



COMMUNITY MEMBERS ARE INVITED TO MAKE THEIR MARK ON ALTON'S NEXT MURAL

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Pride Inc. has made a \$750 donation to cover preparation expenses

(July 31, 2012 - Alton, IL) Alton Main Street invites area residents to help paint Alton's next mural, which is currently underway at the corner of Piasa & 9th Street. Through August 25th, children and adults may come to the mural and paint a section with muralist Jeanie Cousley's help on Wednesdays from 4 – 7p.m., and Saturdays from 8 – 10 a.m. There is a suggested donation of \$5 to leave your mark on the painting, which is themed "A River Runs Through Us".

Alton Main Street's Design Committee was inspired to refresh the blank canvas last fall. The committee developed a strategic plan then pursued funding.

The Jacoby Arts Center and Illinois Arts Council led the way with a \$900 grant. The Alton Community Service League came on board with \$200, followed by the Alton Foundation with \$4,000.

Through further research, it was discovered that products to prepare the wall properly were going to cost more than initially budgeted for, and since preparation is the key to a mural that will stand the test of time, it was critical that additional funding to do the job right be found.

Pride, Inc. put its money where its mission is and donated \$750 in order to purchase these products, which include a rust-inhibitive primer, a masonry surface conditioner called Loxon, and a product called Conflex, which is a waterproofing coating that repairs hairline cracks.

“We were excited that Alton Main Street took this project on and we wanted to do our part to help make it a reality,” said Karen Wilson, President of Pride Inc., “The donation came out of our Bucket Brigade funds, because we felt the mural fit perfectly with the goals of that program.” Pride, Inc. is a 47-year-old local nonprofit organization dedicated to community beautification. Its mission is to promote civic pride and general beautification in River Bend communities, and to support an educational program to stimulate public interest in beautification efforts. Well-known for its projects like Bucket Brigade and the Memorial Tree Program, Pride, Inc. has been a driving force behind making the community visually appealing. This contributes to the attraction and retention of businesses and residents.

According to Pride’s website, an important but overlooked strength of a community is its appearance to visitors. The mural location at 9th and Piasa Streets in downtown Alton is a heavily trafficked intersection as well as the location of the bustling Alton Farmers’ and Artisans’ Market. Turning the blank concrete wall with peeling white paint into a vibrant depiction of our community is a natural fit for Pride, Inc.’s mission.

Pride, Inc.’s donation came at a crucial time, according to Sara McGibany, Executive Director of Alton Main Street, “We can not thank the Pride Board enough for this generous gift which ensures that the mural will last for many years to come. Donations from the public going forward will be put toward a protective topcoat, and once we achieve that final goal any remaining funds will be seed money for a future mural when the time is right.” Cash donations are being accepted at the Market, and debit card donations can be accepted on the home page of www.AltonMainStreet.org.

Riverbend Head Start Preschoolers to Paint Mural With Artist

Photo Op: About 20 children ages 3 – 5 years old will paint a concrete wall with muralist Jeanie Cousley.

Who: Preschoolers enrolled in Riverbend Head Start, a local nonprofit.

What: Children will paint a section of a mural in downtown Alton with the artist

Where: 900 Piasa Street, Alton, IL 62002

When: Thursday, August 2, 2012, 9:30 a.m.

Why: Alton Main Street, the local nonprofit behind the mural, wanted to involve young at-risk children in the mural.

How: Riverbend Head Start will bring the children to the mural on its school buses. The artist and volunteers will work with the children on painting a small part of the mural.

Significance: Alton Main Street wants to give every child the opportunity to be involved in painting the mural but recognizes that not all children have the same advantages. Children qualify for Riverbend Head Start's programs because they live below the federal poverty line, have a disability, or are involved in the Department of Children and Family Services. These factors, at times, place children at a disadvantage, even in the strongest of families. Participating in a community project such as the mural can be a highlight for a family facing challenges. Though children of all ages can participate in painting the mural, giving these young, vulnerable children a "private session" will be another way for the community to invest in its future citizens.