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Downtown Lee's Summit Main Street's Love Local Campaign Awarded the Best Organization Pandemic Response Award.

Missouri Main Street Connection Inc. (MMSC) presented downtown revitalization awards recognizing revitalization excellence during Missouri's Premier Downtown Revitalization Conference in Kansas City on August 5, 2022. The event was hosted at the Kansas City Marriott Downtown.

Missouri Main Street Connection is the leading statewide nonprofit organization devoted to preservation-based economic development. Through the Main Street America™ movement and our partners, we empower community revitalization by celebrating, supporting, and sustaining Missouri historic commercial districts in both rural and urban settings.

MMSC is proud to announce that we have been celebrating one billion dollars in public and private investment in Missouri Main Street districts. This milestone was reached at the end of 2021. In addition, Missouri Main Street communities have created 5,069 net new jobs and 1,068 net new businesses from 2006-2021.

The ceremony Friday night honored communities, individuals, businesses, and organizations from across the state that have completed exemplary work in downtown revitalization. Competitive nominations were submitted for projects, activities and individuals in 16 different categories that covered aspects of design, economic vitality, organization, promotion, and other efforts in downtown revitalization.

Best Organization Pandemic Response Awarded to Downtown Lee's Summit Main Street.

Downtown Lee's Summit Main Street moved quickly as the COVID-19 pandemic began to affect the small businesses in downtown Lee's Summit. In mid-March 2020, the downtown retailers and restaurants were given just a few hours' notice that they would have to shut their doors for the safety of the community. Many of the business owners

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completely changed their business model in a matter of a few days to continue bringing in revenue. As an organization, Downtown Lee's Summit Main Street knew they needed to promote different ways for the community to still support the small businesses while staying at home. The Main Street staff came up with the Love Local Campaign that included a page on the website, shareable graphics the business owners could use, posters and marketing material, a video, and some income producing product sales.

Downtown Lee's Summit took inventory of the downtown businesses to ensure the Main Street program had the business website address, hours, if they offered curbside pickup, online ordering, local delivery, carry out, etc. The page was continually updated as the pandemic evolved. A graphic for six ways to Love Local included leaving a big tip, ordering carry out, buying a gift card, leaving an online review, sharing a business on social media, and shopping online. This message was shared on the Downtown Lee's Summit Main Street social pages with a reach of almost 100,000 people.

Graphics and posters were shared with business owners that displayed them in their windows while their stores remained closed. A video was created showing business owners in front of or in their stores, again while their business was closed, to stay connected to their customers during this trying time. The Main Street efforts helped make sure that even with a 6-week closure of many of the downtown businesses, taxable sales in 2020 were still up 1.6% from a record year in 2019. That growth has continued with taxable sales up more than 22% in 2021.

For more information on this award contact Downtown Lee's Summit Main Street's Executive Director Donnie Rodgers at 816-246-6598 or donnie@downtownls.org.