



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Virginia Department of Housing
and Community Development

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- Virginia Main Street celebrates “25 Years of Entrepreneurship and Investment on Virginia’s Historic Main Streets”

Program has helped create more than 4,900 businesses, attracted \$638 million in private investment, and created, retained or expanded more than 14,000 jobs since 1985

Richmond, VA – Since 1985 the Virginia Main Street (VMS) program has worked to strengthen the economic vitality of downtown commercial districts across the Commonwealth of Virginia. Last Thursday at Lynchburg’s Craddock-Terry Hotel more than 100 representatives from VMS designated communities and affiliates gathered to celebrate the program’s 25th anniversary and present the *Virginia Main Street Milestone Achievement Awards*.

The awards were presented by Bill Shelton, director of the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), the agency which administers the VMS program.

“For 25 years the Virginia Main Street program has worked to strengthen the economic vitality of downtown commercial districts in hundreds of communities across Virginia,” said Shelton. “Through Virginia Main Street, these communities received the training and assistance they needed to focus on their unique heritage and attributes, and to develop strategies to create economic growth and community pride in their downtown areas.”

The milestone awards recognize designated VMS communities for excellence in two categories; amount of private investment dollars and number of volunteer hours contributed toward improving downtowns.

This year three additional recognitions were presented as part of the 25th anniversary:

- **Special Achievement in Innovation** - Community Partnership for Revitalization of Rocky Mount and the Town of Rocky Mount
- **Special Achievement Milestone, 500 Downtown Building Improvement Projects** – The Partnership for Warrenton Foundation and the Town of Warrenton, Orange Downtown Alliance, Inc. and the Town of Orange
- **Special Achievement Milestone, 25 Years of Main Street** - Bedford Main Street, Inc. and the City of Bedford, Downtown Franklin Association and the City of Franklin, Winchester Old Town Development Board and the City of Winchester

- more -

The following localities received awards for private investment:

- **\$1 Million in Private Investment**, Downtown Blackstone, Inc. and the Town of Blackstone
- **\$20 Million in Private Investment**, Destination Downtown South Boston and the Town of South Boston
- **\$25 Million in Private Investment**, Marion Downtown Revitalization Association and the Town of Marion
- **\$30 Million in Private Investment**, The Partnership for Warrenton Foundation and the Town of Warrenton
- **\$40 Million in Private Investment**, Culpeper Renaissance, Inc. and the Town of Culpeper
- **\$40 Million in Private Investment**, Harrisonburg Downtown Renaissance and the City of Harrisonburg
- **\$45 Million in Private Investment**, Historic Manassas, Inc. and the City of Manassas
- **\$50 Million in Private Investment**, Staunton Downtown Development Association and the City of Staunton
- **\$85 Million in Private Investment**, Lynch's Landing, Inc. and the City of Lynchburg
- Winchester Old Town Development Board and the City of Winchester

The following localities received awards for volunteerism:

- **1,000 Volunteer Hours**, Advance Abingdon
- **15,000 Volunteer Hours**, Berryville Main Street
- **15,000 Volunteer Hours**, Luray Downtown Initiative, Inc.
- **15,000 Volunteer Hours**, Waynesboro Downtown Development, Inc.
- **40,000 Volunteer Hours**, Historic Manassas, Inc.
- **40,000 Volunteer Hours**, Staunton Downtown Development Association
- **40,000 Volunteer Hours**, The Partnership for Warrenton Foundation
- **45,000 Volunteer Hours**, Bedford Main Street, Inc.
- **55,000 Volunteer Hours**, Harrisonburg Downtown Renaissance
- **80,000 Volunteer Hours**, Lynch's Landing, Inc.

The VMS program, administered by DHCD, uses the National Main Street Center's Main Street Approach™ to help communities revitalize their downtowns, focusing on their unique heritage and attributes. The approach has proven extremely successful in Virginia, with the cumulative private investment in designated communities alone surpassing \$638 million. That correlates to an average of 197 new businesses and 575 new jobs each year—meaningful economic growth.

“In 1985, it was the pioneer spirit that possessed Virginia's first designated communities – including Bedford, Franklin and Winchester – to tap into the strategy,” said Shelton. “This pioneering spirit is alive today, strengthening economies where new entrepreneurs can emerge and promising investment opportunities might arise.”

Currently Virginia Main Street provides assistance to [21 designated Main Street communities](#) and more than 75 DHCD Commercial District Affiliate Communities. For more information about VMS, call (804) 371-7030 or visit the VMS Web page at: www.dhcd.virginia.gov/mainstreet. Follow VMS on their blog: <http://dhcdvms.wordpress.com/>.

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Editor's note: High-resolution photographs and Interviews are available upon request. For additional story ideas and information, contact Hollie Cammarasana at (804) 371-7006 or hollie.cammarasana@dhcd.virginia.gov.