

August 5, 2022

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Warrensburg Main Street's The Alley Awarded the Creative Placemaking Project Over \$1,000 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.

Creative Placing Project Over \$1,000 Awarded to Warrensburg Main Street.

In 2020 the Warrensburg Main Street Art and Design committees committed to adding more art downtown and decided the best way to accomplish a high impact project was to create a space where art could be continuously added and would make a new gathering space in Downtown. After much discussion, the big impact space would be an

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alley that was a pass-thru from a popular restaurant and bar area to public parking lots behind the buildings. The total project would include planters, benches, public art, and outdoor lights strung across the alley.

Multiple sources of funding were eventually secured from a Walmart Giving Grant, the Integrated Business Experience class from University of Central Missouri, and the AARP Community Challenge Grant. In-kind contributions of labor came from the Johnson County United Way youth, students from an alternative school and the local school district, and the Warrensburg Arts Commission. Planters were painted, art tiles were created, lights were strung to create a festival feel, and benches added. A large optical illusion mural of a waterfall on the stairs was completed by a local artist and a large gorilla was painted on an adjacent wall. To finish the project, the Warrensburg Master Gardener group planted perennials in the new planters and added additional greenery to the area.

This collaboration brought together all ages, youth, young adults, senior adults, non-profits, community groups, schools, and local government. An official opening to The Alley kicked off at the April 2021 First Friday Art Walk and since has created an enjoyable place for the community to come Downtown. The Alley has become a popular stop for photo ops and selfies as well as a great place to gather for a treat from Green Truck Bakery or ice cream from Meyer's Market.

For more information on this award contact Warrensburg Main Street's Executive Director Jill Purvis at 660-429-3988 or director@warrensburgmainstreet.org.