

This revolution will be televised, Pt. 1: Broadway businesses speak about applying for The Small Business Revolution

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ALTON – After Alton's victory in *The Small Business Revolution's* national vote for a town to be showcased in its season three, several local businesses are filling out their applications to be featured on the show.

Those applications are due by March 6, and must come from businesses located within 1.5 miles of the city's visitors center downtown. That radius includes both the Downtown District and the Broadway Corridor. On Friday afternoon at Bluff City Grill,

a reporter from Riverbender.com discussed the Broadway Corridor with two of the main businesses trying to restore it to its former glory – Donna and Dave Nunnally from It's Raining Zen and Cathy Gross of Bluff City Grill.

Donna Nunnally said she was working on an application for It's Raining Zen, and Gross said she spent a longer amount of time on hers than she expected. Both said they had a use for the money, but also agreed they would not feel slighted if they were not one of the six businesses ultimately selected by the show's production staff.

“I think everyone should apply personally,” Gross said.

Gross said she would like to see more outdoor seating and some additional renovations on her building, which was once the Eagles Club. More importantly, however, Gross applied on behalf of Broadway itself.

“I want to see better lighting and sidewalks on Broadway to give it more of the comfy feel of downtown,” Gross said. “I would much rather that application get picked than for Bluff City.”

That feeling of love for Broadway was echoed by Donna and Dave Nunnally. Each recalled their travels and seeing wrought iron archways spanning streets with banners and town names.

“Seeing one of those always lets you know you're in the part of town you want to be in,” Dave Nunnally said.

Such improvements as those were a part of both Bristol Borough, Pennsylvania and Wabash, Indiana's wishlists when *The Small Business Revolution* came into town “like a whirlwind.” While the show and staff predominately works with marketing and tech support, a good portion of the \$500,000 promised in investments goes to improving the city itself.



Donna Nunnally said she wanted to apply for It's Raining Zen, as the business is planning yet another expansion to increase its clothing retail space as well as its alternative healing rooms. Donna Nunnally is a Reiki Master, and does such work, which she described as deeply personal and emotional, in a room that, while comfortable, is loud – especially in the summer.

“I love the amount of tourism we get on the Great River Road from cars and bikers, but sometimes when doing work of such a deeply personal and emotional nature, the sound of a motorcycle revving is a bit much,” she said. “I want people to be able to relax in that space, and then afterwards get on their motorcycle and rev it up without disturbing anyone else and enjoy themselves.”

She said she would remedy that issue with better soundproofing, which she said she plans on including in the application to the show.

Like Gross, however, Dave and Donna Nunnally agreed the victory is one for all of Alton, not just the six businesses selected by the show.

“This whole campaign has been a great example of the community coming together for a common goal,” Dave Nunnally said. “I really hope we can continue this momentum toward doing great things.”

Donna Nunnally said she trusts Deluxe Corporation, the sponsors of *The Small Business Revolution*, to know where the \$500,000 is best suited in the community. She compared it to her Reiki therapy.

“Reiki is a treatment for people involving taking energy from God, the source or however you would refer to it and directing it to wherever it needs to go,” she said. “It's perfect love and light and goodness. I trust the Deluxe Corporation will see who needs it the most and put the money where it needs to go.”

Lighthouse Sounds – a recording studio currently located on Market Street in Alton is planning a move to 628 Broadway by June. The two-year-old business has submitted its application already and chief engineer Alex St. Cin said they could really use the assistance being offered by Deluxe Corporation and *The Small Business Revolution*.

The move benefits the studio because of more available space as well as the ability to own the building in which it operates. St. Cin also described the purchase of the former fireplace store as “a steal.” Renovations, however, have been expensive – despite lots of capable volunteers. St. Cin said he would appreciate some help from the show with renovations as well as the Deluxe Corporation and *The Small Business Revolution* host Amanda Brinkman's specialty – marketing.

“We're really looking to expand our brand,” St. Cin said. “We've tried newspaper ads and radio spots, but those don't really hit our demographic. We can reach that better with boosted Facebook and Instagram ads, but the majority of people hear about us through word-of-mouth. People will bring friends in with us to record, and they will have no idea we were even here doing this – and they're from Alton! It's like, 'we've been here for two years, how have you not heard of us?’”



Once finished, St. Cin said the first floor of the new building will feature the main studio as well as a new addition to Lighthouse Sounds: a retail shop.

“We want to sell things related to music, like instruments, strings, picks, and the like,” he said. “We also have a deal with Ian Whitmore (who founded recent Alton music collective – Cochlear Collective) to sell local band vinyls and merchandise. We’re also going to sell vinyls that are not exactly local, but our main focus will definitely be local.”

St. Cin, like the Nunnallies and Gross, said he is excited to see the synergy *The Small Business Revolution* will bring to Alton's businesses. He said he works with local businesses like Old Bakery Beer Company to provide sound equipment. He said they return the favors by sponsoring events, such as a recent anniversary party at the studio over the summer. Returning the favor is not necessary for assistance, however, St. Cin said.

Regardless of which six Alton businesses are chosen, each business owner or manager speaking to Riverbender.com Friday afternoon was excited to see the town had been chosen by a national vote, and hoped the momentum and collective town spirit could continue and expand through and even after the filming.

Applications can be found [here](#), and businesses and nonprofits within 1.5 miles of the visitors center are eligible to apply by March 6.