



ALTON MARKETPLACE BRINGS “MAIN STREET” FRONT AND CENTER NON-PROFIT ENTERS NEW YEAR WITH REFINED STRATEGY, RESTRUCTURED BOARD, AND NEW NAME

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In 1996, Alton’s Main Street program was established under the name “Alton Marketplace” in order to improve the economic climate and aesthetic quality of the downtown district. As part of an effort to maximize effectiveness and be more closely recognized as part of this larger program, the Board of Directors of the Alton Marketplace Association has voted unanimously to change the name of the organization to *Alton Main Street, Inc.*

“Our mission is to engage every person, organization, and resource in our community to continue the momentum realized in downtown,” explained Ron Tanner, Alton Main Street President. *“Great progress is underway and as an organization we realized that restructuring was essential to build on that growth and hopefully extend it throughout the community.”*

The goals of the not-for-profit remain the same, to be a public/private partnership committed to a focus on community involvement, beautification and economic revitalization that builds on the assets of Alton’s historic downtown district.

The new name reflects the change in leadership and organization of the program. Armed with a new Board of Directors and a new strategic plan, Alton Main Street, Inc. (formerly Alton Marketplace Association) launches a new era in 2012. More than 6 months of planning and vibrant debate was confirmed when an Illinois Main Street assessment team visited to evaluate the organization.

“The State staff essentially confirmed that the changes we had been considering were the right course of action”, said Executive Director, Sara McGibany. *“Our new strategic plan is comprehensive and to facilitate our goals, we have restructured our Board of Directors and designated 5 committees to provide strategic leadership with action plans and clear milestones to achieve successes. We are bringing together new volunteers, a new name, and new energy for the district.”*

The vision statement reads as follows:

Alton Main Street, Inc. will create a unique and vibrant front door to our community by engaging all stakeholders and leveraging every resource. Alton's culture, residents, and economy will prosper through unified collaboration.

The voting Board of Directors includes 4 officers and 5 committee chairpersons. Besides President, Ron Tanner, Lori Smith is V.P., Stacey Noble Loveland is Secretary, and Mark Hackworth serves as Treasurer. The committee chairs are Allan Largen in *Promotions*, Sarah Ansell heads up *Design/Beautification*, Patrick King leads *Organization*, Jeannine Kelly chairs *Economic Gardening*, and Ann Bromaghim will organize the new Team Building/Volunteer committee.

Non-voting advisors include First Ward Alderman Jim Ryan, Third Ward Alderman Mike Velloff, Zeke Jabusch, President of the North Alton-Godfrey Business Council, and Tanja Moneyhun, President of the Upper Alton Association. Previous board members Breane Schafer, Nancy Elson, Brad Kreider, and Carol Queen continue to serve the organization as Project Chairs on various strategic initiatives.

“The work of these committees is what makes it all function,” Tanner added. *“Their effort is tireless and we could not have achieved this plan without the input from each of them.”*

Currently, Alton Main Street collaborates with the City of Alton to support economic development projects, business retention and recruitment, and various promotions. The organization will also continue to coordinate with the well-planned efforts of the Alton Regional Convention and Visitors Bureau to further support community events, strengthen tourism, and build the business base.

Alton Main Street will provide opportunities for organizations, business owners, and residents to participate in the process. All are encouraged to step up and join forces with Alton Main Street, Inc. to collaborate in the progress and build on the future of the community.

“Over the coming weeks, staff and board members will be walking the district and scheduling meetings with community groups to discuss future plans with stakeholders and reach out for ideas and new partners,” McGibany explained. “Members of the organization are excited about the opportunities for downtown Alton and encourage suggestions and participation from the public.”

Over the past 30 years, the Main Street movement has transformed the way communities think about the revitalization and management of their historic downtown commercial districts. Cities across the nation have come to see that a prosperous, sustainable community is only as healthy as its core.

The Main Street program, developed by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, has taken root in more than 2,000 communities and has spurred over \$49 billion in reinvestment in traditional commercial districts, galvanized thousands of volunteers, and changed the way governments, planners, and developers view preservation.

Illinois is one of 37 states whose government operates a coordinating program. Illinois Main Street is administered by the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency provides design services, and Lt. Governor Sheila Simon serves as ambassador. State staff provides training and resources to help communities define their own vision and works with local leaders to make that vision a reality. Local staff, businesses and volunteers provide grassroots leadership, raise money and spearhead revitalization activities.

For more information, Alton Main Street, Inc. is available online at [www.
AltonMainStreet.org](http://www.AltonMainStreet.org) or by phone at 618-463-1016.