



MONITOR

TECHNICAL BRIEF

Summer 2005

Inside this issue

Virginia Well Represented at National Main Streets Conference

4

Extending Hours Requires Merchants to Get into the Mall Mentality

5

People, Places & Happenings

7

The Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development's Main Street Program provides downtown revitalization technical assistance to Virginia communities, using the National Main Street Center's Four Point Approach™ (Organization, Promotion, Design & Economic Restructuring) to comprehensive preservation-based revitalization of historic commercial districts.



Department of Housing and Community Development

Trade Secrets to Successful Fundraising Events

Special thanks to Scott Smith in Bedford, Anne Williams in Franklin, Terri Proffitt in Lynchburg, Tricia Davis in Manassas and Anne-Marie Walsh in Warrenton for providing information for this article.

By Rowena Fratarcangelo

Special events can be an important source of revenue for Main Street communities. They draw attention to your downtown and to your Main Street organization. Plus, events bring people together, create goodwill in the community, and attract tourism dollars.

Knowing the importance of special events, downtown organizations just getting started often want to know what it takes to put on a successful fundraising event. The Main Street managers in Bedford, Franklin, Lynchburg, Manassas, and Warrenton gave us some important trade secrets to successful fundraising events.

Each of these five communities has a number of successful events that generate healthy profits. Bedford's two most successful events are Centerfest and Bedford Blues & BBQ; Franklin's We Be Jammin' summer concert series attracts large crowds; and Lynchburg's Friday Cheers concert series has become so well known that Travelocity lists it in "Top 10 Finds in Virginia." The concerts have been men-

tioned on the Discovery Channel and in *Southern Living* magazine. In Manassas, the Fall Jubilee, now in its 23rd year, is always popular. They also have success

with smaller street festivals with rides for kids, good bands, and arts and crafts. And in Warrenton, Evening Under the Stars and the Father's Day Car Show are both popular.

Talking with these managers, we found out that whether it's a summer concert, a fall festival, or a holiday celebration, fundraising events all require attention to some planning basics. There are a few key questions to ask at the beginning of the planning process: What is the goal or objective behind the event? What do we hope to accomplish? Who is our target audience? What is our budget? What are the logistics and legalities? Let's look at what the Main Street managers had to say.

1) What is the goal or objective behind the event? What do we hope to accomplish?

This isn't just about immediate monetary proceeds from an event, look at the long-term impact of the event on your



Music is an important part of the fundraising events in Franklin (top) and Bedford (bottom).

(continues on page 2)

organization and downtown. Is the event meant to attract first-time visitors to the area or are you trying to encourage community involvement? Is the goal to increase the visibility of downtown or increase the visibility of the organization? Perhaps it's a combination of several goals.

In any case, fundraising events help to rebuild community interest in downtown. Many special events focus on local heritage, talent, natural beauty or other special features of the community. Downtown reflects the unique features of the community and is re-established as the center of community activity and pride.

Sylvia Allen, in her *Main Street News* article, "A Planning Guide to Special Events: What to Do and When to Do It (October 1999)," gives this advice, "Begin with a goal, an objective. Why are you having the event? Who do you want to attend? ...When deciding on an event, do your homework. See what other, similar communities have done successfully. Look at your competition: is a nearby town putting on a similar or competitive event at the same time? Look at your own community: what can it support? Be honest with yourself; don't plan something so grandiose that it fails. You'll lose credibility—and money—and you may find it more difficult to produce future events."

2) Who is our target audience? Are we trying to attract the entire community or a mix of local residents and tourists? Or is the event oriented to children and families?

The answer to this will depend on your community and the type of event. Some communities interviewed said they pick the demographic based on

what they know traditionally will work. Others answered that it depends on the event; they decide on what they're trying to do, then pick an appropriate audience. Lynchburg's Friday Cheers is designed to get the whole community involved. Twenty-four nonprofit

organizations compete for the opportunity to co-host the event and receive a portion of the gate proceeds. The organizations' board members come out to work the event. They "talk up" the event to their friends and business acquaintances, thus getting a large

group of "advocates" attending and supporting the event. Manassas events reach beyond local residents and the community and draw large numbers from the Washington, D.C., metro area. In Franklin, it depends on the event, but they try to make everything family oriented. If families are comfortable bringing their children to events, then it communicates that downtown Franklin is a "fun, friendly, safe place to visit."

3) What is our budget? How much money do we need to raise?

For a new event, this will be an estimate. To help in determining your budget, look at expected expenses and operational costs.

This could include: entertainment and advertising costs; rental equipment; signage; supplies; and other miscellaneous expenses such as postage or paid labor. To figure out how much money you

will need to raise, identify areas where you could collect revenues, such as admission and vendor fees, then look at what you will need in terms of sponsorship money to offset costs.

One Main Street organization takes a conservative approach at developing a budget. For a continuing event, they look at the previous year's budget and then increase estimates for expenses and decrease estimates of expected income. Factor in the number of sponsorships you'll have and determine if sponsorships, together with proceeds from vendor fees, will bring

Community	Event	Revenue Generating Activities
Bedford	Centerfest (September)	Sponsorships Vendor fees Admission fees Beverage sales
	Blues & BBQ (August)	Sponsorships Vendor fees Admission fees Beverage sales
Franklin	We Be Jammin' (May – Sept.)	Sponsorships Beverage sales
	Fall Festival and Block Party (October)	Sponsorships Vendor fees Beverage sales
Lynchburg	Friday Cheers (May – August)	Sponsorships Vendor fees Admission fees Beverage sales
	Jamboree by the James (September)	Sponsorships Beverage sales
Manassas	Fall Jubilee (October)	Sponsorships Vendor fees
Warrenton	Evening Under the Stars (September)	Sponsorships Admission fees Beverage sales Reserved table fees Silent auction
	Father's Day Car Show (June)	Sponsorships Participant fees Admission fees



Bedford's Centerfest



Lynchburg's Friday Cheers

in the desired amount. If not, consider charging an entrance fee. For Friday Cheers, Lynchburg sets a budget based on what they anticipate their net profit needs to be. They look at sponsorships and in-kind donations and subtract estimated expenses. There is an admission fee for Friday Cheers and the Main Street organization receives proceeds from beer sales, so the event doesn't rely on vendor fees as much as a festival would. When determining how much money they want to raise, Warrenton looks at the previous year's revenue and adds 10 percent.

4) What are the logistics and legalities?

Logistics to consider include parking, public safety, special equipment, sanitation, insurance and vendor contracts. For parking, is there an adequate number of spaces, or will special arrangements need to be made? In Bedford, free parking is limited, so nearby businesses and churches charge people to park in their lots. In Franklin, local high school students handle parking for the Block Party that kicks off the Fall Festival. For added fun, the students dress up in costumes owned by the Downtown Franklin Association.

Public safety is an important consideration for special events. All events require some combination of police,

fire and rescue personnel. The size of the event will dictate the number of personnel needed. For example, in Lynchburg, they decide on the number of rescue personnel based on expected attendance and how hot the weather will be. In most communities, fire and rescue is already close by such as in Bedford and Franklin. For police presence, Franklin hires two off-duty police officers for each concert in the summer, while Warrenton hires a police officer for Evening Under the Stars, however their other events are already monitored by town police. In Manassas, the city provides total police presence.

In terms of special equipment and sanitation, your organization should consider its needs for: rental equipment such as tents, tables, and chairs; audio and lighting equipment; porta-johns; and trash collection. If your event requires porta-johns, how many will you need? The number needed is a matter of opinion. One Main Street manager bases it on the event: if alcohol is available, they provide one porta-john per 100 attendees; if alcohol is not available, they provide one porta-john per 500 attendees. Trash collection and lighting is often provided for free by the city's public works department, so approach local government in advance to hopefully set up arrangements with them.

The last two things on your logistics

laundry list to check-off are insurance and vendor contracts. Every community has to consider potential legal issues, and all of the communities interviewed carry some amount of liability insurance. Bedford carries \$5 million in liability insurance, while Lynchburg and Warrenton each carry \$1 million liability policies. In Franklin, they have separate insurance for fireworks. Usually the fireworks company carries the insurance and lists the event and the city of Franklin on the company's liability policy. Bedford requires that vendors carry \$4 million in liability insurance. If the vendor doesn't have the insurance, Bedford won't use that vendor. Of the five communities, Bedford is the only one to purchase cancellation insurance in case of inclement weather. Cancellation insurance is expensive; most communities either take their chances and specify that the event is held rain or shine, or they schedule a rain date. However, it may be a smart idea to buy cancellation insurance if a sizable portion of your annual budget depends on the profits from the special event. With cancellation insurance, your organization will be able to recoup some of its losses.

Contracts are important in avoiding potential legal issues by helping to define expectations and ensure that all parties involved are in agreement. Importantly, having the appropriate contract can save money. For example, Franklin doesn't carry cancellation insurance, but they do have a clause in the contract they use for booking entertainment that states if they notify the entertainer of a cancellation by 2 p.m. the day of the event, the contract is void, and then Franklin has no financial obligation to the entertainer.

With all the questions that need to be answered, it's important to start the planning process early! How early varies by the event-how large and how established-it is but most managers allow at least six months for planning. Smaller events might only need two or three months; larger events that require booking entertainment

might need eight to 12 months.

Two other important reasons for starting early are sponsorships and volunteers. Talking to potential sponsors early in the process usually means they will be able to give you a larger donation. Given the importance of sponsorships, Manassas recommends putting together a professional looking sponsorship "packet." Telephone the company to let them know you are sending them the packet, call them the following week to make sure they received it, and then schedule an appointment to go speak with them about a sponsorship. Several communities have media sponsors, which helps them with advertising for events. If advertising space isn't donated, smaller, local newspapers are the most affordable. (For more information on sponsorships, read Sylvia Allen's October 1998 *Main Street News* article, "How to Sell More Sponsorships.")

Finally, the importance of volunteers cannot be overstated. It's a case where more really is better. Not having a sufficient number of volunteers means everyone involved is overworked, and overworked volunteers are less likely to volunteer again. The number of volunteers needed var-

ies by event. For Centerfest, which attracts approximately 25,000 people, Bedford uses about 100 volunteers. Lynchburg uses about 120 volunteers each week for Friday Cheers. Warrenton uses about 50 volunteers for Evening Under the Stars. Smaller events might only need 10 to 20. Most communities take advantage of local schools, churches, and service organizations in recruiting volunteers. Often a corporate sponsor will supply volunteers from the company. Other volunteers are recruited through word of mouth, advertisements in newspapers, and requests featured on the organization's web site.

Each of the communities referenced in this article has a number of popular, successful events. But keep in mind that there are different definitions of success. For example, Bedford's long-running Centerfest is its largest (25,000 people) and most successful if you're just looking at attendance. But the Bedford Blues & BBQ (1,500 – 2,000 people) grosses more per man hour put into it. Warrenton's Evening Under the Stars generates the most revenue, but the Father's Day Car Show draws more people to downtown.

Lessons Learned?

Each of the Main Street managers had words of wisdom to pass along. Several managers mentioned the Virginia Festival and Events Association (www.vfea.com, 757-481-6700) as a valuable resource. Also, take advantage of Main Street seminars, training sessions, and conferences to network with other Main Street organizations and learn about their ideas and techniques. Franklin got the idea of hiring a contractor to pursue sponsorships when talking to someone at a Main Street training.

Other good advice: be creative, but keep it simple. This is especially true when starting a new event. Start small and then grow it after it has become established. Don't try to do too many things at once. Remember, no matter what the size of the event or the community, it's a "huge undertaking." But with careful planning, it's an undertaking that is worth the effort.

Virginia Well Represented at National Main Streets Conference

Over 50 downtown advocates from across the Commonwealth attended the National Main Streets Conference in Baltimore, May 9-11. The National Main Streets Conference is the premier educational gathering for preservation-based commercial district revitalization in the country. This year's conference drew a record 1,800 attendees. **Terri Proffitt**, Executive Director of Lynch's Landing, Inc., was a featured speaker at the well-attended conference session "New Attitudes About Money." **Kimberly Watters**, Executive Director of the Staunton Downtown Development Association, was one of 38 local Main Street managers from across the country chosen by the National Main Street Center to participate in a visioning session during the conference. The session will be the basis for a report on the future of the Main Street commercial district revitalization movement.



Some of the Virginians who attended the Conference

Extending Hours Requires Merchants to Get into the Mall Mentality

By Kent Burnes

Virginia Main Street (VMS) is reprinting Kent Burnes' commentary from the "Perspectives" section of the March 15, 2005 Downtown Idea Exchange. VMS staff is often asked by local downtown advocates to provide advice on persuading merchants to extend their hours of operation. Though there's no easy answer to this situation, Mr. Burnes' tips and case study may help you when making the pitch to your merchants to extend their hours.

One piece of sage advice from the National Main Street Center—extending hours of operation doesn't mean that all stores in a downtown must have uniform store hours. In her Main Street News Director's Column (February 1993), Kennedy Smith comments, "Because a shopping mall offers homogeneous merchandise, it makes sense for its shops to maintain uniform hours.

But because downtown businesses offer a wide array of goods and services for different markets, uniform hours not only may not be possible; they may not be desirable. Some downtown leaders confuse the need for extended hours for certain businesses, such as grocery or drug stores, with the desire for uniform hours." And Matt Hussman in his Main Street News article "Store Hours on Main Street" (August 1992) sums the subject up this way, "Hours are only part of the picture. Retailers must give customers a good reason to shop. Price, convenience, selection, service and atmosphere are all key variables. Everything must work together, including store hours."



Merchants serving a customer in Staunton

Extending hours is not as easy as just hanging a new sign. Merchants must get into the mall mentality, and by that I mean they have to first see themselves as a part of a big outdoor mall. After all, the new lifestyle malls are patterned after a downtown.

The mall mentality is more of a working-together mentality. If one or two businesses stay open late, they will not have the same impact as if all the stores or a vast majority of them stay open.

and do not stop when we close the door. Rent, insurance, cost of inventory, advertising, utilities, cost of supplies and loans are all 24 hour-a-day expenses.

4. Extended hours combat outshopping.

5. Increased sales tax revenue goes to local government.

The kicker is that most businesses operating in small downtowns do not have the resources to hire business coaches or consultants. So the local downtown manager, the Small Business Development Centers

(under the U.S. Small Business Administration, www.sba.gov/sbdc/) and others have to know why these people are not changing and then get some training to overcome the weaknesses.

A matter of know-how, not cost

Here is how complicated extending store hours downtown can be. The

majority of businesses will tell you that they do not stay open later because they cannot afford to. They cannot afford not to.

They really feel the insecurity of hiring another employee. The reasons? They may not know how to do the record-keeping, or they are afraid the employee won't do the right job.

Of course, they do not have an employee policy manual! They have never standardized any procedures in the business, so they don't know how to train the employee to run the business when they are not there because they themselves have never written an opening, closing and daily operations manual—even a short statement—for

Making the case for extended hours

Let's first examine the questions, why stay open later?

1. According to almost every retail research resource, the vast majority (over 75 percent) of the retail purchases in the U.S. are made between 4 p.m. and midnight.
2. In businesses that extend their operations by two hours, the owner typically works 20 percent less time in the store and profits exceed increased expenses by a minimum of 16 percent.
3. Most business expenses are fixed,

their business. Then they don't trust anyone to run the business when they are not there. Well, they have never explored any techniques to keep employees honest, or looked into a simple \$50,000 surety bond that can be bought for any legal, upstanding employee for about \$50 per year!

The majority of businesses in a downtown do not have the procedures in place, much less written



Winchester merchant cleaning his display window

down, to support an extension to hours.

Case study: One-year training project

When I was faced with this problem as a project manager for downtown Flagstaff, Arizona (pop. 52,890), we prepared a one-year process by which downtown worked with the merchants on a one-to-one basis in training groups to teach them how to prepare for the extension of hours.

Then, the economic development department gave downtown some money to do new employee training as well. Downtown even put together a small fund that we could "loan" to a business as a cash flow loan to hire the employee and support the payroll for two months (this fund never had to be used).

Downtown had a training program every two months, and it was repeated in its newsletter as the short

version or recap. Each training session was about three hours long and covered how to hire employees, paperwork, managing employees, policy and procedures, scheduling, and financial statement training. The merchants in downtown set a date (one year out) to extend their hours from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. and they made it.

If other downtown organizations would hook up with the Small Business Development Centers, economic development organizations and the city, and lay out a plan, they can get this done. They need to show the potential for job creation and everyone gets excited.

Extending store hours created about 160 new full-time jobs in downtown Flagstaff in the early

1990s, and they are still open late. That is better than the Wal-Mart, where 70 percent of the jobs are part-time with no benefits.

Extending hours not always the answer

There are some towns in which this will not work. For downtowns with less than 20 percent occupancy, extended hours is not the answer. The answers for that type of town are much more complex. The downtown that has a good occupancy rate, has decent selection and is frequented by shoppers should consider going to extended hours before they see their market position slip.

Kent Burnes is principal of Burnes Consulting. Contact him at kent@burnesconsulting.com.

Reprinted with the permission of Downtown Idea Exchange, New York, NY. ©2005 Alexander Communications Group, Inc. All rights reserved.

Virginia Main Street Monitor

is published by the Virginia Main Street Program Office of Community Revitalization & Development Virginia Department of Housing & Community Development

Amy Yarcich, Program Manager

Courtney Anderson, Downtown Revitalization Planner

Sarah Dillard Pope, Downtown Revitalization Planner

Rowena Fratarcangelo, Program Assistant

501 N. Second St.,
Richmond VA 23219
Phone 804-371-7030
Fax 804-371-7093

E-mail: mainstreet@dhcd.virginia.gov

Web site:

www.dhcd.virginia.gov/Mainstreet



Help Celebrate Independents Week!

July 1-7

For more information visit the American Independent Business Alliance: <http://amiba.net>

Governor Mark Warner and National Trust President Richard Moe "Wow" the Crowd in Warrenton

On Wednesday, March 30, Governor Mark R. Warner joined President of the National Trust for Historic Preservation Richard Moe and staff from the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development in **Warrenton** to celebrate the 2005 Virginia Main Street Milestone Awards. Approximately 150 people attended the event, which was held on Main Street in the Warrenton Presbyterian Church.

"Virginia's downtowns' unique, historic treasures are important to our local and regional economies," said Governor Warner in his remarks to the attendees. "The program has proven invaluable as we preserve and revitalize our downtown areas and ensure that Virginia's Main Street communities are excellent places to live, work, and do business."

Richard Moe, President of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, joined Governor Warner in his praise for the

Virginia Main Street communities. In his engaging keynote presentation, Mr. Moe remarked, "Main Street is working—and its success is played out not just in

"prettied-up" facades, but in new businesses and new jobs created, new tax revenues generated, and—perhaps most important—a new spirit of confidence and energy in places that had long known only disinvestment, discouragement, even despair,"

Deputy Secretary of Commerce and



The crowd in front of the Warrenton Presbyterian Church after the awards ceremony.

Trade Matt Erskine traveled to Warrenton to present the awards. The Virginia Main Street Milestone Awards recognize designated Main Street communities for excellence in two categories: amount of private investment dollars; and number of volunteer hours contributed toward improving downtowns. Eight communities received awards for their attraction of private investment to their Main Street districts. They are:

Danville and **South Boston** for \$1 million; **Marion** for \$10 million; **Orange** for \$15 million; **Warrenton** for \$20 million; **Culpeper** and **Lynchburg** for \$25 million; and **Winchester** for \$35 million. The 11 communities receiving awards for volunteerism in 2004 were: **Luray** and **South Boston** for 1,000 hours; **Harrisonburg** and **Waynesboro** for 5,000 hours; **Culpeper**, **Martinsville** and **Staunton** for 10,000 hours; **Bedford**, **Franklin**, **Manassas** and **Rocky**

Mount for 15,000 hours; and **Lynchburg** for 35,000 hours.

Next year's Milestone Awards presentation will be held in **Staunton** in conjunction with the

Virginia Main Street 20th Anniversary celebration event in March of 2006. 

Help Tell America's Stories

Parade, in collaboration with the National Trust, invites you to enter the "Tell America's Story" Preservation Award contest. They want to hear

about places in your community where history may have happened. These sites can be connected to individuals, groups or events that helped shape our history and culture. A panel of judges, including representatives from *Parade* and the National Trust, will select winners based on the site's importance and the story behind it. Ten national winners will receive plaques that describe what happened at the

site; 50 other winners will receive framed certificates. The best stories will be featured in *Parade*. The deadline for entries is **September 30, 2005**.

For more

information, visit www.nationaltrust.org/parade. 

People

In March, **Luray** Downtown Initiative (LDI) hired **Diana Scharf** as its first Executive Director. Before her position with LDI, Diana was the Zoning Administrator for Shenandoah County where she was actively involved in introducing the Main Street approach to New Market, a DHCD Commercial District Affiliate. Diana also held the position of manager for Shenandoah Technology Systems and is a licensed realtor.

In April, Main Street **Radford** hired **Becky Haupt** as its new Executive Director. Becky holds a degree in psychology from Radford University. She served as a Board member for Main Street Radford and also chaired its membership program. Originally from northern Virginia, Becky settled in Radford because "it is a wonderful place to live and raise a family. The sense of community and pride here is something I hadn't experienced in other places I had lived." 

People, Places & Happenings

resources & news
you can use 



VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF
HOUSING AND
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

501 North Second Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT CALENDAR

July 05

19-20 Virginia Main Street Summer Tool Kit Training, Danville, VA (Virginia Main Street, 804-371-7030)

August 05

13-16 American Society of Association Executives Annual Meeting, Nashville, TN (www.asaenet.org or 888-950-2723)

September 05

- 7-9 America's Town Meeting, Washington, DC (National Center for Small Communities, www.smallcommunities.org/ncsc or 202-624-3556)
- 10-13 IDA 51st Annual Conference, Denver, CO (International Downtown Association, www.ida-downtown.org)
- 14-16 Governor's Housing Conference, Roanoke, VA (Department of Housing & Community Development, www.dhcd.virginia.gov or 804-371-7000)
- 21-24 American Association for State and Local History Annual Meeting, Pittsburgh, PA (www.aaslh.org or 615-320-3203,)
- 27-10/2 National Preservation Conference, *Sustain America: Vision, Economics and Preservation*, Portland, OR (National Trust for Historic Preservation, www.nthpconference.org or 202-588-6000)
- 28-29 Virginia Main Street 101: Design and Promotion, Harrisonburg, VA (Virginia Main Street, 804-371-7030)

October 05

- 15-19 International Conference of National Trusts, Washington, DC (National Trust for Historic Preservation, www.nationaltrust.org or 202-588-6187)
- 16-18 APVA Preservation Virginia's 20th Annual Virginia Preservation Conference, Lynchburg, VA (APVA Preservation Virginia, 804-648-1889 x 304, or www.apva.org)
- 23-25 100th VML Annual Conference, Richmond, VA (Virginia Municipal League, www.vml.org/Conference.html or 804-649-8471)
- 26-29 Preservation North Carolina Annual Conference, *Mills, Mills & More*, Gastonia and Shelby, NC (Preservation North Carolina, 919-832-3652 or www.PreservationNC.org)