



Alton Main Street Recognized Statewide For Outstanding Revitalization Efforts

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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ALTON - Alton Main Street has received some prestigious recognition being awarded the Lieutenant Governor Award for Design. The honor recognizes the organization's mini-mural grant program which resulted in public art projects on exterior walls of River Bend Yoga (100 W. 3rd St.) and The Lovejoy (401 Piasa St.), and additionally transformed a utility box in the 100 block of 3rd Street into a work of art.

A salute goes out to Executive Director Sara McGibany, the board and the overall organization for such extensive work over the past year for community revitalization. McGibany has led so many positive developments in the Alton Downtown community over the years and this just adds to the list with its hard-working board and volunteers. McGibany is the force behind the valuable organization with her energy, creativity and positive nature with Alton's success always at the focal point of her efforts.

The Lieutenant Governor Award for Excellence in Revitalization is one of the most notable recognitions for Illinois Main Street communities to achieve for their work in bringing economic prosperity to their communities. Work highlights projects, activities, and events focused on the Main Street Approach™, as well as outstanding volunteers and board members.

“Main streets across Illinois showcase the very best of small businesses and revitalization efforts. I’m so proud of the 2023 award recipients for their hard work and talent to create positive change in our Main Street communities,” said Lt. Governor Juliana Stratton. “That positive change will spark economic opportunities and jobs that build purpose and a sense of community throughout Illinois.”

McGibany was exceptionally excited about this tremendous recognition and shared her appreciation to all involved: "We extend our sincere appreciation to Lt. Governor Julianna Stratton for honoring Alton Main Street with this award which celebrates the power of creativity to transform and inspire communities. This recognition underscores the transformative impact of our program's dedication to preserve and revitalize Alton's historic charm.

"It's a testament to the collective efforts of our residents, businesses, and partners who breathe life into Downtown Alton, making it a beacon of culture and heritage. We are proud to share this achievement with the artists and property owners who collaborated to create these works of art that are being honored, along with all of our volunteers who contribute to the vibrancy of our beloved community."

On Wednesday, November 15, 2023, Lt. Governor Juliana Stratton alongside Main Street America recognized 16 awardees at the Illinois Main Street conference. Twelve

awards were given for program efforts, two for outstanding volunteers, and one each for Board Member and Volunteer of the Year.



The full list of recognitions is as follows (details can be found on the Illinois Main Street website):

Awards for Design

- Alton Main Street Alton, IL | Mini-mural grant program
- Greater Freeport Partnership | Freeport, IL | Chicago Avenue Streetscape Project
- Jacksonville Main Street | Jacksonville, IL | The Plaza Project

Awards for Economic Vitality

- Action Brown County | Mt. Sterling, IL | Start-Up and Business Innovation Competitions
- New Covenant CDC BFD | North Lawndale | Chicago, IL | Business Financial Dashboard
- Sterling Main Street | Sterling, IL | Shoppes at Grandon Plaza

Awards for Organization

- Austin African American Business Networking Association | Austin Area Chicago, IL | When Soul City Met Black Wall Street

- MainStreet Libertyville | Libertyville, IL | Oktoberfest in Libertyville
- Calumet Area Industrial Commission | Pullman/Roseland Community Chicago, IL | Community Bike Ride

Awards for Promotion

- Batavia MainStreet | Batavia, IL | Increased Merchant Engagement & Promotion Strategy
- Six Corners Association | Portage Park/northwest side Chicago, IL | Go Local - Six Corners
- The District Quincy | Quincy, IL | Blues in the District Concert Series

Outstanding Volunteers

- Batavia MainStreet – Suzy Ray
- Dixon Chamber of Commerce & Main Street – Beautify Dixon – Preservation and Beautification Committee

Volunteer of the Year

- Greater Freeport Partnership – Devin Mielke

Board Member of the Year

- Greater Freeport Partnership – Josh Elliott

“Throughout the year, Illinois Main Street communities work tirelessly to build relationships with businesses, property owners and other economic development partners to create a vibrant place for residents and visitors alike,” Jim Miller, Illinois Main Street State Coordinator. “Collectively, these recognitions showcase just a portion of what can be accomplished when using the Main Street Approach™ as a method for economic development.”

The 2023 Illinois Main Street Conference was hosted alongside the Chicago Main Street program, and in partnership with the office of Lt. Governor Juliana Stratton, the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, and the City of Pontiac.

All projects, activities, or events submitted for recognition must have been completed in 2022 through June 30, 2023. Volunteer nominations reflect an amalgamation of work done with the Main Street organization and community.

Learn more about Illinois Main Street and view a full list of award winners at ilmainstreet.org.

ABOUT ALTON MAIN STREET

Alton Main Street engages our community in the continued renewal of our historic downtown district and Mississippi River heritage by cultivating an attractive center of economic and social activity.

ABOUT ILLINOIS MAIN STREET

Illinois Main Street (IMS) supports a network of communities across the state that are working to bring prosperity to their older and historic downtowns and commercial districts. IMS does this by providing hands-on training, statewide workshops, networking opportunities, and other resources. Illinois Main Street programs have collectively secured nearly \$1.2 billion in public and private reinvestment, with 24,000 businesses started, added over 11,000 jobs and rehabilitated 1,220 buildings since 1992. Illinois Main Street is administered by Main Street America, a national movement of neighborhoods and communities who share both a commitment to place and to building stronger communities through preservation-based economic development. Learn more at ilmainstreet.org.