

# Main Street

## **An Idaho Main Street Program: Exploring the Possibilities**

White Paper  
For Discussion  
September 20, 2007

IDAHO

# Table of Contents

I.	Background.....	2
II.	The National Main Street Program.....	3
III.	State Programs Around the U.S.....	6
IV.	Main Street Programs in Neighboring States.....	7
V.	Downtown Revitalization Resources in Idaho.....	8
VI.	Potential Options for Main Street in Idaho.....	11
VII.	Next Steps.....	11
VIII.	Sources.....	12
VIX.	Appendices.....	13
	A. Idaho Gem Grants.....	14
	B. Idaho Community Development Block Grant Handbook 2008 (excerpt).....	15
	C. National Main Street Accreditation Information.....	18

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*Disclaimer: This White Paper was developed by the author in collaboration with fellow Idaho delegates to the 2007 National Main Street Conference and Idaho state agency representatives, as a summary of downtown revitalization resources and related programs in Idaho, of previous and current efforts related to Main Street, and as a reference to begin discussion about the potential opportunities for an Idaho Main Street program. It is based on information-gathering from state and national sources, and conversations among community representatives interested in Main Street in Idaho. The information and observations are purely the responsibility of the author, and are not intended to be 100% comprehensive, or to reflect the views of state agency personnel.*

# I. Background

The National Main Street Program, and its Four Point Approach to downtown revitalization, has been discussed and used as a resource in Idaho for more than two decades.

## **Early Beginnings: Mid-1980s**

In 1986, Ida-Ore Planning and Development Association (now Sage Community Resources in Region 3) received a grant from the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) to start a Main Street program in SW Idaho and in Regions 1 and 4. Several people from each of the three economic development districts attended a week of Main Street training conducted by the National Trust and the Oregon Main Street program in the fall of 1986. The training materials received at that event have been used in a number of communities over the years.

Communities involved in the project included Nampa, Jerome, Oakley, Shoshone, Twin Falls, Coeur d'Alene, Sandpoint, etc. Twin Falls and Sandpoint created Business Improvement Districts (BID) to fund full-time Main Street Managers, and were able to sustain programs. However, the regional coordination/support effort could not sustain itself after the EDA funds were expended.

## **Several Main Street Programs are Currently Operating in Idaho**

Idaho communities that currently operate Main Street programs with full time directors include Idaho Falls, Oldtown Pocatello, Coeur d'Alene, and Sandpoint. Other communities that have expressed strong interest in starting a Main Street program include Lewiston, Moscow, Bonners Ferry, Filer, Salmon, Nampa, Caldwell, Kamiah, and Kooskia/Stites, among others.

## **State Economic Development Professionals Support Main Street**

In March 2007, the Idaho Economic Development Association, Idaho Department of Commerce, and Idaho Rural Partnership sponsored a statewide economic development conference in Boise called *Emerging Trends in Economic Development*, which included a session about the National Main Street Program and its role in economic development. Panelists included Todd Barman from the National Trust, Mary Randolph from Wyoming Main Street, and Timothy Bishop from the Ellensburg (Washington) Downtown Association. At the end of the conference, economic and community development professionals from around the state overwhelmingly expressed support for an Idaho Main Street Program.

## **Idaho Delegation Meets at 2007 National Main Street Conference**

In April 2007, during the National Main Street Conference in Seattle, Idaho was represented by eight delegates from Lewiston, Grangeville, White Bird, Idaho Falls, and Pocatello. The "Idaho delegation" held a meeting to discuss steps to initiate a Main Street program in Idaho, including potential partners, sources of funding, and ways to move the process forward. The delegates identified as potential partners the Idaho Department of Commerce, Idaho State Historical Society/State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), Idaho Rural Partnership, Association of Idaho Cities (AIC), UI Extension, Preservation Idaho, Idaho Housing organizations, Idaho Economic Development Assn., Economic Development Districts, regional tourism organizations, and others.

## **Idaho State Historical Society and Idaho Dept. of Commerce Host Meeting**

In July 2007, the City of Lewiston and Lewiston Chamber of Commerce Downtown Task Force, who were part of the Idaho delegation at the national conference, sent a letter to Idaho SHPO formally requesting assistance with moving the process forward on behalf of communities around the state who are working to revitalize their downtowns using the Main Street approach. The Idaho State Historical Society partnered with the Idaho Department of Commerce to host a meeting on September 20, 2007.

## II. The National Main Street Program

The Main Street Approach™ and Main Street programs on the local level are one of the most powerful economic development tools in the nation ([www.mainstreet.org](http://www.mainstreet.org)). In 2006, economic activity reported from approximately 1,900 Main Street communities was as follows:

### **2006 Main Street Reinvestment Statistics**

Dollars Reinvested: Total reinvestments in physical improvements from public/private sources. \$41.6 billion  
Average investment per community \$11,083,273  
Net gain in businesses: 77,799  
Net gain in jobs: 349,148  
Number of building rehabilitations: 186,820  
Reinvestment ratio: \$25.76 to 1

*Downtowns or traditional commercial districts are the most visible indicator of community economic and social health. They are either assets or liabilities in the effort to retain and recruit new residents, new businesses and industries, retirees, tourists, and others to the community.*

**Main Street is not a one-time project – it is a program:** the National Main Street Program offers an ongoing and comprehensive commercial district revitalization strategy that has been widely successful in towns and cities nationwide. Described below are the four points of the Main Street approach, which work together to build a sustainable revitalization effort.<sup>1</sup>

**Organization** involves getting everyone working toward the same goal and assembling the appropriate human and financial resources to implement a Main Street revitalization program. A governing board and standing committees make up the fundamental organizational structure of the volunteer-driven program. Volunteers are coordinated and supported by a paid program director as well. This structure not only divides the workload and clearly delineates responsibilities, but also builds consensus and cooperation among the various stakeholders.

**Promotion** sells a positive image of the commercial district and encourages consumers and investors to live, work, shop, play and invest in the Main Street district. By marketing a district's unique characteristics to residents, investors, business owners, and visitors, an effective promotional strategy forges a positive image, carried out by local volunteers. These activities improve consumer and investor confidence in the district and encourage commercial activity and investment in the area.

**Design** means getting Main Street into top physical shape. Capitalizing on its best assets — such as historic buildings and pedestrian-oriented streets — is just part of the story. An inviting atmosphere, created through attractive window displays, parking areas, building improvements, street furniture, signs, sidewalks, street lights, and landscaping, conveys a positive visual message about the commercial district and what it has to offer. Design activities also include instilling good maintenance practices in the commercial district, enhancing the physical appearance of the commercial district by rehabilitating historic buildings, encouraging appropriate new construction, developing sensitive design management, and long-term planning.

**Economic Restructuring** strengthens a community's existing economic assets while expanding and diversifying its economic base. The Main Street program helps sharpen the competitiveness of existing business owners and recruits compatible new businesses and new economic uses to build a commercial district that responds to today's consumers' needs. Converting unused or underused commercial space into economically productive property also helps boost the profitability of the district. Coincidentally, the four points of the Main Street approach correspond with the four forces of real estate value, which are social, political, physical, and economic.

<sup>1</sup> National Main Street Center  
Idaho Main Street Program White Paper

## The Main Street Philosophy - Eight Principles of Success

The National Trust Main Street Center's experience in helping communities bring their commercial corridors back to life has shown time and time again that the Main Street Four-Point Approach succeeds. That success is guided by the following eight principles, which set the Main Street methodology apart from other redevelopment strategies. For a Main Street program to be successful, it must whole-heartedly embrace the following time-tested Eight Principles.

1. **Comprehensive**: No single focus — lavish public improvements, name-brand business recruitment, or endless promotional events — can revitalize Main Street. For successful, sustainable, long-term revitalization, a comprehensive approach, including activity in each of Main Street's Four Points, is essential.
2. **Incremental**: Baby steps come before walking. Successful revitalization programs begin with basic, simple activities that demonstrate that "new things are happening" in the commercial district. As public confidence in the Main Street district grows and participants' understanding of the revitalization process becomes more sophisticated, Main Street is able to tackle increasingly complex problems and more ambitious projects. This incremental change leads to much longer-lasting and dramatic positive change in the Main Street area.
3. **Self-help**: No one else will save your Main Street. Local leaders must have the will and desire to mobilize local resources and talent. That means convincing residents and business owners of the rewards they'll reap by investing time and money in Main Street — the heart of their community. Only local leadership can produce long-term success by fostering and demonstrating community involvement and commitment to the revitalization effort.
4. **Partnerships**: Both the public and private sectors have a vital interest in the district and must work together to achieve common goals of Main Street's revitalization. Each sector has a role to play and each must understand the other's strengths and limitations in order to forge an effective partnership.
5. **Identifying and capitalizing on existing assets**: Business districts must capitalize on the assets that make them unique. Every district has unique qualities like distinctive buildings and human scale that give people a sense of belonging. These local assets must serve as the foundation for all aspects of the revitalization program.
6. **Quality**: Emphasize quality in every aspect of the revitalization program. This applies to all elements of the process — from storefront designs to promotional campaigns to educational programs. Shoestring budgets and "cut and paste" efforts reinforce a negative image of the commercial district. Instead, concentrate on quality projects over quantity.
7. **Change**: Skeptics turn into believers and attitudes on Main Street will turn around. At first, almost no one believes Main Street can really turn around. Changes in attitude and practice are slow but definite — public support for change will build as the Main Street program grows and consistently meets its goals. Change also means engaging in better business practices, altering ways of thinking, and improving the physical appearance of the commercial district. A carefully planned Main Street program will help shift public perceptions and practices to support and sustain the revitalization process.
8. **Implementation**: To succeed, Main Street must show visible results that can only come from completing projects. Frequent, visible changes are a reminder that the revitalization effort is under way and succeeding. Small projects at the beginning of the program pave the way for larger ones as the revitalization effort matures, and that constant revitalization activity creates confidence in the Main Street program and ever-greater levels of participation.

## The National Main Street Center

The National Trust Main Street Center is a program of the National Trust for Historic Preservation ([www.mainstreet.org](http://www.mainstreet.org)).<sup>2</sup> In the 1970s, the National Trust developed its pioneering Main Street approach to commercial district revitalization, an innovative methodology that combines historic preservation with economic development to restore prosperity and vitality to downtowns and neighborhood business districts. Today, the message has spread, as the Center advocates a comprehensive approach that rural and urban communities alike can use to revitalize their traditional commercial areas through historic preservation and grassroots-based economic development. It has created a network of more than 40 statewide, citywide, and countywide Main Street programs with more than 1,800 active Main Street programs nationally.

The Center has led the preservation-based revitalization movement by serving as the nation's clearinghouse for information, technical assistance, research, and advocacy. Through our consulting services, conferences, publications, membership, newsletter, and trainings, it has educated and empowered thousands of individuals and local organizations to lead the revitalization of their downtowns and neighborhood commercial districts.

- ◆ Provides direct, on-site technical assistance and consulting services to towns, cities, and urban neighborhoods.
- ◆ Supports and coordinates a nationwide network of Main Street organizations.
- ◆ Publishes a wide range of books and training materials.
- ◆ Offers membership in the National Main Street Network, which includes a subscription to Main Street News.
- ◆ Coordinates the annual National Main Streets Conference on commercial district revitalization.
- ◆ Offers professional training and certification programs through the National Main Street Institute.
- ◆ Recognizes revitalization successes with its annual National Main Street Awards.
- ◆ Provides information and research on commercial district revitalization.
- ◆ Forms strategic partnerships with organizations and agencies to promote preservation-based commercial district revitalization.
- ◆ Leads the commercial district revitalization movement nationwide.
- ◆ Works within the National Trust to provide comprehensive community revitalization, historic preservation, and strategic services to communities, as well as to assist in legislative initiatives, special projects, and more.



<sup>2</sup> National Main Street Center  
Idaho Main Street Program White Paper

### III. State Programs Across the U.S.

Nationally, 40 states and the District of Columbia have Main Street programs, the earliest begun in 1979-1980, and the most recent in 2005 (Wyoming and Montana, with Oregon currently in process). Of the 40 programs, 25 (63%) are housed in the State Department of Commerce, Division of Economic and/or Community Development (or equivalent). Six programs (15%) are housed with the State Historical Society or Historic Preservation office, and another six (15%) are free-standing nonprofit associations. Two programs are part of a State or Neighborhood Housing Development Authority, one program is housed in the Governor's Office, and another is part of the State Municipal Association.

State programs range from several full-time staff to programs based on fee-for-service. State staff provide technical assistance such as training in organization development, market analysis, retail merchandising, historic preservation, design, promotion and events, etc. State budgets for Main Street range from less than \$100,000 to more than \$1 million annually. The most common funding source is state general funds, but programs also receive funding from grants, SHPO, lottery, earmarked tax receipts, sponsors, memberships, utility companies, CDBG funds, HUD EDI/Hope 6 funds, and foundations. Many programs provide low-interest loan pools and/or grant programs for façade renovations, promotion matching funds, etc. Most states do not provide funds for local Main Street program staffing, although they do provide scholarships for local managers to attend training conferences, visits to mentor communities, etc.



#### Wyoming is Recent Example of State Main Street Program Start-Up

The Wyoming Main Street Program began with pilot legislation in 2004. The Governor appointed an advisory board of seven members, and five pilot communities were selected through a competitive selection process. The program had 1.5 FTEs, and a budget of \$450,000 for the biennium, including a \$50,000 contract with the National Trust for Historic Preservation for technical assistance, and \$300,000 in revolving loan funds for façade renovations. In 2006, an additional \$440,000 was added for technical assistance, bringing the total to \$890,000 for the next biennium, of which \$500,000 is used for technical assistance and training. Wyoming Main Street also provides technical assistance to non-Main Street communities.

The five pilot communities range in size from 964 to 27,204. Assistance to Main Street communities includes a reconnaissance visit, membership to National Main Street, scholarships for two people to attend National Main Street Conference, Main Street 101 Training, purchase of EasyWare reporting software, Main Street Manager training and quarterly meetings, technical assistance (board, committee training; design assistance, etc.), entrance signs, and an annual review. The National Trust provides the reconnaissance visits and Main Street 101 training. The revolving loan fund for façade improvements allows property owners to borrow up to \$32,000 at 4% with a 15 year payback. After just one full year of operation, the Wyoming Main Street 2006 Reinvestment Statistics were as follows:

Dollars Reinvested:	\$16.3 million
Net business gain:	34
Net gain in jobs:	100
Number of building rehabs:	38
New construction:	3
Public improvements:	15
Housing units created:	4
Volunteer hours:	2,075
Reinvestment ratio:	\$2.72 to \$1

## IV. Neighboring State Programs

The table below provides a summary of Main Street programs in Idaho's neighboring states:

CONTACT	STAFF	NMSC CONTRACT	TOTAL BUDGET, SOURCE	MAJOR FUNDING/ TA PTNRS	# M.S. CMTYS SERVED	TA BEYOND CONSULTS, LIBRARY	GRANTS TO TOWNS
<b>Montana:</b> 2005 MT Main Street Dept. of Commerce Julie Burk 406-841-2756	1 full-time: State Coordtr	\$25,000	\$125,000 ----- State General Fund		Under 5,000: 4 5-50,000: 3	Website, semi- annual mgr. mtgs, list-serve w. updates, new Affiliate Program for <2,000	None
<b>Utah:</b> 1996 Utah Main Street Program/Dept. of Cmty & Econ Dev. Bev Evans goed.utah.gov/business_ development/PCMS	1 full-time: State Coord ----- Contractors: architectural, mktg, biz dev.		\$218,300 ----- State General Fund	USU – public impr. & bus. dev. plng, Zions Bank/ Utah Heritage Fdn –. Rehab. Loan Program	Under 5,000: 3 5-50,000: 9	Gen. Assistance to non-partner communities	\$10,000/yr. for first three yrs.
<b>Washington:</b> 1984/1990 WA State Main Street Program/Dept. of Cmty, Trade & Economic Dev. Susan Kempf 360-725-4056 <a href="http://downtown.wa.gov">downtown.wa.gov</a>	2 full-time: State Coord, Assistant Coord. 1 part-time: Admin. Assistant	Up to \$50,000 2 yr. contract	\$114,909 ----- State General Fund plus \$76,000 private/ local		5,000- 50,000: 8 Over 50,000: 1 Startups: 4 Other: 88	Qrtly MS network mtgs, mgr retreat, wkshps, annual confc, awards prog, local program evalns, 1 <sup>st</sup> yr. resource teams, website	Scholarship s for state and nat'l confs and MS Certification Institute
<b>Wyoming:</b> 2005 WY Main Street, WY Bus. Council Mary Randolph 307-777-6430 <a href="http://wyomingmainstreet.org">wyomingmainstreet.org</a>	2 full-time: Coord., Program Mgr. 1 part-time: Admin. Asst.		\$890,426 ----- Biennial funding from state legislature		Under 5,000:1 5-50,000: 4	Design assist, annual review, wkshps, BOD/cmte trngs., newsletter, annual confc, wkshps., qtrly. mgr. mtgs	\$300,000 revolving loan fund for building structure
<b>Oregon:</b> 2007 OR Main Street Prog. Bob Repine Oregon Economic & Cmty Dev't Dept.	In progress	??	\$500,000 Biennial from Legislatr	OR Housing, DLCD, DOT, DCBS, DEQ, Parks-SHPO, OR Tourism Commission	None yet		\$300,000 from CDBG for façade improvements for certified MS cmtys



## V. Downtown Revitalization Resources in Idaho

There are several programs and resources currently available to Idaho communities that provide technical assistance or funding for projects to improve downtown districts; however, none of those programs provides a comprehensive, ongoing downtown management approach like Main Street.

### **Idaho Gem Community Program Offers Technical Assistance & Capacity-Building**

Created in 1988 primarily for communities under 10,000 in population, the Idaho Gem Community Program provides training and technical assistance for rural communities interested in pursuing economic and community development. The program's primary goal is to help communities build local capacity and resources to meet the challenges confronting Idaho's rural communities. The benefits of Gem Community certification include increased self-reliance, ability to better address local needs, knowledge of available resources, increased competitiveness for grants, priority access to Idaho Dept. of Commerce technical assistance and training opportunities, assistance with updating plans, and access to scholarships to the Northwest Community Development Institute. Downtown revitalization is a priority in many Gem Communities, and Gem grants can be used for downtown infrastructure projects (see Appendix A). Since the Gem Community program is broader than downtown issues, a state Main Street program could be highly complementary to Gem Community. Idaho Dept. of Commerce also offers growth management technical assistance.

### **Idaho Block Grants Provide Funds for Downtown Infrastructure**

The Idaho Department of Commerce (IDOC) manages the Community Development Block Grant program and the Rural Block Grant program, funded through U.S. Housing & Urban Development (HUD) and the State Rural Initiative respectively. HUD funds focus on prevention or elimination of slum and blight, and the funds can be used for utility and streetscape improvements in downtown districts. In order to receive project funds, communities must address organization issues, conduct a downtown assessment and market analysis, implementation plan, business development targets, and local match commitment (see Block Grant Application, Appendix B). Idaho does not allow use of the block grant funds for development of the downtown assessment and implementation plan as do other states (HUD allows up to 10% of funds to be used for technical assistance and planning), but IDOC staff provide some technical assistance.

### **Idaho Dept. of Commerce Offers Business & Tourism Development Assistance**

The Department of Commerce is engaged in partnerships with local cities and counties to employ twelve Rural Economic Development Specialists around the state. IDOC also works closely with the state's urban economic development professionals, and with the Idaho Economic Development Association (IEDA). IDOC's Tourism Development Division administers Idaho Travel Council grants, and provides technical assistance to chambers of commerce and regional tourism associations, including ways to promote community historic and cultural assets to visitors.

### **University of Idaho Pursues Outreach in Business & Community Development**

In 2001, the University of Idaho commissioned a study of potential outreach opportunities in the area of business development, including a statewide Business Incubation System, which included a Main Street component.<sup>3</sup> The UI developed agreements with ISU and BSU to partner on the incubation system. Although not yet implemented due to funding issues, the Idaho Business Incubation Network provides a blueprint for UI engagement in business development initiatives such as a Main Street program. Other outreach efforts at the UI include assistance to communities by groups of architecture students to develop downtown design concepts, and business students to assist with market and economic analyses.

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<sup>3</sup> *Idaho Business Incubation Network*, 2001, Tom Hudson Company  
Idaho Main Street Program White Paper

UI Extension assists Idaho communities by offering economic and leadership development programs. Partnering with state and federal agencies and private foundations, Extension helps communities address challenges ranging from rapid population growth to economic and social changes affecting rural Idaho. UI Extension currently employs seven Community Development Specialists around the state. Several of these professionals assist with the Horizons program, a community leadership development program funded by the Northwest Area Foundation involving fourteen rural Idaho communities. Many of those communities have identified downtown revitalization as a priority.

### **Idaho State Historical Society Offers CLG, Technical Assistance, and Funding**

ISHS manages the Certified Local Government (CLG) program, which is a local, state, and federal partnership that provides technical assistance and small grants to local governments seeking to keep for future generations what is important and significant from their past. The CLG Program responds to the needs of communities and links them to the national historic preservation program established by the National Historic Preservation Act. Two important benefits are gained by participating in the CLG Program: (1) Cities and counties formally participate in the nomination of properties to the National Register of Historic Places and, therefore, have more control over what properties are listed in the Register; and (2) Cities and counties are eligible for federal funds reserved exclusively for their use. In Idaho, about \$45,000 is distributed yearly, and twenty-five communities are participating in the program. The CLG Program Handbook is available on the ISHS web site. CLGs can apply for historic preservation grants from the National Park Service.

ISHS also developed the Idaho Historic Preservation Plan, and provides historic research, archives, and technical assistance to communities and property owners, including assistance with National Register listings. The Idaho State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) administers the federal tax incentives available to private developers and owners who rehabilitate historic buildings for commercial purposes. This program has generated over \$20 million of private construction investment and has aided in the preservation of more than fifty historic buildings in Idaho.

The Idaho Historic Preservation Council (IHPC), or Preservation Idaho, was established as a nonprofit organization in 1972 by a group of Idahoans concerned with the alarming rate at which historic sites and resources in Idaho were being lost. These individuals wanted to create an organization that could help the members of the public unite to work towards the preservation of these resources. Today, the IHPC receives the support of over 250 individuals, corporations and foundations as it advocates heritage education and preservation issues throughout the state. IHPC programs include the Heritage Homes Tour, Orchid & Onion Awards, Archwalks, Idaho History Time Machine, Bown House, Bar & Brothel Tour, and Preservation Alert!

### **Idaho Rural Partnership and Association of Idaho Cities Provide Assistance**

The Idaho Rural Partnership (IRP) is a collaboration of federal, state, local and tribal government agencies, and the private sector, established to assist rural communities and remove policy and regulatory barriers to rural development. IRP sponsors the Idaho Community Review program, annual leadership training, a statewide Rural Resources database, and specific initiatives like the Hispanic Business Initiative.

The Association of Idaho Cities (AIC) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit corporation, owned, organized, and operated by Idaho's city governments. AIC provides services that individual cities might not be able to afford on their own, such as legislative and judicial advocacy, training and education, and technical assistance to City elected officials and staff. There are a number of AIC programs to provide the necessary tools city officials need to more effectively govern their cities, including Idaho's Promise, Sample Ordinances, Idaho Community Review, Energy Efficiency, Tree City USA, and Youth Engagement in City governance.

## **Other Resources are Available to Help with Downtown Revitalization Efforts**

- ◆ The Idaho Transportation Department State Highway Improvement Program and the Transportation Enhancement Program offer resources for improving downtown infrastructure. The Idaho Scenic Byways program offers support and funding for byway-related projects.
- ◆ The Local Highway Technical Assistance Council offers funding that may be used for the engineering and construction of locally controlled streets, curbs, gutters etc.
- ◆ The Idaho Department of Water Resources Energy Program offers funding to modernize industrial, commercial and residential structures to make them more energy efficient.
- ◆ Idaho Power, Rocky Mountain Power, and Avista Utilities offer financial assistance to promote energy efficiency for building owners and grants to communities.
- ◆ The Idaho Department of Lands offers funding for landscaping and in some cases signage. The Department of Lands also manages the Tree City USA program.
- ◆ Banks are a good source of both grants for community improvement projects (through their Community Reinvestment, or CRA, program), and low interest loans.
- ◆ Economic Development Districts offer revolving loan programs to help property owners improve buildings and facades, assistance with formation of Urban Renewal Districts, and grant writing assistance.
- ◆ USDA Rural Development offers the Rural Community Development Initiative and the Rural Business Opportunity Grant program.
- ◆ US Economic Development Administration (EDA) offers grants for infrastructure and economic development activities linked to job creation.

## VI. Potential Options for Main Street in Idaho

When the Idaho delegation met at the National Main Street Conference, they agreed that, since the primary focus of Main Street is business development and economic revitalization of community centers while preserving their historic character, the Idaho Department of Commerce would be the most logical 'home' for the program. However, other possibilities for hosting the program could include the Idaho Rural Partnership (similar to the Wyoming model), UI Extension, the Idaho State Historical Society, or Association of Idaho Cities. Main Street would be a complementary addition to the Idaho Gem Community Program, as well as link to the Block Grant, Gem Grant, Business Development, and Tourism Development programs.

Local Main Street programs typically are free-standing nonprofit organizations. Many have both a 501(c)3 and a 501(c)6 designation. However, some programs are a program of the City, and some are affiliated with the Chamber of Commerce. In a couple of locations, local Main Street programs are embedded within a local or regional economic development organization, or they are a partnership with the County Extension Office (the Main Street Manager is Extension faculty).

In a few cases, a regional Main Street Circuit Rider provides staff support to several small community programs. In 2006, the Clearwater Economic Development Association in Lewiston submitted an appropriations request to undertake such a circuit rider program, focusing on communities along the Northwest Passage National Scenic Byway/All-American Road. Partners in that effort (which was not funded) included the NW Passage Scenic Byway Advisory, local economic development councils, the North Central Idaho Travel Association, Lewis Clark State College/SBDC, the Nez Perce Tribe, Idaho Transportation Dept., and Idaho Dept. of Commerce.

## VII. Next Steps

The Idaho delegates and others contributing to this White Paper discussed the possibility of obtaining funding from non-legislative sources while pursuing a legislative strategy in 2009. The partners believe that, if funding is sought, a minimum of a 3-year funding commitment is needed with sufficient funding for at least 1.5 positions, pilot communities, technical assistance, resources for support of local programs (scholarships, façade improvements, etc.), and tracking/reporting. Suggested next steps to move the process forward in Idaho include the following:

1. Convene a meeting of key players and interested community representatives to discuss needs and priorities, possible partners, potential funding sources, and responsibilities.  
STATUS: Meeting scheduled September 20, 2007 in Boise, hosted by ISHS and IDOC.
2. Outline program elements and how they interface with existing Idaho resources and programs.
3. Determine program start-up needs and process, and identify costs and timeline.
4. Determine potential funding sources for a state program, such as state general funds, CDBG technical assistance funds, Idaho Community Foundation, EDA, USDA Rural Development.
5. Develop a strategy for obtaining feedback on the proposed program elements and funding, and for soliciting the support of partners such as AIC, IEDA, IRP, Regional Development Organizations, key legislators, etc.
6. Work with the Governor's Office to develop a program proposal and budget.
7. Work with the North Idaho Chamber of Commerce (NICC) to include a tour of downtown Lewiston and presentation about Main Street during the 2008 North Idaho Legislative Tour, in preparation for introduction of a proposal in the 2009 legislative session.
8. Identify key legislative support and work with JFAC to support the Main Street program.
9. Once program authorization and funding are received, begin program implementation!

## VIII. Sources

National Trust for Historic Preservation, (202) 588-6000, [www.nationaltrust.org](http://www.nationaltrust.org)  
National Main Street Center, Lauren Adkins, (202) 588-6137, [www.mainstreet.org](http://www.mainstreet.org)  
NTHP Western Office, Elaine Stiles, (415) 947-0692

Idaho State Historical Society, Boise, Jan Gallimore, Director (208) 334-2682, and State Historic Preservation Office, (208) 334-3847, [www.idahohistory.net](http://www.idahohistory.net)

Preservation Idaho, Boise, (208) 424-5111, [www.preservationidaho.org](http://www.preservationidaho.org)

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Tourism Development Division, Carl Wilgus, Administrator  
Karen Ballard, International & Cultural Tourism

Idaho Transportation Dept., Pamela Lowe, Director, (208) 334-8000, [www.itd.idaho.gov](http://www.itd.idaho.gov)  
Scenic Byways Program, Garry Young, (208) 334-8214, [www.idahobyways.org](http://www.idahobyways.org)

University of Idaho Extension, Charlotte Eberline, Director, (208) 736-3603, [www.extension.uidaho.edu](http://www.extension.uidaho.edu)

Local Highway Technical Assistance Council, Boise, (208) 344-0565, [www.lhtac.org](http://www.lhtac.org)

Downtown Idaho Falls Development Corp., Shirley Chastain, Director, (208) 535-0399, [www.downtownidahofalls.com](http://www.downtownidahofalls.com)

Downtown Sandpoint Business Assn., (208) 255-1876, [www.downtownsandpoint.com](http://www.downtownsandpoint.com)

Old Town Pocatello, Stephanie Palagi, Director, (208) 232-7545, [www.oldtownpocatello.com](http://www.oldtownpocatello.com)

Coeur d'Alene Downtown Association, Terry Cooper, (208) 667-5986, [www.cdadowntown.com](http://www.cdadowntown.com)

Salmon Valley Stewardship, (208) 756.1686, [www.salmonvalley.org](http://www.salmonvalley.org)

Historic Downtown Twin Falls, (208) 734-2113, [www.twinfallsid.org](http://www.twinfallsid.org)

Region IV Development, Joe Herring, Director, (208) 732-5727 ext. 3003, [www.rivda.org](http://www.rivda.org)

Sage Community Resources, Kathleen Simko, President, (208) 322-7033, [www.sageidaho.com](http://www.sageidaho.com)

Clearwater Economic Development Association, Christine Frei, Director, (208) 746-0015, [www.clearwater-eda.org](http://www.clearwater-eda.org)

Wyoming Main Street, Mary Randolph, Director, (307) 777-2934, [www.wyomingmainstreet.org](http://www.wyomingmainstreet.org)

Washington Main Street, Susan Kempf, (360) 725-4056, *Organizing a Successful Downtown Revitalization Program Using the Main Street Approach*, Washington Dept. of Community, Trade & Economic Development, Olympia, [www.cted.wa.gov](http://www.cted.wa.gov)

Ellensburg Downtown Association, Timothy Bishop, (509) 962-6246, [www.ellensburgdowntown.org](http://www.ellensburgdowntown.org) and [www.savedowntown.org](http://www.savedowntown.org)

USDA Rural Development, Mike Field, State Director, (208) 378-5600, [www.rurdev.usda.gov/id](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/id)

US Economic Development Administration, Rick Tremblay, Idaho/Nevada Director, (208) 334-1521, [www.eda.gov](http://www.eda.gov)

## **VIX. Appendices**

- A. Idaho Gem Grants
- B. Idaho Community Development Block Grant Downtown Revitalization Program
- C. National Main Street Accreditation Information

## **Appendix A: Idaho Gem Grants**

Idaho Gem Grants (IGG) are an extension of the Idaho's Rural Initiative. The purpose of the program is to develop public assets for job creation and economic development. In 2007 the Idaho Legislature appropriated \$400,000 for the IGG program.

### **Eligible Applicants –**

Rural cities with a population below 10,000 residents and counties working with unincorporated rural communities are eligible applicants for these funds. Cities and counties may seek Idaho Gem Grant funds on behalf of special districts (water, sewer, highway etc), tribal governments and not for profit organizations. Under special circumstances Idaho Gem Grants may be awarded to larger communities whose population figures are skewed by temporary residents or for projects whose direct benefits will reach into rural communities.

**Gem Communities -** In 2005 the Idaho Legislature dropped the requirement that applicants to this program have a "Gem Community Certification" and maintain active "Gem Community Status". Thus, the program is now open to any rural community meeting the eligibility criteria.

**Eligible Activities -** Idaho Gem Grants are limited to the hard implementation costs of economic development projects. Some examples of eligible cost items include: construction materials, new and rehabilitative construction, architectural and engineering services; and property acquisition.

**Grant Size and Local Match –** The maximum grant amount is \$50,000 and a 20% match is required.

**Selection –**All Idaho Gem Grant proposals are screened by department staff, and if fundable, recommended to the director for award. While a wide array of projects are eligible for consideration priority is given to those applications demonstrating direct and immediate job creation benefits.

**Application Deadlines –** Applications for this grant program may be submitted at anytime. A typical application takes six weeks to review however, this timeline may be compressed by working with the Idaho Department of Commerce prior to submitting an application.

### **Additional Information -**

For additional information check the Idaho Department of Commerce Web site or contact Jerry Miller at (208) 334-2650 ext 2143.

## Appendix B: Idaho Community Development Block Grant Handbook 2008

### Chapter 8: Economic Development/Downtown Revitalization Ranking & Review

#### Part A: Instructions

Downtown revitalization projects address prevention or elimination of slum and blight as their national objective, but a downtown revitalization is made up of much more than just infrastructure improvements. Therefore the following ranking criteria look at the larger effort, rather than just the Idaho Community Block Grant project component.

I. Organization (75 points): This criterion measures the strength and depth of local commitment to the revitalization effort and the narrative should describe how the community is actively organized to plan and implement the revitalization process. This includes using a take-charge steering committee representing major community actors, and subcommittees to help with organization. Property owners, merchants/chamber of commerce, government agencies, economic development organizations, and funding agencies should all be a part of this process.

II. Economic Assessments (75 points): This criterion measures the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the assessments that underlie the implementation of the community's downtown revitalization plan. Knowing and understanding the market forces which support a community's downtown is the foundation of any revitalization effort. As a result the assessment must include:

- A. Goal for downtown, i.e., tourism, retail, mixed use, entertainment.
- B. Existing vacancy rate of downtown buildings, property values, and if available sale volume.
- C. Identify barriers to downtown revitalization, which at a minimum should include assessment of: Infrastructure needs / zoning / building codes / traffic patterns / parking / illumination and lighting / Private investment / ADA accessibility / Maintenance / Signage / Employment / Cultural Facilities.
- D. Identify the existing businesses and primary trade area in the downtown area. This should include existing land uses of downtown.
- E. A market study or survey of downtown business owners and/or downtown customers regarding the downtown demographics, supply and demand factors, needs, design issues, desired amenities and activities, and target markets.

This information will help the community determine what mixture of goods and services will most likely flourish in the downtown area, and thus enable applicants to more effectively determine the nature of their revitalization efforts.

III. Implementation (200 points): All downtown revitalization projects should have an implementation plan that outlines the activities to be completed and what effects they will have on the downtown economic environment. The plan should also contain a goals statement that couches the implementation of activities regarding the entire downtown revitalization effort, in specific measurable terms. These statements should address marketing, promotion, regulatory, cleanup and infrastructure. The plan will be awarded points as follows:

A. Action items (50 points) and implementation time frame (50 points): This measures the detail of the implementation plan including specific actions with assigned responsibilities and time frames for completion, specifically, business recruitment, events, downtown policy and regulation changes, Idaho Community Block Grant project and private capital improvement projects.

Writer's Guide: Include the community's Implementation Plan in the appendix; if your plan addresses all of the criteria in this section, no narrative is necessary. If the community does not have an Implementation Plan, or if the plan does not address all of these criteria, please complete your narrative in the space provided in Part B of this chapter. In addition to the Project Schedule you completed as part of the general application in Chapter 5, also complete a separate schedule that encompasses all other action items. Include start and completion dates

B. Design professional plan (50 points): This measures the completeness of designs and specifications undertaken to determine the scope of the grant project and estimated costs.

C. Previous amount accomplished (50 points): This measures all other action items in the implementation plan, how many have been started and the progress toward completion.

IV. Slum and Blight (200 points): All downtown revitalization applications must meet slum and blight criteria and receive at least 125 points in this category. The points for slum and blight will be awarded as follows:

A. Need and impact (100 points):

1. For the slum and blight conditions that are being addressed with grant funds, what measurable effect will the project have on the economic environment of the downtown area? Consider the following:

- (a) Increase in private investment
- (b) Establishment of new businesses or business expansion
- (c) Sales growth
- (d) Improvement of the appearance and value of property
- (e) Reduction of vacancy rates and increased housing units
- (f) These measurable terms must address both economic and community impact.

B. Relationship to overall plan (100 points)

- 1. How the proposed project is related to the other actions and needs of the implementation plan.
- 2. Whether the proposed project is foundational or peripheral to the revitalization of the downtown economy.
- 3. How logically sequenced the activities being proposed are in relation to the other activities.

V. Idaho Community Development Block Grant Project (350 points): The application must be made up of the eligible activities listed in the general section of this application handbook. The eligible activities that make up the community's project should be described in detail and located on a detailed map. The relationship between the proposed grant project and other implementation activities must be clear. All other collateral implementation activities should be discussed and the funds expended documented as well. The points will be awarded as follows:

A. Project local match (100 points): This measures the percentage of local match or applicant funds and in-kind as defined in Chapter 5 committed to the project. If there is program income from previous grants, it may also be used as local match. Match may include items such as cash on hand, LID/BID, bond, revolving loan funds, or resort city tax.

B. Project other match (75 points) : This measures the percentage of all other non-local match funds committed to the project including private, other state and federal sources used to fund or complete the Idaho Community Block Grant funded activity.

Writer's Guide: The information from A and B will be taken from the Budget Sheet you filled out in the general part of the application in Chapter 5.

C. BID/LID commitment (50 points): If the community has established a formal business or local improvement district prior to the submission of the application and addendum it will receive full points.

Writer's Guide: If the community has a BID or LID, provide documentation.

D. Related implementation expenditures (60 points): This measures the percentage of private investment or related expenditures spent of the implementation plan action items compared to the grant funds being requested. Applicable action items are those that are a part of the overall downtown revitalization effort, but are not a part of the grant funded project. All amounts spent on these other action items one year before and after the application is submitted may be included.

E. Long-term program involved (65 points): This measures the use of grant funds to leverage a payback mechanism so that funds will sustain the downtown redevelopment efforts over the long term. This pool of funds, which may be created through loans, fees, bonds, a revolving loan fund, urban renewal district, resort tax or tax increment financing, must be dedicated to the downtown area. Employment of a marketing professional dedicated to marketing and managing downtown.

Part B: Forms

Review and Ranking Narrative:

I. Organization: Describe how the community is actively organized to plan and implement the revitalization process.

II. Assessments.

III. Implementation: If the community has an implementation plan, attach it. If not or if the plan does not address all criteria specified in the directions, use the narrative to address all components as they pertain to the following sub categories:

A. Action items/implementation time frame:

B. Design professional plans:

IV. Slum and Blight:

A. Impact: State in measurable terms how the slum and blight project will have an impact on the economic environment of your downtown area.

V. Idaho Community Development Block Grant Project

A.-B. (Information will be used based on the budget sheet in Chapter 5.)

C. \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No. Check yes or no if you have a BID/LID. If yes provide documentation in appendix.

D. Related Implementation Expenditures: Amount spent on other implementation plan action items  
\$\_\_\_\_\_ Amount Action Item

E. Long-term program involved: Describe how your community will use grant funds to leverage a payback mechanism for funds that will sustain downtown redevelopment. Does your community have a revolving loan fund? \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

If yes, please describe attempts to secure funding.

## Appendix C: National Main Street Accreditation Information

The Main Street Program Accreditation process evaluates established commercial district revitalization programs on the basis of 10 basic performance standards and provides national recognition to those that meet these standards. The 10 performance standards provide benchmarks and guidelines on how the organization should be functioning and an incentive for organizations to perform better and be more effective.

### THE 10 STANDARDS OF PERFORMANCE

1. Has broad-based community support for the commercial district revitalization process, with strong support from both the public and private sectors.
  - The Main Street organization should have the active participation of various stakeholders at the committee and board levels.
  - Participants should contribute financial, in-kind, and volunteer support for the revitalization program.
  - Participants should also look for, and act on, opportunities to make connections between other programs with which they are involved and the Main Street revitalization effort so that, by doing their own work a little smarter, or in a more integrated way, other programs help further the revitalization process.
  - The program should include an ongoing process for volunteer recruitment, orientation, and recognition, constantly refreshing its pool of volunteers and involving new volunteers each year.
  - The downtown revitalization program has broad-based philosophical support from the community.
  - Municipal government demonstrates a philosophical commitment to downtown revitalization.
2. Has developed vision and mission statements relevant to community conditions and to the local Main Street program's organizational stage.

Some revitalization programs begin with a vision statement; others develop a vision statement after several years of work. At a minimum, the Main Street organization should have a mission statement in place, reviewed annually (and updated, if appropriate). If the organization does not have a vision statement at the beginning of the revitalization process, it should develop one prior to the organization's transition from the catalyst phase to the growth phase.

  - The organization has an appropriate written mission statement.
  - The mission statement is reviewed on annually and updated as appropriate.
  - The organization has an appropriate written vision statement.
3. Has a comprehensive Main Street work plan.
  - The work plan should contain a balance of activities in each of the four broad program areas that comprise the Main Street approach — design, organization, promotion, and economic restructuring.
  - The work plan should contain measurable objectives, including timelines, budgets, desired outcomes, and specific responsibilities.
  - The work plan should be reviewed, and a new one should be developed annually.
  - Ideally, the full board and committees will be involved in developing the annual work plan. At a minimum, though, the full board should adopt/approve the annual work plan.
  - The work plan should distribute work activities and tasks to a broad range of volunteers and program participants.
  - There has been significant progress in each of the four points based on the work plan submitted last year.
4. Possesses an historic preservation ethic.
  - The program has, or is working toward putting in place, an active and effective design management program (which may include financial incentives, design assistance, regulatory relief, design review, education, and other forms of management).
  - The program encourages appropriate building renovation, restoration, and rehabilitation projects.
  - The program works to find creative adaptive use, financing, and physical rehabilitation solutions for preserving old buildings.
  - The program recognizes the importance of planning and land use policies that support the revitalization of existing commercial centers and works toward putting planning and land use

policies in place that make it as easy (if not easier) to develop property within the commercial district as it is outside the commercial district. Similarly, it ensures that financing, technical assistance, and other incentives are available to facilitate the process of attracting investment to the historic commercial district.

- The program builds public awareness for the commercial district's historic buildings and for good design.
5. Has an active board of directors and committees.
- The board is a working, functional board that understands its roles and responsibilities and is willing to put forth the effort to make the program succeed.
  - Committee members assume responsibility for the implementation of the work plan.
  - The program has a dedicated governing body, its own rules of operation, its own budget, and its own bylaws, and is empowered to carry out Main Street's mission, even if the Main Street program is a part of a larger organization.
  - The board has well-managed, regular monthly meetings, with an advance agenda and regular distribution of minutes.
  - Committees have regularly scheduled monthly meetings with an advance agenda that addresses the committee work plan.
6. Has an adequate operating budget.
- The Main Street program's budget should be adequate to achieve the program's goals.
  - The budget should be specifically dedicated for the purpose of revitalizing the commercial district.
  - The Main Street program's budget should contain funds adequate to cover the salary and fringe benefits of staff; office expenses; travel; professional development; and committee activities.
  - The dollar amount that is "adequate" for a program budget may vary from region to region, depending on local costs of living, and may be different for small town, midsize, and urban Main Street programs. General guidelines for minimum operating budgets are:
    - small town programs: \$30,000+ annually
    - midsize community programs: \$45,000+ annually
    - urban neighborhood programs: \$80,000+ annually
  - Revenue sources are varied and broad-based, including appropriate support from municipal government.
  - There is a strategy in place to help maintain stable funding.
  - There is a process in place for financial oversight and management.
  - Regular monthly financial reports are made by the treasurer to the board.
7. Has a paid professional program manager.
- The Main Street executive director should be paid a salary consistent with those of other community development professionals within the city, state, or region in which the program operates.
  - The minimum amount of time the Main Street executive director works each week should be consistent with comparable Main Street programs in the city, state, or region.
  - The executive director should be adequately trained — and should continue learning about revitalization techniques and about issues affecting traditional commercial districts.
  - The executive director has a written job description that correlates with the roles and responsibilities of a Main Street director.
  - There is a formal system in place for evaluating the performance of the executive director on an annual basis.
  - Adequate staff management policies and procedures are in place.

8. Conducts a program of ongoing training for staff and volunteers.

The local Main Street program develops local leadership capacity through such mechanisms as:

- taking advantage of citywide, state, regional, and national training opportunities;
- making reference and training materials available locally — and using them; and
- providing/conducting training when appropriate, including annual Main Street 101 training, annual orientation for board members, and annual committee training.

9. Reports key statistics.

- The program collects and tallies statistics related to the revitalization movement, using the baseline criteria listed below. It should keep this data from year to year, providing an economic record of the program's impact over the course of its history. This information is distributed regularly to constituents and in the annual report.
- The program submits regular reports to the statewide, countywide, or citywide Main Street coordinating program (either monthly or quarterly, as specified by the coordinating program).

Baseline data should include:

- Community population
- Net of all gains and losses in jobs
- Net of all gains and losses in new businesses
- Number of building rehabilitation projects
- Number of public improvement projects
- Number of new construction projects
- Number of housing units created: upper floor or other
- Monetary value of private investment spent in above projects: i.e., individuals or private sources of money spent on building rehabs, public improvements, or new construction.
- Monetary value of public investment spent in above projects: i.e., city, county, state, or federal money spent on building rehabs, public improvements, or new construction.
- Monetary value total of all investment and public and private investment
- Ground-floor vacancy rate when your program started
- Ground-floor vacancy rate now
- Rental rate per square foot when program started
- Rental rate per square foot now
- Your program's annual operating budget

10. Is a current member of the National Trust Main Street Network.

The organization is a current member of the National Trust Main Street Network Membership program.