



COLORADO MAIN★STREET

MAIN STREET, REFRESHED

By the Main Street Team

THE BEST OF THE MAIN STREET NOW CONFERENCE

By Main Street Community Attendees

RIDGWAY ROCKS

By Mayor John Clark, Ridgway

THE PEOPLE'S STAGE

By Emily Katsimpalis, Buena Vista

PROGRAM UPDATES: WELCOME NEW COMMUNITIES | REPORTING REVAMP

By the Main Street Team | Tracy Barnett & Shawna Hodge, Consultants



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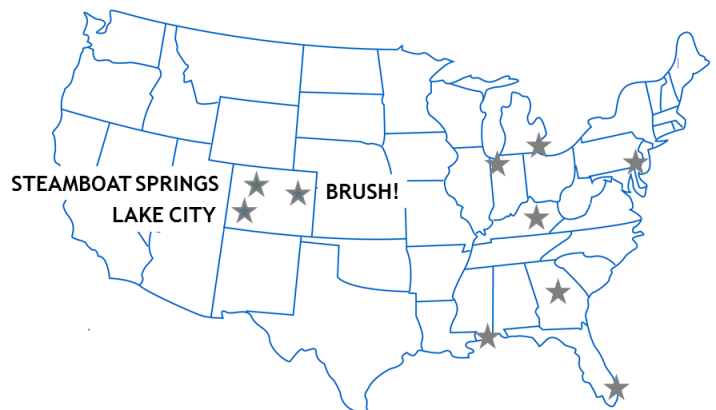
BY THE MAIN STREET TEAM

You may have noticed the Colorado Main Street newsletter has a fresh new look - but that's not the only thing being refreshed about the program! To help Main Street communities thrive now and in the future, the National Main Street Center is launching a refreshed approach. It's designed to better meet the challenges and embrace the opportunities of today's community development landscape, while staying true to and building on the strength of the proven Main Street Approach.

The National Main Street Center describes the refresh as "a more outcome-driven, strategy-focused approach to preservation-based revitalization." As part of this, Main Street communities will organize their efforts around transformation strategies, refine their community engagement techniques, and report their progress on meaningful success indicators. The refreshed approach, explains the National Main Street Center, "is not a drastic reshaping of the principles of Main Street, but a natural evolution of the framework."

Brush!, Lake City, and Steamboat Springs are playing a crucial and unique role in the launch of the refreshed Main Street Approach. Along with seven other communities across the country, these Colorado Main Streets are participating in a pilot project as "learning labs" to test and refine the approach on the ground before it's rolled out nationwide. Unlike their other demonstration site counterparts, these three communities are bringing an invaluable rural western perspective to the project, helping to shape the next generation of Main Street to ensure it works for communities of all kinds.

So far, participating communities have selected their transformation strategies, and based on these, have drafted work plans including key measurements. Next, they'll begin implementing those work plans and tracking their progress on the identified success indicators. This fall, staff from the National Main Street Center and the state program will be visiting the three Colorado pilot sites to check in on communities' experience with the refreshed approach and learn how they can adjust it to work for all other Main Street communities. The refreshed approach is expected to be rolled out nationwide early next year. In the meantime, state program staff will be working with Main Street communities and offering assistance to help them adapt to the refreshed approach. To learn more, see Main Street Refresh Pilot Project in Colorado Webinars 1 and 2 here: <http://bit.ly/2ayT8WS> and look for Webinars 3 and 4 Sept. 15 and Dec. 8 from noon-1pm.



Colorado Main Street communities were out in full force during the Main Street Now 2016 Conference in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Attendees from 13 Colorado Main Street communities participated in this National Main Street Center annual event, and as part of their scholarships they shared their favorite lessons learned. Here are some highlights from the conference.

ORGANIZATION

To succeed as a Main Street Manager, be an optimist, know all there is to know about downtown, be an expert, be a historic storyteller, and be a tour guide.

There are three types of volunteers: starters, finishers, and one-time eventers. Try to identify and remember who is in which category to maximize mutual satisfaction.

When attending a conference, remember: don't get overwhelmed, have a backup plan, and wear comfortable shoes!

PROMOTION

Branding is like picking an outfit for the rest of your life.

Create and publicize a list of the "Top 10 Selfie Locations" in your community.

At events, have one volunteer who is a "stayer" and one who is a "goer." The stayer remains on-site, and the goer is available to run last-minute errands.

DESIGN

Public art should be fun, interactive, worthy of a nickname, and meant not to build consensus but to begin a conversation.

When beginning to encourage property owners to reinvest, focus on "first wavers": owners who are also users of the building, new owners, local owners, and native sons and daughters.

Engage in authentic placemaking - ask "do your downtown improvements match the community's soul?"

ECONOMIC VITALITY

Get owners to take a closer look at the appeal the front of stores may have or lack, and to ask themselves, "Would I shop here?"

It's Main Street's job to get people to town. It's the job of businesses to pull people in and increase their sales.

Start an entrepreneurship mentoring program utilizing the successful entrepreneurs in your town, start a young entrepreneur program, have an Entrepreneur Hall of Fame to recognize successes.



The Colorado Crew at the Main Street Now conference

The Ridgway Concert Series, which has just completed its 9th year, happens every Thursday in July, from 6 until dark in the heart of our downtown. We strive to bring a diverse lineup of bands, with everything from Americana & Bluegrass to funk, jazz & international styles. In addition to great live music the event features a children's activity area, food vendors, and plenty of local non-profits promoting their activities.

In 2013, Ridgway was chosen for the CU Denver graduate school of architecture's annual Design-Build project to build a performing arts stage in our historic Hartwell Park. The students collaborated with the community on the design, then built the stage themselves in May of that year. The Town was only responsible for the cost of materials.

That stage has been an incredible focal point for the concerts, enabling us to take the series to the next level. Ridgway is a music-loving community, and the crowd loves to dance as well. As a result, the bands never cease to be amazed at the level of engagement of our audience.

The Concert Series is presented by the Town of Ridgway and funded entirely by community sponsors, fundraisers, and donations. Every year there are 2-3 major sponsors who donate \$2500 or more in cash or in-kind services (motels rooms for the bands, advertising, etc.), as well as a dozen or more regular sponsors who donate \$1000 in cash or services. On-site alcohol and merchandise sales also help fund the series. Another major fundraiser happens each May: the Love Your Valley Festival, with microbrew sampling and live music.

Probably the biggest secret to our success comes from our partnership with promoter Rob Miller of Pickin' Productions in Paonia. His skill at finding up-and-coming bands before they get big, and catching well-known bands en route to larger festivals is what enables us to garner the high-quality acts for which we've become known. Another benefit is our collaboration with the local Sherbino Theater, just a couple blocks west of the park. The opening act gets to play a late-night show there, which is an added incentive for them.

The Ridgway Concert Series is the epitome of a truly inclusive community event. It is an outstanding example of the kind of diverse 'happening' that can help a small town build excitement and generate economic vitality in its downtown. Make sure you visit next year for our 10th season!



A stunning sunset provides the backdrop for the Ridgway Concert Series. Photo credit: Mayor John Clark

The Buena Vista (BV) Main Street People's Stage came about as an idea to activate an unkempt, highly visible lot located on our Main Street corridor. Once the owners agreed to let the Main Street group use the lot, the idea to build a stage and host performances and live music arose. The name "People's Stage" was decided upon as a way to advertise that the stage was available to any group that had a desire to play or perform. We saw it is a community space that could serve as place where budding musicians, bands and playwrights had the opportunity to practice their craft.

The town provided funds to support musicians and performers. This was key, since BV Main Street is a Candidate community and has not yet undertaken a fundraising campaign, and mini-grant funds cannot be used to pay for performers. Once the financial support was secured, a list of local musicians and bands came together. Last year, the stage was completed during a Main Street work day. Over 25 Main Street volunteers and their families came out on a Saturday to complete the vacant lot activation. A celebration including a performance by a local band capped off the successful day.

Due to our desire and mission to support Main Street businesses, BV Main Street wanted to be cognizant of the fact that many of our local restaurants and bars downtown host live music on weekend evenings. It was a strategic decision for People's Stage performances to occur Saturday afternoons

from 2-4pm, missing the busy evening hours, while ensuring the downtown stays lively and active during the lull between lunch and dinner.

This year, improvements have been made to the lot, including a large shade tent to protect the audience from the elements. Super volunteers on BV Main Street's Board of Directors have helped make the series a success. Tom Rollings has given many hours of his time to host the bands and performers, greeting the bands, helping them set up, and introducing both the performers and the Main Street program to the audience. Ashley Ahlene has also given her time and skills free of charge to design beautiful posters for each People's Stage performance and update the BV Main Street Facebook page each week. Without these super volunteers, the People's Stage would not be nearly as successful as it is.



The audience enjoys musicians performing at the Buena Vista People's Stage. Photo credit: Scott Anderson

PROGRAM UPDATES

WELCOME NEW COMMUNITIES

BY THE MAIN STREET TEAM

“ WELCOME MEEKER AND WINDSOR, TWO EXCELLENT ADDITIONS TO COLORADO MAIN STREET! ”

The Colorado Main Street team and Advisory Board are excited to welcome two new Candidate communities. The towns of Meeker and Windsor will join the 19 other distinguished Colorado Main Street communities and have access to the technical assistance, training, network and other resources offered by the program.

Meeker and Windsor both submitted strong applications that demonstrated to the Colorado Main Street team and Advisory Board their progress in the four points of organization, promotion, design, and economic vitality; as well as other unique strengths.

Meeker has a strong identity with unique historic resources and other assets that attract tourism. The Colorado Main Street Program will help them build on already significant momentum around developing partnerships and dedicating resources to economic development and historic preservation. Windsor has a clear vision that prioritizes downtown, and has embraced and organized around the Main Street approach. The program will help them continue this existing momentum and complement strong support from the town and a proven capacity to work on downtown revitalization.

REPORTING REVAMP

BY TRACY BARNETT & SHAWNA HODGE, CONSULTANTS

Collecting and reporting key statistics is not only a requirement of the Colorado Main Street Program but also a vital aspect of each community's responsibility to monitor the economic vitality of their downtown. To streamline, simplify and offer tips and tools for this necessary but not-so-fun part of Main Street, we -- two experienced former Main Street managers, Shawna Hodge of McCool Development Solutions and Tracy Barnett -- were brought on board.

We first interviewed, and then trained, all Colorado Main Street communities on the reporting revamp. Through this collaborative process, we were offered invaluable insight that enabled us to create a user-

friendly and implementable Quarterly Reporting Best Practices document and companion Quarterly Statistics Tracking Worksheet. We hope these tools will assist new and seasoned managers to collect consistent data and information and more easily report to the Colorado Main Street Program.

Thank you for taking time from your schedules to share your community's reporting successes and challenges. The new reporting resources can be found on the Colorado Main Street website: <http://bit.ly/2ayT8WS>.



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 **HISTORY** *Colorado*

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