

THE MAIN THING

EVENT ADAPTATIONS

Vol. 3



COLORADO
Department of Local Affairs
Division of Local Government





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INNOVATIVE MAIN STREET RESPONSES TO COVID

Main Street organizations have an essential role to play in supporting their downtowns during this difficult period. One of their many roles is to figure out new ways to hold fun, socially distant events and experiences downtown that are safe and responsible.

About the Main Thing:

During these times, we've found that focus can sometimes be tough to come by. The Main Thing is a collection of resources compiled by Colorado Main Street to highlight innovations, give a thumbs-up to local practitioners, and encourage the spread of positive news. Watch for regular editions featuring new topics throughout the summer.

This issue of the Main Thing highlights several innovative examples of how Colorado Main Street communities are adapting their events to meet public health guidelines, leveraging technology to keep community members connected, and encouraging residents and visitors to safely and responsibly get out and explore downtown.

More than ever during this pandemic, we continue to be inspired by our Main Street programs' ingenuity and creativity. The programs and events being implemented are exactly what our communities need to keep spirits lifted.



OLD EVENTS IN NEW TIMES

HUGO

To combat some of the negative feelings arising during an ongoing pandemic, Hugo Main Street joined forces with several partners to organize a community mural project that would bring people together in a creative and safe way. The event was held at The Garage, a Main Street redevelopment project, where community members were invited to contribute to a large paint-by-number mural of a giraffe. Hugo Main Street chose a giraffe for its ability to appeal to a wide range of ages, sexes, genders, and political and religious affiliations. The vision was to utilize visual arts to move beyond differences and create a space for community connections to grow. More than 100 participants helped paint the mural. As participants waited for their turn to paint, they were encouraged to support local artisans and vendors at an outdoor market that offered different types of crafts, ceramics, interior décor, and food items. The booths were spaced 8-feet apart and shoppers were asked to wear masks and practice safe physical distancing. The day ended with Hugo's annual "Dueling Pianos" concert that was staged outside The Garage. Tables were pre-arranged and appropriately distanced, and space was allocated in the driveway to allow people to set up their lawn chairs. The concert raised approximately \$2000, with 50% of the proceeds going towards rehabbing The Garage and 50% going to the "Paint the Plains" project sponsored by the Colorado Prairie Art and Music Council. This event is just one example of how Hugo Main Street is helping elevate community cohesion during this incredibly challenging time.



MEEKER

Every summer, Meeker holds several events to draw people to experience its downtown. The events have historically been held separately with varying degrees of success. This year, the Chamber decided to pull the individual events together into a larger event- Meekerpalooza- that allowed for combined marketing for a broader reach. The approach has proven successful on four separate occasions, attracting more than 500 people to experience Meeker's Farmers Market, downtown park concert series, and its famous cornhole & pickle ball tournaments. Combining the events not only generated more interest and support from diverse audiences, but it also resulted in increased sales for the vendors.

With the primary goal of keeping the Meeker community safe and healthy, the Meeker Chamber implemented several safety and social distancing measures that are worth mentioning:

- The Chamber painted 6-foot circles in the lawn to provide visual cues for concert goers.
- The market vendor booths were spaced apart and moved away from the sidewalk to allow for distancing.
- A "Take-Out Station" booth was created where people could order their food from a restaurant and have it delivered to the booth at the event for pick up. They then could enjoy their meal on the lawn.

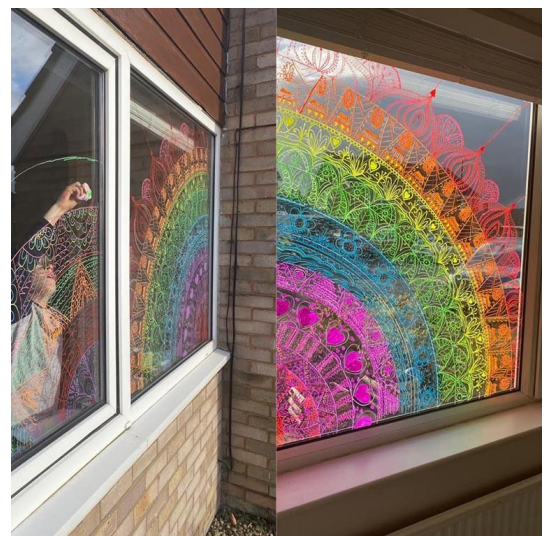
While the event brought together a larger crowd, Meeker was able to adhere to the county's public health gathering guidelines by increasing the physical space of the event which allowed for safe social interaction and commercial activity.

CREATING SOMETHING NEW



WELLINGTON

Wellington Main Street launched an exciting social media contest: the #WellingtonStrong window decorating contest. The contest ran the month of June where participants were encouraged to decorate car windows, house windows, and business windows and submit their photos with the hashtag #WellingtonStrong on social media for a chance to win a \$25 gift card to the downtown business of their choice. Four businesses and six residents amplified their windows with beautiful colors and designs. The contest was a fun way to keep positivity and creativity flowing, bring people into the downtown individually or as families, and spread that message that we are all in this together and will come out stronger.





GOING VIRTUAL

LEADVILLE

The "Share the Love" online auction was a project arising from an auction originally planned for the Lake County School District's Arts Program. The real heroes of the program were two small business owners and arts program supporters who began planning for the auction before the public health orders went into effect. They quickly pivoted to a more inclusive model and helped recruit more partners to the process.

Leadville Main Street shared the costs of running the auction, promoted the event, and provided staff to help keep the auction website updated with items available for bid throughout the auction window. Local Leadville businesses sold more than \$35,000 worth of products and services with an additional \$11,000 raised for COVID relief efforts and the school district's art department.

TRINIDAD

Every Friday night, Trinidad Historic Main Street leverages the power of Facebook to host a "Cash Mob" event for local downtown businesses. These virtual events help local businesses move inventory to would-be shoppers despite the pandemic. Each participating merchant is asked to highlight 50-60 items they would like to sell. The event occurs at the location of the business, where the store owner walks through the store and shows the live online audience the items available for purchase. A few businesses have also hosted local artists and their artwork. To date, six events have occurred and each has been widely successful. As a bonus, the Cash Mobs have provided residents an opportunity to meet individual store owners, provided artists a platform and space to showcase their work, and given more exposure to downtown businesses and their inventory. Each Cash Mob has generated more than \$1000.





FRONT PORCH FRIDAY

FACEBOOK LIVE @ OWL CANYON

APRIL 24
10 AM

JOIN US
LIVE & GET
A COUPON
CODE!

WELLINGTON

Wellington's Front Porch Friday events have been gaining steam and popularity the past few summers. The events have helped draw visitors and shoppers to town to experience locally made products. When COVID hit, Wellington Main Street decided to transition the event to a monthly Facebook Live event. This adaptation has helped several downtown businesses keep their doors open. The first Live event was held at Owl Café where a barista performed a latte art demonstration for the live audience. Participants were asked to comment in the message box to receive a coupon (#frontporch) for \$1 off any beverage purchase. 124 people posted in the chat box resulting in 124 coupons, and 34 coupons have already been used.

The event also provided the owners of Owl Café the opportunity to talk about their fundraiser. The two owners wanted to give back to the Wellington business community and raise money for local businesses struggling during the pandemic. #WellingtonStrong T-Shirts were printed and sold for the cause and approximately \$1000 was raised. This event was a great example of private and public entities joining forces for the greater good of the community.

