

Mount Vernon-Lisbon Community Development August 2008 Monthly Summary

PROMOTION COMMITTEE – Co-Chairs: Sara Gaarde, Lori Winder, Jennifer Miller

- The summer “Save \$10” campaign concluded in August. The campaign was designed to point out to local residents that each time they drive out of town to shop it costs them at least \$10 in gas. Local residents can “Save \$10” by shopping in town, and they can help ensure the health of their local businesses as well. It began with yellow “Save \$10” buttons worn by business owners and employees at work all over town. The next phase included window signs in the stores, on which the “Save \$10” message was continued with either a general message or with a listing of merchandise that could be bought at that business for \$10 or less. Both phases were bolstered by weekly news items and advertising in The Sun.
- Lincoln Highway Art Festival - The Promotion Committee granted \$500 to the Mount Vernon Area Arts Council to help with advertising and marketing of the Lincoln Highway Art Festival. The event is set for Saturday, September 27 on Mount Vernon Main Street.
- Fall Planning - The retail subcommittee of the Promotion Committee is working on a fall marketing campaign, which will emphasize the beauty of our area in October and how many shops and cafes we have to offer to “day-trippers” from the area. Retail is also working on improving participation in a common “open late” night to be bolstered by special events during “open night” only.
- Chili Cook-off - The community events subcommittee of the Promotion Committee is hard at work planning the Chili Cook-off, which is set for Saturday, October 11 on Main Street. This is the second annual cook-off, in which amateur chefs whip up their special chili recipe, and everyone gets to try it all! Please check the visitmvl.com web site for the latest.
- Want to Get Involved? More help is always needed! If you want to get involved in promotion, call Bill Micheel at 319-210-9935 and he will forward your name and contact information to the Promotion Committee.

DESIGN COMMITTEE – Co-Chairs: Ed Sauter, Karla Steffens-Moran

- The deadline for submission of Business Improvement Grants was extended to September 30. These grants are an equal match, up to a maximum grant amount of \$1000, for projecting signs and awnings for properties in the Mount Vernon Main Street District. The Design Committee has up to \$12,000 set aside for these grants. A second cycle of grants will follow with an expanded area of eligibility that includes Main Street Lisbon. Contact Bill Micheel for the one page grant application form.
- The Community Billboard Project, the sign on the side of Fran and Cherrie's Skillet Cafe, is undergoing a total redesign following a closer inspection which showed the base of the sign is deteriorating. A new design for the base which replicates the current profile will be developed and priced before deciding how best to continue.
- The Committee decided on several projects to be highlighted during the fall Design Charette with Main Street personnel October 1-2. We will solicit 3-4 interested building owners for store front designs, rear building designs, and at least one of the alleyways leading from the rear parking areas to Main Street. The ongoing attempt to find a garbage solution will also be discussed.

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- Plans are progressing for a community clean-up effort this fall. Volunteers from Cornell, the Main Street businesses, and others will be organized to conduct a one-day concerted effort to rid the Main Street zone of trash, clutter and other undesirable intrusions. The long-term plan is for the clean-up to expand to the entire Community Development Board realm of Lisbon and Mount Vernon and for it to be a semi-annual event (Spring and Fall).
- Main Street Mount Vernon tree lighting is still an issue. Contact will be made with the original installing electrician to see if the trouble area can be pinpointed. It is uncertain if the problem is in the electrical supply, the underground wiring, or the tree lights themselves.
- The task group working on Design Guidelines for the urban corridor, retail, and Highway 30 commercial areas will be cooperating with the Planning and Zoning Commission to incorporate their vision into the zoning ordinance.
- The IDOT has been contacted to install the remaining 2 "Main Street" community signs. Two are currently in-place near Guild Hall and the First Street Building. The two located on Highway 1 north and south must be installed at the entrance to the city versus the entrance to the actual Main Street district due to IDOT regulations.
- Work continues on the Scorz building. All floor and roof structural repairs have been completed. A roof has been installed and work on masonry restoration continues. Windows are the next critical issue. The owners have been working with the Historic Preservation Commission to assure historically acceptable windows and other visual improvements are consistent with preservation guidelines.

ORGANIZATION COMMITTEE – Co-Chairs: Dee Ann Rexroat, Brenda Langenberg

- Co-chairs met to reorganize goals and brainstorm potential investment and membership drive concepts and plans.
- Contacted numerous business owners and individuals inviting them to join a committee; several signed up for the Sept. 3 work plan development workshop with Main Street professionals.
- Approximately 400 Cornell students attended "Meet Your Community Night" on August 28th. This was hosted by the Organization sub-committee with about 30-35 businesses participating. The event is designed to inform students of available products and services and to welcome them to the area.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE – Co-Chairs: Dick Budde, Stephanie Hasselmann

- No activity to report.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – Rich Herrmann, Ed Sauter, Dee Ann Rexroat, Stephanie Hasselmann, Jennifer Miller

- Held a work session August 18 to discuss investment and memberships, incorporation to a 501(c3) organization, future priorities and general discussion on roles, responsibilities and progress.