



# **Wood River Business Alliance's New Director Discusses Main Street Affiliation, More**

by Dalton Brown, News Reporter  
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WOOD RIVER - Kristen Burns, the newly-named executive director of the Wood River Business Alliance, recently shared more about the group becoming the Riverbend's latest Main Street organization and their goals going forward.

Burns said on [Our Daily Show! on Riverbender.com](#) that there are only two Main Street organizations in downstate Illinois, including Alton Main Street and now the Wood River Business Alliance. She noted the two cities' close proximity will hopefully lead to greater growth for the whole region.

"There's only a couple in downstate, so it's really big for us to be able to get it, especially since we're so close to Alton," "I think that's really exciting because there's so many things we'll be able to work together to do, and it's just going to grow the Riverbend area."

Illinois Main Street, a division of Main Street America, "supports a network of communities across the state that are working to bring prosperity to their older and historic downtowns and commercial districts," according to its [website](#). Burns said the historic downtowns of both Alton and Wood River make them ideal cities for the Main Street mission of preserving historic downtown business districts.

Burns, who has formerly served as the Business Alliance's vice president, said she will officially "take the reins" as executive director in May of 2024. She was also the Marketing and Public Relations consultant for the City of Wood River, a position she'll be moving on from.

The news of Burns accepting her new role was bittersweet for Wood River Mayor Tom Stalcup, who still wished her "good luck" with her new position at the last [City Council meeting](#). Burns said Stalcup, along with some other city officials, have been consistently supportive of her efforts.

"He was really, really excited, because he saw the passion that we had for this and he really helped with that," Burns said of the mayor. "Him and Chief Wells and Steve Palen, they've been so incredibly supportive in just helping us push forward."

Burns said the Business Alliance's first official board meeting as a Main Street organization will take place tomorrow, April 28, 2024. From there, the organization will



be extremely busy between organizing Farmers Market vendors, the Summer Kickoff event, a ribbon-cutting for a newly renovated office space, and much more. Burns also said new businesses are rapidly joining the community.

“In the coming months, we’ll have three new businesses that we’ve already signed leases for - and that just happened in the last week,” Burns said.

To learn more about the Wood River Business Alliance, its Main Street affiliation, and their upcoming events, visit their [website](#) or see the full interview with Burns at the top of this story or on [Riverbender.com/video](http://Riverbender.com/video).