



## COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Virginia Department of Housing  
and Community Development

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### ***Harrisonburg recognized as the 2014 Great American Main Street***

*– Harrisonburg is a designated Virginia Main Street community –*

**RICHMOND** – The Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development is proud to announce that downtown Harrisonburg has been selected as the 2014 Great American Main Street Awards (GAMSA) winner, which was announced at the 2014 National Main Streets Conference in Detroit this week. The GAMSA is the nation's premier accolade for downtown revitalization achievement.

Harrisonburg is a designated Virginia Main Street Community. Harrisonburg Downtown Renaissance (HDR), the Main Street organization, has led a remarkable transformation of the downtown district by increasing the number of downtown housing units, redeveloping and repurposing historic buildings, providing incentives for small businesses and entrepreneurs and setting itself as a tourism destination for its culinary samplings, as well as recreational offerings.

"We are very proud to have a Virginia Main Street Community recognized as the 2014 Great American Main Street," said Bill Shelton, director of the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development. "Harrisonburg has utilized strong partnership, creativity and all available resources to create a business-friendly downtown district that has made it a great place to work, live and play."

Downtown Harrisonburg boasts a low vacancy rate of 3.5 percent, an increase in real estate value to more than half a billion dollars and an increase in tax revenue, approaching \$2 million. Its strong partnership with the city of Harrisonburg and James Madison University and the ongoing support of sustainability initiatives make downtown Harrisonburg a hub for entrepreneurs and attractive to downtown residents.

"Harrisonburg Downtown Renaissance is honored to have our revitalization success recognized at the national level," says Eddie Bumbaugh, executive director of Harrisonburg Downtown Renaissance. "The GAMSA award is a testament to the work of our organization, city government and community members, and we believe this announcement will build momentum for future projects, events and success."

The other two 2014 winners are Milledgeville, Ga. and Woodbine, Iowa. Winners were selected by a national jury composed of former award winners, community development professionals and governmental agency representatives who are active in community revitalization and historic preservation.

Harrisonburg was designated a Virginia Main Street Community in 2004. Three other Virginia Main Street communities have been named Great American Main Street winners including: Culpeper in 2012, Lynchburg in 2006 and Manassas in 2003.

The Virginia Main Street program provides assistance and training to help communities increase the economic vitality of their downtown commercial districts. Virginia Main Street uses the National Main Street model to help communities revitalize their downtowns by focusing on their unique heritage and attributes. The program helps communities implement a comprehensive revitalization strategy that creates economic growth and pride in downtowns.

For more information about the Virginia Main Street program, visit [www.dhcd.virginia.gov/MainStreet](http://www.dhcd.virginia.gov/MainStreet).

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