



# **ALTON HOSTS A SUCCESSFUL ILLINOIS MAIN STREET DIRECTORS RETREAT**

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(16 March 2012) Alton was recently chosen by the Illinois Main Street program as the host community for a retreat offered to Executive Directors from around the state, as well as staff from the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity who oversee the program.

Twenty-five people traveled to Alton in early March for educational workshops and networking opportunities. William Brockwell, CEO of LEADERINC from St. Simons Island, GA presented courses on "Strategic Leadership to Build Effective Teams". Part of the training included a behavioral and motivator assessment. The downtown managers learned about generational differences in the workplace, and were also taught how to generate a report showing the amount of sales tax that is generated in the historic district that they serve.

"I am so glad that I was able to attend this function, as we had a really dynamic speaker and each of the attendees went away from the meetings knowing so much more about ourselves, and how to work with all different types of people. Illinois Main Street and Alton Main Street went above and beyond to host an informative and delightful conference," said Diana Kinney of Downtown Crystal Lake.

Alton Main Street organized the logistics of the event, and also planned a "Dine-A-Round Trolley Tour" for attendees, which took them to Bossanova Restaurant & Lounge for appetizers, Tony's Restaurant for a main course, and Gentelin's on Broadway for dessert. Many historical points of interest and notable downtown developments were also included in the tour. Participants also enjoyed catered

breakfasts and lunches from State Street Market, Chez Marilyn and Southern Girls BBQ, as well as an evening mixer at Jazz on Broadway.

Mayor Tom Hoechst welcomed the group to kick off the session and expressed his commitment and enthusiasm for the Illinois Main Street approach to downtown revitalization. “The support of City Hall is an invaluable resource to our volunteers who work tirelessly to promote and improve downtown Alton,” said Sara McGibany, Executive Director of Alton Main Street.

McGibany has traveled to over a dozen Illinois Main Street communities for training over the past five years as Director, and this was the first time that her colleagues have visited Alton in her tenure. “Everyone in our organization was honored to be chosen as a host community,” McGibany commented, “I have received rave reviews from everyone who attended about how much they enjoyed their visit to Alton. Many commented that our outstanding restaurants were the high point of their trip.”