



Virginia Main Street

# MONITOR

## TECHNICAL BRIEF

Winter 2004

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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

# Making Maintenance Glamorous

## Tips for Keeping Your Downtown Looking Fresh

by Kathy Frazier

**F**rom the Virginia Main Street Monitor archives, "Making Maintenance Glamorous" is a timeless article that should be required reading for Design Committee members. We are reprinting Kathy Frazier's piece along with a supplemental pull out page with a Visual Assessment Form and Design Walkaround Discussion Topics—excellent tools to help you prioritize downtown maintenance projects.



and businesses for a long time and shows up in deteriorated paint and mortar, leaky roofs, dirty awnings, worn out carpet, faded wallpaper, dated fixtures and broken sidewalks. We must also remind ourselves that recently improved buildings, streets and landscaping need maintenance, too. It is truly amazing how quickly things can deteriorate without regular care and maintenance.

Maintenance for recently improved buildings and streetscapes may

Maintenance glamorous? Hardly.

In the process of Main Street revitalization, there is nothing more exciting than a dramatic façade improvement, a new business opening or new street improvements. New, new, new. Even with our historic Main Street, it's the "new" that excites us. But of course, for long lasting revitalization to occur, there must also be maintenance. And that usually draws a big yawn, if any attention at all.

Lack of maintenance has been a reality for historic downtown buildings, streets

include touching up chipped paint, washing dirty windows and awnings, pulling weeds, cleaning stained sidewalks, removing blockage from downspouts, and other non-structural maintenance items. Discouragement can set in at having to maintain something that was just completed a couple years ago, but we can keep our downtowns fresh with a good old-fashioned spring cleaning once a year. Here are some tips for making regular maintenance an important priority on people's busy agendas:

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## Making Maintenance Glamorous

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Weeding and planting for public landscaped areas, along with other maintenance projects such as awning and façade cleaning, can become more fun when coupled with a retail special event that kicks off the summer shopping season.

### Virginia Main Street Monitor

is published by the

Virginia Main Street Program  
Office of Community Revitalization  
& Development

Virginia Department of Housing  
& Community Development

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1. **Spring cleanups** that include lining up a water truck to help owners scrub brick and awnings, setting up discounts on paint, awning fabric, and window cleaners, and planning a weeding/planting party for public landscaped areas can be a fun way to make maintenance a highly visible annual event. Top these activities with a party that kicks off the summer shopping season. This maintenance promotional event could also tie in with promotional sales to “spring clean” businesses for new merchandise or have spring cleaning products on sale.

2. **Grants**, small and large, can be geared not only to new façade improvements, but to maintenance of recent improvements, too. They can go toward making minor repairs, repairing or replacing awning fabric, repainting faded trim, or replacing signs.

3. **Loan pools** for Main Street building improvements should allow at least a portion of the funds to be used on big ticket maintenance items such as roof repair/replacement, brick repointing and other needs. While the highly visible improvements such as façade restoration have greater public impact, Main Street revitalization relies as much on the less visible maintenance issues. Loans should be flexible enough to accommodate both needs, as determined by the conditions of your downtown buildings. Large maintenance issues should not be allowed to go by the wayside for the sake of more showy cosmetic improvements.

4. **Plan ahead** - Be sure when your community initiates a new project such as banners, flower baskets, landscape improvements or new street furniture, that there is an annual amount set aside for maintenance and the eventual replacement of the item. Banners may last only five years, flower baskets may wear out or be stolen, and light poles and trash cans will need to be repainted.

For the long haul however, maintenance is key to the whole issue of downtown as a viable business location, of community pride and of image. Maintenance can be woven into promotional events, and in turn, be promoted as an image issue. An analogy is, would we want to live on a street that is as poorly maintained as downtown? Clearly not. Then why would a desirable new business or a desirable new customer want to come to a shabby looking area? They won't.

Ideas for encouraging and supporting maintenance are as numerous and varied as the Main Street communities themselves. Here is one idea to help the community recognize the importance of maintenance. Assemble a group, preferably starting with your design committee. Divide the group into smaller teams and send them out to different parts of town with a throw-away camera. Have them record the good, bad and ugly visual appearance of their area. Once the photographs are developed, mount them on posters and have each team present their findings to the group. Determine the largest maintenance problems, and opportunities for investment. Be sure to invite different stakeholders in the downtown to join you in these tours such as business and property owners, shoppers, members of city council and city employees, teenagers and senior citizens. Many suggestions for improving downtown will come out, and many ideas will involve maintenance. Team up with your promotions committee to determine ways to “sell” maintenance. Hopefully, maintenance will no longer feel like a separate ho-hum issue that needs to be made glamorous, but a vitally important element to the success of downtown revitalization. ■

*Kathy Frazier, AIA, a principal of Frazier Associates in Staunton, is the Virginia Main Street Architect.*

# Visual Assessment Form

Rate the following for each block in the downtown. + means positive image, 0 means neutral-neither positive or negative, and - indicates a negative image. Put a few words in the "Comments" column to remind you why you feel that way about that particular view. Make notes of possible improvements as well. Take pictures of equal numbers of problems and good features. Get back together as a group and review results.

**BLOCK :** \_\_\_\_\_

	Rating (+ - 0)	Comments
Maintenance and attractiveness of the buildings		
Quality of improvements to historic buildings		
Image of the businesses as reflected by the buildings		
Visual quality of the retail interiors as viewed from the street		
Effectiveness of window displays		
Appearance and appropriateness of business signs		
Maintenance and general appearance of private green spaces		
Maintenance and general appearance of the public environment...including streets, sidewalks, parking areas, green spaces		
Quality of public signs		
Location and usefulness of public signs		
Traffic		
Sidewalks		
Light poles		
Trash cans		
Benches		
Overall visual image		

# Design walkaround discussion topics



*A group “walkaround” is a great way to help committee members and stakeholders understand the design needs of your commercial district. To help you thoroughly assess design issues and opportunities, here are potential focus questions and discussion points to keep in mind as your group walks the commercial district.*

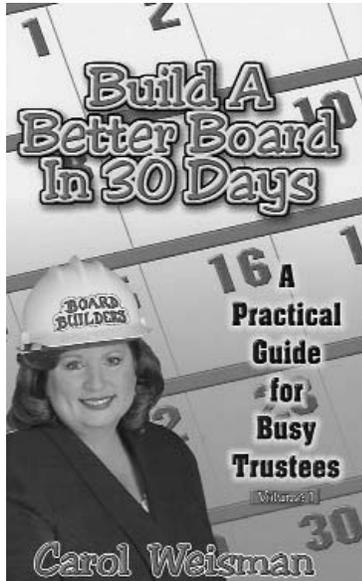
*When your walkaround is complete and it’s time to look for design solutions, contact Virginia Main Street for information on resources, our lending library of publications and our technical files of sample materials and tested ideas.*

- What design element(s) do you hear people mention in conversations about downtown, or when giving directions to get there?
- What design element(s) are most notable to you?
- What elements are most important to protect, because of historic value, outstanding quality of details or construction, etc.?
- What elements hold a strong emotional attachment to locals, including the kitschy and fun?
- What aspects are most intrusive, annoying or dangerous?
- How do pedestrians move about the district, where and why? Do they move easily or with difficulty, and why (conflict with cars, placement of businesses and parking, pedestrian friendly signals, signs, sidewalks, lighting, etc.)?
- How does traffic flow within and through the district? Are speeds appropriate (25-30 mph max.)? Can vehicles turn easily? Are there long backups at lights, do trucks cause problems, etc.?
- How is parking situated, how does it look to the eye, does it seem to be well-placed relative to people's destinations, where is there too much or too little, how can it be better marked, signed, lighted, landscaped, etc.?
- How is the condition and appearance of public areas (maintenance of sidewalks, parks, parking lots, etc.)?
- How much greenery (landscaping) exists? Where is more needed, and what would be an appropriate amount/type of greenery?
- What businesses look good to the eye because of their building, window displays, signage, lighting, landscaping, parking, etc.?
- What businesses or properties have an appearance that looks ragged or in need of help in any of the areas of building design, windows, signs, lighting, landscaping, parking, etc.?
- What signs look appealing to the eye due to quality materials, message, placement on the property, colors, lighting, etc.?
- What signs are most unappealing, overwhelming or deteriorated (and why)?
- What improvements would have the most dramatic impact? What would be relatively quick and easy improvements? What improvements would be more challenging, expensive, difficult or time-consuming?
- What incentives and methods of persuasion (the carrot vs. stick!) might be required to accomplish some of the improvements that are obviously needed?

# The Importance of A Prenuptial Agreement Between A Board President and the Executive Director

## OR

# Better Living Through Clear Expectations



*In the Fall 2004 issue of the Virginia Main Street Monitor, we reprinted Carol Weisman's article, "The Honeymoon Never Has to End: How to Keep Your Board Happy and Productive." To continue on this theme, we are providing another wise and witty article by this nationally known speaker and author.*

*In September, Ms. Weisman gave a presentation at the Virginia Main Street 101 training in Rocky Mount on responsibilities of Board and staff, fund raising, and volunteer recruitment.*

*Acknowledgement: Special thanks to Greg Echele, executive director of the Family Resource Center, without whom this article would never have been written.*

*By Carol E. Weisman*

There are a myriad of ways to describe the relationship between a board president and an executive director. Some say it's like a marriage. Others liken it to a fox-hole in wartime. Still others see it as an adversarial relationship, much like that of rival gangs. However you describe it, the relationship is what the participants make it to be. It can be one of mutual admiration and support, or it can be as fragile and tension filled as a Tennessee Williams play. To be successful, this relationship must have two things in common: a respect for boundaries; and a clear communication pathway for discussion. Without these, no relationship, personal or professional, can function successfully.

In an organization, the agency will not function in a healthy manner, its mission will be lost and its employees, clients, board members and volunteers will be unhappy. It is critical that the executive director and board president discuss, understand and accept role expectations, responsibilities and goals before any work is started. And it doesn't matter if they've been friends since kindergarten. Sometimes it's even more urgent when they've had a longstanding friendship.

Some years ago, when I assumed a board presidency, I sat down at a

private dinner—away from phones, staff and family—with the executive director whom I'd known for years. "What do you want from me?" we asked each other. In answer to his question I assured him he could make a one-minute phone call to me and then go on with his regular work. This was important because we were in the habit of having marathon conversations on business trips. Later on he asked me not to call him on Mondays unless it was urgent, because this was his planning and meeting day with his staff. I agreed. Now if I really need him on Monday, I tell his secretary and because he knows I respect this request, he always returns the call because he knows it's important. And all because we had our discussion. For my side, I wanted to attend the quarterly board meetings and he set this up. We also discussed future meetings between the two of us, which kept in mind the other's schedules and needs.

Establishing how to communicate is also important. If there's a staff, should messages be left with them? Some people have answering machines or fax machines; others have beepers. Let each other know how you prefer to be contacted. A person-to-person, time consuming meeting isn't always necessary in these days of easy electronic communication. But having a clear-cut agenda is. With one executive director, we wrote the agenda for the executive meeting on the first Friday

*(continued on page 6)*

### **The Importance of A Prenuptial...**

*(continued from page 5)*

of each month, and the agenda for the board meeting on the second Friday. It was an easy, painless way to keep informed and the business of the agency on target. The role of each person in a meeting situation is an evolving process. There's nothing worse than sitting in a board meeting and wondering who called this meeting and why. Again, expectations such as an agenda or a briefing before a board meeting need to be established and discussed, along with the line of authority. Who takes over in the absence of the president, the executive director or the vice president? Decide in advance. This also avoids the issues of turf and boundary and saves hard feelings that can disrupt any board.

Perhaps the most difficult job of role recognition belongs to the board president. An agency needs different kinds of involvement at different times. When there's a capital campaign, a financial crisis, a period of intense growth or a redefinition of the agency's mission, a hands-on board president is needed. When things are going well with no major disruptions in sight, a more hands-off policy is needed. Executive directors and board presidents need to know what mode the agency is in. I know a woman who has run a not-for-profit retail shop for 15 years. She says she'd love a board president who would stay out of her hair and let her continue doing the job that everyone says she does well. She doesn't want to be presented with a lot of schemes to make her more productive or to revamp a highly lucrative venture.

Fund raising is another potential source of trouble. For some reason, board members feel this is their cue to shift their emphasis to programming and give the fund raising responsibilities to the hired gun. The reality is just the opposite and needs to be communicated to everyone. It's



*It's important for the Executive Director and the Board President to create an agenda and send it out to participants ahead of time. There's nothing worse than sitting in a board meeting and wondering who called it and why.*

really the time to fine-tune fundraising so that all board contacts and efforts are as productive as possible. Again, with a strong president-executive director partnership, this can be accomplished.

Another potential area for discontent comes when someone is hired to manage duties that were previously shared by staff or volunteers. Everyone feels threatened. Clear lines of authority have to be established and respected. This is the time to hear people out and acknowledge their contributions so that nobody is hurt and the agency doesn't lose valuable resources. An example of this is a volunteer director of religious education, who did not want the position as paid staff, and stepped aside when a salaried director was hired. This did NOT mean that she wasn't interested in helping the new director. Unfortunately, the new director wasn't interested in her suggestions until a perceptive priest suggested that she have coffee once a month with the former director. He suggested she listen and use the ideas she felt comfortable with and credit the former director as often and publicly as possible. This sage advice helped avoid a difficult transition.

I once asked an executive director who had worked with many different board presidents who her favorite was, and why. She said it was a businessman who called every Friday for their weekly meeting. "He

always asked me about my week," she says, "and this gave me a chance to ventilate." He'd then ask me, "Is this something you want me involved in, or can you handle it yourself?" Because of his respect for the executive director's boundaries and professional judgment, she had a mentor and partner and the president had a clear understanding of how the agency was functioning.

Privacy is another important aspect of the executive director/board president relationship. My husband gets up at 5:00 a.m., so a 6:00 a.m. call is not a problem for me. But a call after 9:00 p.m. is, and I make clear that unless it's an emergency, please wait until morning. In return, I never call an executive director at home or on the weekend unless there's marvelous news or a dire event. This includes vacation times. Staff and volunteers should be able to handle emergencies as well as routine agency functions. It also gives them a chance to show off their leadership abilities. Define beforehand what an emergency is. I remember an executive director of a disease-related foundation who left for a three-week summer vacation. He asked his staff to call him if anything happened to friends or a board member. But if the agency burned down, he knew they could handle it without him.

Social invitations are another area where personal space and distance should be respected. I entertain a lot and have often invited executive directors to parties, making clear that I do not mean to infringe on their free time. Social occasions should never be viewed as a command performance. Sometimes, there are personal reasons for refusing an invitation. Once I extended an invitation to a man with whom I'd just started working. He refused and I told him that was fine.

Later that day he called and thanked me for not putting him on the spot. He explained that he was a newly recovering alcoholic and was avoiding situations where alcohol would be served. He asked me to continue to invite him and that he'd come when he felt comfortable. Today we have a trusting and warm working relationship and friendship. Is there anything more uncomfortable than sitting at a card table with a couple who is fighting? Or sitting in a restaurant in the middle of a family feud? Imagine conflict situations between an executive director and a board president. Nobody knows where to look, what to say or how to act. And everyone looks for the door. Resolve these differences in private. These are times when issues of boundaries and communications are most important.

I've had constant disagreements and personality clashes with one executive director through the years. This relationship is based on warmth through friction. But we've kept our "dirty linen" private and made our differences work for us with the result that if we both feel comfortable with something, it's probably going to be comfortable for the entire board. Whatever we do together is better than what we do apart. When we do disagree in public, it is always over issues, rather than personalities. Supporting one another is very important. Undermining each other is detrimental to everyone. Check out the facts first, before believing an accusation or criticism. Once, as a young social worker, I was told by a mother that her child's physician had told her to start saving for her child's funeral. I rushed into the doctor's office and asked him why he'd said this. Luckily, he was a kind man and asked me if, in all seriousness, I really thought he'd said this. What he'd really told the mother was that the outlook for her son wasn't good, but they'd do everything they could. The concern about funeral expenses were the thoughts of a grief-stricken,

shocked mother. When complaints or concerns come to you, stop and look into them before you react.

When misunderstandings occur, and they will, inform one another and decide who will handle them. After a frustrating day, some time ago, I jumped on a staff member's suggestions and hurt her feelings. A board member pointed it out to me and I told the executive director what I'd done. We discussed the possibility of me apologizing personally or of letting him handle the situation. He chose to handle it and, assuring the woman of the remorse I felt, was able to diffuse the situation. I have also resolved similar issues on his behalf with board members and contributors when feelings were hurt and noses put out of joint. Not all conflicts can be resolved successfully and sometimes the board president, with the support of the board, has to terminate an executive director. A paper trail in these situations is very helpful.

Many years ago I worked with an executive who, among many other shortcomings, refused to learn the computer system and insisted on typing letters manually, and refused to use the computerized accounting system our CPA had recommended. We offered her a teacher and I offered to help her. She refused. I began to document our sessions outlined my expectations and shared the information with the executive committee. As it happened, she chose to leave before she was terminated, but our expectations of her behavior were clearly documented on paper. Without it, termination without litigation might have been impossible.

Every executive director that I have worked with has taught me something important, whether I wanted him or her to or not. One taught me how miserable it is not to have one's phone calls returned, which makes one feel insignificant. Others have taught me to have broad shoulders and to give credit to those who

deserve it. The executives I've valued most have been patient, had a sense of humor and have been supportive. It's important that since I treasure these traits, I try to give them back to the people with whom I work. I've appreciated them for their clear sets of boundaries. I tend to be intrusive—and I need to know when I'm being a pain in the neck. I enjoyed those with whom I could have honest, confidential discussions about the strengths and challenges of our colleagues and how, between us, we could get the most out of them in terms of contributions to the agency's mission.

I've never been an executive director but the traits I've heard most often valued in a board president are respect for the director's intelligence and skills, a willingness to listen and be supportive, and the ability to help only when asked and then only as part of a team effort. When I think of the great joys in my life, they include sitting down to work with a talented executive director to create ways to make the most out of what are always the limited resources of time and money for a not-for-profit whose mission I value.

A clearly defined "prenuptial" agreement before starting out on this unique relationship adds to the chances of success for a cause that both parties cherish, and a fulfilling experience for all involved. ■

*Carol Weisman is president of Board Builders, a consulting firm in St. Louis, Missouri. She is a speaker, author, trainer and consultant who has served on 24 boards and been president of seven. Visit [www.carolweisman.com](http://www.carolweisman.com) or call 888-500-1777 to learn more.*

# The Trip to Richmond: A Main Street Manager Finds It All in Her Own Back Yard



*Liz Sater, Executive Director of the Downtown Danville Association, writes a monthly feature article on her downtown in the free arts and lifestyle publication Evinco, which is distributed across Southside Virginia. Liz's first article appeared in the June, 2004 issue, and she feels that writing the monthly piece is a "good investment of time" as it promotes downtown Danville to a larger audience. Her July, 2004 article, re-printed below, demonstrates that shoppers can really find most everything they need in downtown.*

By Liz Sater

Recently, my husband and I traveled to Richmond for the weekend. Our son, Jeff, has moved there to take advantage of a business opportunity and we wanted to see his new house. I had become used to having both grown children in Danville, right where I could get my hands on them if I needed to, so having him even that far away was something that took a bit of getting used to. But it was an exciting opportunity for him and he was proud to show off his new home and his new turf. Since it was Saturday, he had a full array of Saturday errands to accomplish—you know the ones: gas station; dry cleaning; grocery store; etc., etc. It's a part of every working person's week whether it falls on a Saturday or not. Plus, he was planning a backyard bar-b-q that evening, which included his fiancée's family on the guest list, and had some last minute things to pick up. Not wanting to stay alone in his empty house while he carried out his to-do list, and interested in how he navigated his new territo-

ry—this city of over one million people—we tagged along.

We started out fairly early. Jeff put me in charge of his list as he knows I love to scratch things off as we go. Our first stop was a gourmet coffee shop, where we picked up some java and some wonderful bagels for Sunday's breakfast. Then it was onto the dry cleaners (scratch, scratch). Two interstate exchanges later, there was a stop at a kitchen supply shop for some grilling utensils then a quick gas station experience. Back on the interstate, we took the off-ramp to downtown and had lunch in a wonderful little café on Strawberry Street before heading over to meet his fiancé and her mother at a home furnishings store. They were looking for just the right coffee table for their new living room, and wanted to try just one more spot before deciding. The girls left us then as they had errands of their own—pick up the wedding invitations, a fitting of the mother-of-the-bride dress, and manicures and pedicures before they met us later for dinner. Jeff had one more stop to make, too, before we hit the gro-

## National Trust for Historic Preservation President Richard Moe to Speak at Main Street Summit in Warrenton

**Richard Moe**, President of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, will be the keynote speaker at a Virginia Main Street sponsored summit on March 30, 2005 in **Warrenton**. Mr. Moe's presentation, which is open to the public, will focus on the growth issues that some Virginia Main Street communities near northern Virginia are now facing. Mr. Moe will also present the Virginia Main Street Milestone Awards to communities from across the state at the event. For more information, contact Virginia Main Street at 804-371-7030, [mainstreet@dhcd.virginia.gov](mailto:mainstreet@dhcd.virginia.gov).

### **The Trip to Richmond...**

*(continued from page 8)*

cery store for luscious steaks and salmon. He was looking for a bright Hawaiian shirt to wear at the bar-b-q. As we pulled into the driveway of his house, some 4 1/2 hours since the beginning of our run, I had to ask, (just curious you know) "How many miles do you think we put on your car today?" Checking the odometer, he replied, "Well, since I filled up, we have been about 60 miles." He said this with not a blink of an eye. This was apparently not an unusual accrual of mileage for a city the size of Richmond.

As I looked over the list in my hand and the scratched-off errands, I mentioned to Jeff that every single thing on his list (and even his fiancée's) could have been accomplished within three or four blocks in downtown Danville! As many opportunities as there are in Richmond, VA for blatant consumerism, our little downtown could fulfill all of those same needs just as well. Jeff looked at me as if to say, "Come on, Mom..." so I gladly elaborated. I can't pass up an opportunity to extol the virtues of downtown Danville.

Main Street Coffee Emporium offers not just freshly baked New York style bagels, but also the only fresh-roasted coffees in town (roasted right on the premises). There are two dry-cleaning facilities, Coachman and Martinizing within the district. River City General Store or Bryant's Restaurant Equipment can supply grilling utensils or the like. There are two service stations on Memorial, just near the Union Street Bridge where you can fill up your car. For filling up the human tank at lunchtime, Purple Onion or Jr.'s Country Café will do the job nicely (scratch, scratch). How about home furnishings? Downtown has abundant possibilities at The Atrium, Schewel's, Wise-Hundley or possibly



*The Atrium is just one of several home furnishings stores in downtown Danville.*

Carolyn's where you can purchase not only an antique table, but also the flowers to put on it! Now to the girls' list—wedding invitations from Captain Copy or Entertainer's Delight, mother's dress from Rippe's, nails done at New Image Hair and Nail Salon or Braids & Beyond. Now, Jeff knows where to get a shirt downtown—Wood's Menswear! Jeff's Dad has been selling clothes on Main Street for as long as Jeff has been alive! But in case he did not have this connection, he could have chosen from Glen-More's, Franklin's, Koplén's or Berman's. Then off to Old Dutch or Midtown for the main course of his bar-b-q. So all the same errands could have been scratched off the list, with less gas and mileage, less time, no interstates to deal with, and had he been in Danville, he would probably have been called by name in at least some of those destinations!

Next time you have your Saturday list in hand, think about coming

downtown. You can bet that your shopping experience is going to be a personal one with excellent customer service. You can feel good about supporting not just your downtown, but your entire community as well, since 60% of your shopping dollars spent in downtown will stay in Danville. The more that people get the message about all the great things downtown has to offer and the more they make downtown the destination for their shopping day, the more the economic atmosphere will improve, making the district more attractive to other businesses who will then want to relocate into the downtown. You really can make a difference and be a part of the revitalization effort, just by giving downtown the chance to scratch those items off your Saturday to-do list. ■



**Franklin County Library Opens in Downtown Rocky Mount**

In September, the doors to the Franklin County Library, located in a former Peebles Department store building, opened in downtown **Rocky Mount**. This multi-year rehabilitation project has resulted in a state-of-the-art public facility and a new anchor for the downtown. On September 30, Virginia Main Street hosted its Main Street 101 workshop in the library, showcasing this innovative project to over 70 workshop participants from across the state. ✍



The top photo was taken in 1995 and shows the former Peebles Department Store. The bottom photo was taken in 2003 and shows the new Franklin County Library close to completion. Also note the façade improvements of the building at the far left and the improved streetscaping completed through Community Development Block Grant funding.

**Hart Family Fund for Small Towns**

The National Trust for Historic Preservation has recently introduced the Hart Family Fund for Small Towns to assist small town preservation and revitalization initiatives around the country, with a focus on towns with populations of 5,000 or less. Grants will range from \$5,000 to \$10,000. The first grant round for the Hart Family Fund will be February 1, 2005. For more information about this and other National Trust grant programs serving Virginia, visit: [www.nationaltrust.org/help/grants.html](http://www.nationaltrust.org/help/grants.html) or contact

the National Trust Southern Regional Office in Charleston, South Carolina, at: 843-722-8552. ✍

**Preserve America Communities in Virginia Are Designated**

**Warrenton and Lynchburg**, both Main Street Communities, Hanover County and Petersburg recently were honored when Mrs. Laura Bush designated them among the nation's newest Preserve America communities, joining Smithfield and Williamsburg.

The Preserve America initiative is a White House effort to encourage and support community efforts for the preservation and enjoyment of America's priceless cultural and natural heritage. The goals of the initiative include: a greater shared knowledge about the nation's past; strengthened regional identities and local pride; increased local participation in preserving the country's cultural and natural heritage assets; and support for the economic vitality of communities. Communities designated through the program receive national recognition for their efforts. Benefits include use of the Preserve America logo, listing on a government web-based directory to showcase preservation and heritage tourism efforts, and eligibility for proposed Preserve America grants that will begin in Fiscal Year 2005 if enacted by Congress. As of September 1, 2004, there were 169 Preserve America communities in 31 states. For more information and application forms and procedures, please visit [www.PreserveAmerica.gov](http://www.PreserveAmerica.gov). ✍

**Marion's Ken Heath Publishes Book on Town History**

**Ken Heath**, Executive Director of **Marion** Downtown!, has released his first book, *Marion and Hungry Mother*

State Park. Part of the Arcadia Publishing "Images of America" series, Heath's book is filled with pictures, postcards, and memorabilia from years gone by in Smyth County's courthouse town.

The book can be purchased at several businesses in Marion, major bookstores, online, and at the Smyth County Museum. "It was my whole

*People, Places  
&  
Happenings  
resources & news  
you can use ✍*

intention to provide a way to raise funds for the museum," said Heath. "We have a tremendous collection of our heritage, but if we don't do something soon, it will be lost. By promoting Marion's history and by donating a portion of the proceeds from each book sold, I'm hoping to help us save our museum." To order *Marion and Hungry Mother State Park online*, go to [www.arcadiapublishing.com](http://www.arcadiapublishing.com).

**National Trust Small Deal Fund**

The National Trust for Historic Preservation's for-profit subsidiary, the National Trust Community Investment Corporation, recently entered into a strategic partnership with Tax Credit Capital, LLC to form the National Trust Small Deal Fund (SDF). The fund provides a unique service within the historic tax credit industry by investing in very small historic tax credit projects generating between \$200,000 and \$650,000 in tax credit equity (approximately \$1.2 million to \$3.5 million in total development costs). The fund can also arrange for the purchase of Virginia state historic tax credits. All types of properties are eligible, including hotels, offices, restaurants, enter-

tainment uses, cultural and nonprofit facilities, retail and mixed-use projects.

The R.R. Smith Center for History and Art project in **Staunton** has been credited with helping forge the partnership that led to the National Trust Small Deal Fund. In the next issue of the *Virginia Main Street Monitor*, we'll feature this project and how the tax credits were used through the Small Deal Fund. For more information visit [www.ntcicfunds.com](http://www.ntcicfunds.com) or contact Joseph Pettiford at [joseph\\_pettiford@nthp.org](mailto:joseph_pettiford@nthp.org), 202-588-6359. ☞



*Some of the Virginia Main Street representatives that visited Kingwood, West Virginia. From left to right: Diane Logan, Culpeper; Jane Beasley, Woodstock; Kate Sipes, Department of Housing & Community Development, CDBG program; Jay Harrison, Orange; Courtney Anderson, DHCD, Virginia Main Street; Eddie Bumbaugh, Harrisonburg; Sarah Pope, DHCD, Virginia Main Street; Scott Smith, Bedford.*

### Virginia Main Street Crosses the Line to Learn More about Kingwood, West Virginia's Revolving Fund

On September 9, representatives from VMS designated communities **Bedford, Berryville, Culpeper, Harrisonburg, Lynchburg** and **Winchester**, as well as Affiliate community **Woodstock**, traveled to Kingwood, West Virginia (population 2,900), to learn more about their Main Street organization's revolving fund. A revolving fund is a pool of capital created and reserved for purchasing and re-selling buildings with

the restriction that the monies are returned to the fund to carry on the same activity. With the proper foresight and management, a revolving fund is an effective tool in saving and rehabilitating historic buildings.

In 1999, Main Street Kingwood learned that the downtown Preston County Inn, built in 1859, was on the market. Concerned that the building would be demolished by a new owner, Main Street Kingwood raised emergency funds to purchase the Inn. The organization then found a sympathetic buyer to purchase the building and wrote a protective easement into the sales agreement. Main Street Kingwood made a profit of \$30,000 from the sale of the Preston County Inn and with that money purchased another historic building downtown. Since 1999, the organization has purchased, sold and protected four buildings in Kingwood, and purchased another building to use as its office, through the revolving fund.

On the September 9 visit to Kingwood, the Virginia Main Street community representatives were treated to a lunch where board members of Main Street Kingwood and Executive Director Robyn Hess

explained their revolving loan history and process. The group then toured the five buildings that the organization purchased through the fund. The trip was a great opportunity to see first-hand how a Main Street organization in a small, rural community can manage a successful revolving fund. ☞

### University of Virginia Offers On-Line E-Commerce Certificate Program

The University of Virginia is now offering a 19-credit online E-Commerce Certificate program to give individuals, employees, and organizations the keys to help unlock the potential of electronic business. This graduate-level certificate program is designed for individuals and companies who want to increase their competitiveness, expand their market reach, and stay abreast of new developments in the field. It is for anyone interested in increasing their knowledge of e-commerce, moving an

enterprise onto the Internet or enhancing their existing Web presence. Through the University's Northern Virginia Center, classes for the E-Commerce certificate program are taken exclusively online. The deadline to register for spring semester online courses is January 31, 2005. For more information, visit <http://uvaceonline.org/index.real?action=Programs>.

### New DHCD Commercial District Affiliate

Welcome to the following new DHCD Commercial District Affiliate community that has joined the fold in recent months:

- Independence

To find out how your community can become an Affiliate and have access to Main Street quarterly trainings, check out our website at [www.dhcd.virginia.gov/MainStreet](http://www.dhcd.virginia.gov/MainStreet). ☞

### People

**Winchester's** Old Town Development Board (OTDB) has named **Karen Helm** as its Executive Director. Karen has been acting Executive Director of OTDB for several months, and before coming to the position was with the City of Winchester's Office of Economic Development. Virginia Main Street welcomes its new intern, **Rowena Fratrancangelo**. Rowena is an urban and regional planning graduate student at Virginia Commonwealth University. **Destination Downtown South Boston** has hired **Jerry Van Eimeren** to be its first Executive Director. Jerry has worked in management for several retail operations including the GAP Stores, Inc. and Nordstrom. A graduate of the University of Wisconsin with a degree in Business Management & Industrial Psychology, Jerry most recently has been a professional trainer on customer service and leadership to private and public sector employees. He recently moved from California to South Boston with his wife, who is originally from the South Boston area. ☞




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**VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT  
OF HOUSING AND  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

501 North Second Street  
Richmond, Virginia 23219

## Downtown Development Calendar

### February '05

1 Save American's Treasures application deadline ([www2.cr.nps.gov/treasures](http://www2.cr.nps.gov/treasures))

### March '05

10 All-America City Award deadline (National Civic League, [www.ncl.org/aac](http://www.ncl.org/aac))  
 14 Arts and Public Policy, Washington, DC (Americans for the Arts, <http://ww3.artsusa.org/>, 202-371-2830)  
 14-23 APA National Conference, San Francisco, CA (American Planning Association, [www.planning.org/2005conference](http://www.planning.org/2005conference))  
 30 **Virginia Main Street Milestone Awards & Northern Virginia Regional Summit, Warrenton, VA**  
 ([mainstreet@dhcd.virginia.gov](mailto:mainstreet@dhcd.virginia.gov), 804-371-7030)

### April '05

17-23 National Volunteer Week (for promotional kit contact Points of Light Foundation at 202-729-8168 or 800-VOLUNTEER, extension 5 or [volunteerweek@pointsoflight.org](mailto:volunteerweek@pointsoflight.org))  
 24-26 Virginia Governor's Conference on Tourism (Virginia Tourism Corporation, [www.vatc.org](http://www.vatc.org))  
 27-29 Virginia APA Conference, Warrenton, VA (Virginia Chapter of the American Planning Association, [www.vaplanning.org](http://www.vaplanning.org))  
 27-30 Traditional Building Exhibition and Conference, Philadelphia, PA (Traditional Building, 1-800-982-6247 or [www.traditionalbuildingshow.com](http://www.traditionalbuildingshow.com))