



Alton named on national list of 20 towns pushing for Small Business Revolution

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
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ALTON - Deluxe Corporation is looking for a town to be on season three of its Small Business Revolution - Main Street series, and Alton is one of 20 on its list.

The selected city will received a \$500,000 revitalization from the corporation for the series, which runs on www.smallbusinessrevolution.org, as well as Hulu and YouTube. The show features Deluxe Corporation's Brand and Communications Officer Amanda Brinkman as a host alongside several marketing experts, who all have the goals of assisting struggling business owners find a path to success.

Nominations have been open from Sept. 28 - Nov. 19, and thousands of communities have been entered. Alton has made the top 20, and the top 10 will be announced in January. Eventually, five or six communities will be put to a national vote to determine the winner.

"There are so many deserving towns that need this boost," Brinkman said in a release from Deluxe Corporation. "Our team decided to announce 20 deserving communities so we can do a deeper dive into their structure and their needs before moving on to the next round. No matter what, each of these 20 would make a great winner for our contest."

Alton Main Street Executive Director Sara McGibany said Alton was nominated by Old Bakery Beer Company, adding she believes recent improvements to the East Broadway Corridor are showcasing the city's entrepreneurial spirit.

"One of the biggest changes that I've seen in recent years is the resurgence in attention along East Broadway and its ancillary streets," McGibany said in a Facebook message. "Many of these buildings are very large and were built for an intended purpose that is no longer needed. So it takes vision to reimagine these properties and a bit of risk to fund their adaptive reuse."

Some examples of these improvements include Old Bakery Beer Company, which started its life in a building once called the Colonial Bakery, the Cracker Factory, which was in fact a cracker factory before being converted into an upscale hospitality suite, an old ice cream factory now seeing new life as a retail and event space and even an old post office, which is becoming a cafe, coffee roastery and small business incubator.

"Alton's Downtown District is enjoying a surge of private investment in recent years, and being a part of such a notable national competition would be quite a boost for Alton's burgeoning business economy," McGibany said. "Gaining this recognition would surely help continue our progress and attract additional momentum to push our community past the tipping point toward additional success."

Deluxe Corporation describes itself as a growth engine for small businesses and financial institutions. Nearly 4.4 million small business customers access Deluxe's wide range of products and services, including customized checks and forms, as well as website development and hosting, email marketing, social media, search engine optimization and logo design.

The other communities on the list are as follows:

- Aberdeen, South Dakota
- Americus, Georgia

- Amesbury, Massachusetts
- Bastrop, Texas
- Brainerd, Minnesota
- Bucyrus, Ohio
- Cartersville, Georgia
- Excelsior Springs, Missouri
- Exeter, New Hampshire
- Farmville, Virginia
- Florence, Oregon
- Glenwood Springs, Colorado
- Laurel, Mississippi
- Martinez, California
- Owatonna, Minnesota
- Paducah, Kentucky
- Palatka, Florida
- Sanford, North Carolina
- Siloam Springs, Arkansas