



To: Mississippi Main Street Investors

Re: Semi-Annual Report

Date: June 29, 2018

During the first half of the 2018 calendar year, the Mississippi Main Street Association (MMSA) hosted the **7th Back Stage Pass** on Jan. 24-26 in **Tupelo**, a conference for community developers, with the Mississippi Arts Commission (MAC) and a new grant partner this year, the Mississippi Hills National Heritage Area. We had more than **100 registrants** from all over the state as well as exhibitors and performing artists from the MAC Roster Artist demonstrating their talents to festival and event planners in the hopes of being booked to perform at an upcoming event. The conference focused on marketing the many strong assets in our communities in Mississippi and developing events to spur economic development through shopping locally and attracting tourists. As part of this conference, we awarded a **\$1,500 Grand Prize** to one conference attendee (**Rollingfork** was this year's winner) who will then use the funds to book a MAC Artist to perform at a community festival or event within the calendar year.

Following swiftly on the heels of Back Stage Pass this year was our **annual Directors' Retreat** on Feb. 22-23 in **Canton**. This retreat focuses on building relationships among Main Street directors in Mississippi. MMSA knows that the extent of our Main Street network throughout the state with **55 cities and towns** is our greatest strength. We had **35 directors** attend this retreat and all benefited from networking and learning from other Main Street directors and MMSA staff. A director's job is never easy; it requires a love of place and of people and being able to lead and manage many different projects, events and people with different personalities. Our directors are stronger when they come together to learn and grow. Continuing education is essential to grow in this field, and we require either a local director or board member to attend **three trainings** each year.

Jan Miller, MMSA's Director of Field Services, has visited **25** - more than half of our communities - already in 2018, providing new director training, work planning, board training, managing resource team visits and assisting with interviews for new local directors. The staff presented a **Main Street 101** for new directors and board members in Tupelo in conjunction with Back Stage Pass in January. The staff conducted a **Refresh Visit** in **Byhalia**, new Downtown Network Member in 2017, and also delivered the final report to **Houston** from its 2017 **Mississippi Vision Program**. A social media workshop for downtown businesses was held in **Baldwyn** in February and MMSA helped sponsor and secure the presenter. These community visits were in addition to hundreds of phone calls and email conversations.

Jeannie Waller Zieren, the Director of Marketing and Training, continues to offer **co-op ad opportunities** for members in various magazines, and we have published ads in **Click Magazine** and **Mississippi Magazine** this year. Jeannie sends monthly E-blasts of information and grant opportunities as well as the monthly **State of the Street** for Main Street members. MMSA strives to be a Resource Center and connect our members to the people and information needed to attain their revitalization goals. Our **social media presence** continues to grow with Twitter (6,459 followers), Facebook (2,667 followers) and Instagram (954 followers), and our website (www.msmainstreet.com) attracts hundreds of new and previous users each month.

Jeannie supervises a **public relations intern** each semester from the University of Mississippi Meek School of Journalism & New Media who assists with the weekly tasks of updating the website, email database, social media, and other communication efforts. Jeannie completed two years of coursework for the **Main Street America Institute** and graduated as the **first Main Street America Revitalization Professional in Mississippi** at the National Main Street Conference in Kansas City, MO in March.

Twenty-seven Mississippians attended the national conference among 1,600 attendees from all over the country, and we gathered together for networking during the conference. The **Downtown Tupelo Main Street Association** was recognized as a **Top 10 Semi-finalist for the Great American Main Street Award (GAMSA)** for the second time. This is a significant national achievement and we are extremely proud of their achievements in downtown Tupelo. The Closing Plenary of the conference featured Jim and Mallorie Rasberry and Josh Nowell of **Laurel** who co-star on HGTV's "Home Town." These young people shared the downtown comeback story of Laurel through the 10+ year efforts of Laurel Main Street and inspired everyone. The national recognition of Tupelo and Laurel was priceless, and we were very proud. Other advanced training staff has attended included a Farmers Market training hosted by the MSU Extension Service in Columbus and the Rural Entrepreneurship Forum in Oxford. MMSA staff speaks annually at conferences for the **Mississippi Municipal League** and other partner organizations.

The City of **Nettleton** was welcomed on April 2 as our newest Downtown Network community. Downtown Network communities are usually smaller communities just getting started in downtown revitalization with the goal to become a designated Main Street Community within three years. We have had several Allied Professional Members renew their membership in 2018, and we seek to add more Friends of Main Street (individuals and families). Programs in good standing were submitted to the National Main Street Center for **National Accreditation** and these communities were recognized through national, state and local press releases as well as during our **Annual Awards Luncheon**. Our Annual Meeting was held June 21 at the Old Capitol Inn in Jackson, and **33 awards** were given to local Main Street programs for outstanding achievement in Organization, Promotion, Design, and Economic Vitality as well as Special Awards given to individuals. We had a record crowd of **240** attend the luncheon this year, and our investors and members were recognized for their annual contributions to MMSA. We hope all of our investors will be able to join us for our **30th Anniversary** at the 2019 Annual Awards Luncheon next June. Our invitations are paperless, so please email jeanniewaller@msmainstreet.com to make sure you are receiving email alerts of upcoming events as well as our quarterly Enewsletter.

Our staff is gearing up for **three regional meetings** with our Main Street directors in July in **Meridian, Laurel and Senatobia**. We will be working in **Tupelo** with Matt Wagner, Vice-President of Revitalization Services for the National Main Street Center on a Community Transformation "Refresh" visit August 6-8. We will then be conducting these "refresh" visits for the additional communities who applied, including **Pascagoula, Canton and Woodville** within the next year. This is just one of several ways we utilize our Program Services to help our local programs.

2018 Reinvestment Statistics: January - June 2018

- 1) New Jobs Created (Net) **180**
- 2) New Businesses Created (Net) **51**
- 3) Business Expansions **18**
- 4) Façade Rehabilitation Projects Completed **23**
- 5) Downtown Residential Units Added **1**
- 4) \$ Public Investment **\$ 2,153,288**
- 5) \$ Private Investment **\$ 4,570,861**
- 6) Volunteer Hours Contributed **6, 025**
- 7) Public Improvement Projects **1**