

# Alton Main Street Hosts Appreciation Party to Recognize Community Advocates

by Sydney Sinks, News Reporter  
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ALTON - Community members gathered at The Lovejoy for the Alton Main Street appreciation party on Thursday, Jan. 11, 2024.

Alton Main Street is an organization that promotes small business and growth in the Alton community. The party recognized volunteers and community partners who have contributed to the organization's mission.

"These supporters have a shared vision for our small business community and make Alton a wonderful place to live, work and visit," said Chris Miller, a community advocate.

Sara McGibany, Alton Main Street's executive director, thanked attendees for their contributions to Alton. She introduced a few award winners that Alton Main Street chose to recognize for their service and commitment to the community.

Robert Hellrung won the Extra Mile Award for the time he spends picking up litter, pulling weeds and championing Alton. Debbie Monroe was named Volunteer of the Year for her community service through Alton Main Street at the Alton Farmer's Market. Mike Weller was recognized for Excellence in Historic Preservation for his commitment to restoring the building at 100 W. 3rd Street in Alton.

Strangelovely, a vintage clothing and furniture store, won New Business of the Year. Artica was recognized as the Partner of the Year for their work with Alton Main Street to bring St. Louis's Artica Festival to downtown Alton. The Audubon Center at Riverlands was named the Sponsor of the Year for their sponsorship of the Alton Flyway Mural, which was commissioned by Alton Main Street and completed in October 2023 in downtown Alton.

Stephanie Schrage was recognized for six years of service on the Alton Main Street Board of Directors. She thanked the community and renewed her commitment to the organization.

CJ Nasello was the featured speaker for the event. He noted the dedication of Alton Main Street's Board of Directors and thanked McGibany and Miller for their work, and he commended attendees for their contributions to the community.

"Our roots are here," Nasello said. "All of your roots are here throughout the county, too. It's not just Alton, but all of you make up downtown Alton, which is the most vibrant spot in Madison County, in the 618, and it's because of all of your hard work, all of your perseverance, all of your dedication, and the fact that we all want to get along for the greater goal of a brighter horizon tomorrow."

For more information about Alton Main Street, visit their [official website at DowntownAlton.com](https://DowntownAlton.com).

