be turned into the State of Iowa this month. Cross your fingers for this large grant to help renovate over a dozen facades downtown using federal funds!

Small Business Assistance

The Business Improvement Committee has been busy working at tabulating consumer and zip code surveys and has some interesting data. A separate handout is available with this information. If you have not received it, please contact Committee Chair, Kathy Greenwald, or Mary Ottoson. If you would like to arrange a strictly confidential conversation with Main Street Iowa staff concerning succession planning, or know someone that would like to start a business and has some questions, please know that the Business Improvement Committee is here to help!

Upcoming Events

The Organization Committee meets the first and third Monday of each month at 8am at The Ivy Bake Shoppe and Café. We invite you attend and participate in our committee. We are currently working on details for the *Main Street BBQ, Annual Pledge Drive, 4th of July* weekend activities, as well as *Steppin' Up for Main Street*, which will take place on Nov.5th this year. We have positions open for Ticket Takers, Sign Putter-Uppers, Home Helpers, PR Coordinator and more. We need your help and hope you can spare us a few hours to help insure the continued success of our local Main Street program.

Main Street Coffee Talk

Stop by for a cup of java and a bit of Main Street chat Thursday, April 7, 8AM at The Ivy. We've revived our old first Thursday morning get-togethers for downtown merchants and anyone else who would like to attend as well. No reservations required, leave the tux at home, we'd probably even let you join us in your bunny slippers!

Farmer's Market

Farmer's Market will move to Central Park this coming season. Opening Day is June 2nd and will run through September 29, 2011. The Market will be held on Thursdays from 4:30pm-6:30pm. We're expecting more vendors than we had last year, but we could always use more! Please help spread the word that we are looking for produce vendors, and also volunteers at help manage the markets. If you can help, please let us know.

Fort Madison Main Street Board of Directors

Charlie Scoville, *President*
 Bob Reding, *Vice President*
 Ryan Nagrocki, *Treasurer*
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Maggie Abolt
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Fort Madison Main Street Business Improvement Committee Survey Results

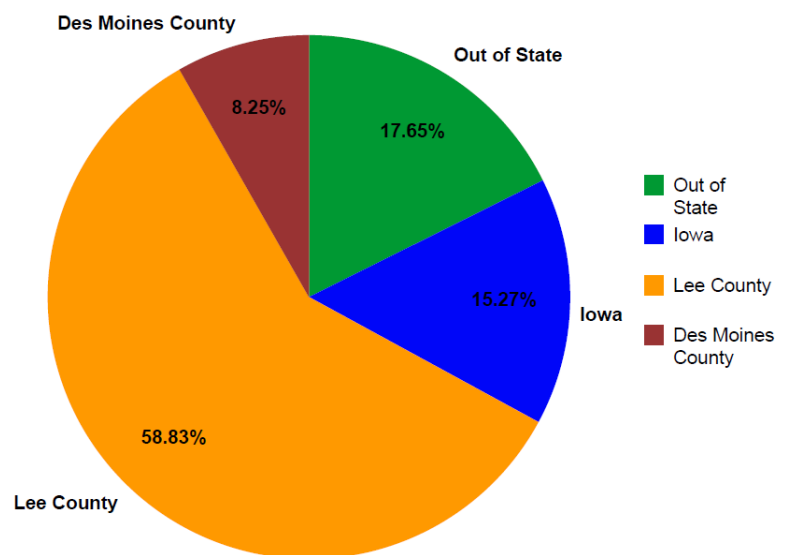
The Main St. Business Improvement Committee has tabulated the results from the Consumer Survey and also the Zip Code Survey. First of all, I want to thank all the participating businesses for their help with both these surveys. Without your help in collecting data there would be no surveys and we would be left in the dark as how to proceed with Main Street improvements.

The highlights from the Consumer Survey:

- 85% of respondents were from Ft. Madison
- 79% of respondents have lived in their homes more than 5 years.
- 40% of respondents come downtown for errands 1-2 times per week.
- 33% of respondents come downtown to restaurants 1-2 times per week.
- As far as new businesses that are desired: The majority wanted a new evening restaurant and the second most popular response was to bring in a clothing store or department store.
- When asked what level of priority of importance should be placed on certain revitalization efforts, 85% put a high priority on expanding and recruiting businesses followed by 48% wanting entertainment-oriented businesses/attractions. The least important priority was creating more housing with a low priority of 49%.
- When asked "what is the first thing that should be done to improve downtown," the majority of respondents indicated that the storefronts and sidewalks should be repaired/cleaned and kept in better repair.

Highlights of the Zip Code Survey:

- There were a total of 3,490 responses from 17 businesses.
- 17.6% were from out of state with 12.2% of those being from Illinois.
- 15.2% were from outlying Iowa counties with only 8.25% being from Des Moines County.
- The numbers of zip codes recorded the day of the Wine Walk and the Friday after Thanksgiving were very high, but the Saturday after Thanksgiving the numbers dropped dramatically.
- The first two weeks of December had the highest number of zip codes collected (1,342), but the numbers dropped significantly for the last two weeks (1,039 in 16 days).



It should be noted that an uncontrolled factor was that not every business in the district participated. If they had, the results could have been quite different. While the study is not complete, it does help to provide Main Street with a picture of how our businesses were frequented during the 2010 holiday season.

One factor which is evident from both the Consumer Survey and the Zip Code Survey is that we are not getting a substantial number of customers from Des Moines County. Actually, not one person from Des Moines County filled out the Consumer Survey. This would indicate to me that a strong effort should be made, perhaps as a district, to recruit customers from that area. If you would have any questions concerning either the Consumer Survey or the Zip Code Survey, you can contact Mary Ottoson 372-5482 or myself, Kathy Greenwald, at 372-5550.