



CENTER *Piece*

WINTER 2021





EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR'S
CORNER

At this seasonal time, I would like to take a moment to express my personal note of gratitude to our community members, managers, board and committee members, partner organizations, and local leaders throughout the commonwealth, and especially the Pennsylvania Downtown Center board of directors and staff members.

This past year has been challenging for everyone in a variety of ways, professionally and personally, balancing work and life responsibilities. Staying on top of the latest regulations or funding opportunities for your own organization can be exhausting on its own, not to mention the added pressure of working to stay positive and encouraging to your local business community, all while continuing to be that resource that the community-at-large has come to expect from you and your program.

Hopefully, each one of you will be able to take at least a few precious moments for yourself to step back and reflect on the difference you have made in your community this year. My guess is... you probably don't hear it enough – so thank you. Thank you for the countless hours of pouring over spreadsheets, and online applications to keep your businesses afloat. Thank you for all of those conference and video calls to keep your board and organization informed of the latest updates. Thank you for caring, for listening, for lending a helping hand, and for your empathy. Thank you for being a steadfast champion for YOUR place/town/city/business district/neighborhood/businesses/residents – YOUR community!

This is usually the time of year when for many of us the usual hustle and bustle, and celebratory holiday chaos of shopping and decorating, party going, baking, cooking, creating, and preparing for overnight guests kicks in. We're often preoccupied with finding the latest toy or gadget or making that unique handmade item, all in hopes of surprising our loved ones with that special gift under the tree. This year, we're distracted with being responsive to reinventing activities, dealing with new issues, and concerns over friends and family, while managing things like end of year deadlines and attempting to figure out how next month's payroll will be paid.

Please know, you are not alone. More than likely, whatever you are dealing with, there is someone else in our PDC community who is as well. However, we know that we are stronger together. We are more resilient, creative, and resourceful when we reach out to others and put our heads together to find common solutions. We have learned to not take situations for granted. We have learned that whatever was, is not guaranteed to be. We have learned to be

grateful for our situations, friends, and family. We will get through this, and hopefully come out on the other side stronger, kinder, and wiser than before.

2020 is coming to an end, and we know 2021 will not magically be back to "normal". We look forward to seeing one another again, learning and leaning on one another, and being able to chat and commiserate face-to-face once again in the not-too-distant future. Until then, be well and stay safe.

Gratefully,

Julie Fitzpatrick, PDC Executive Director

***FOR ANYONE WHO MIGHT BE LOOKING FOR SOME EXTRA INSPIRATION TO PREPARE US FOR THE NEXT FEW MONTHS – HERE ARE A FEW TOOLS (BOOKS, BLOGS, ETC.) THAT I'M FINDING EXTRA ENCOURAGING:**

The Nordic Theory of Everything – In Search of a Better Life
BY ANU PARTANEN

The Art of Gathering – How We Meet and Why It Matters
BY PRIYA PARKER

(You may be thinking it seems counter intuitive to think about gathering while we're in a pandemic, but you would be surprised!)

Care of the Soul

BY THOMAS MOORE

(This is my favorite of his, but all of his titles are worthwhile reads!)

Anything by Seth Godin – his blog is especially insightful

Holstee – Inspiration and tools to help you live a more meaningful life.

(If you decide to join, use discount code "padowntown" for 15% off membership)

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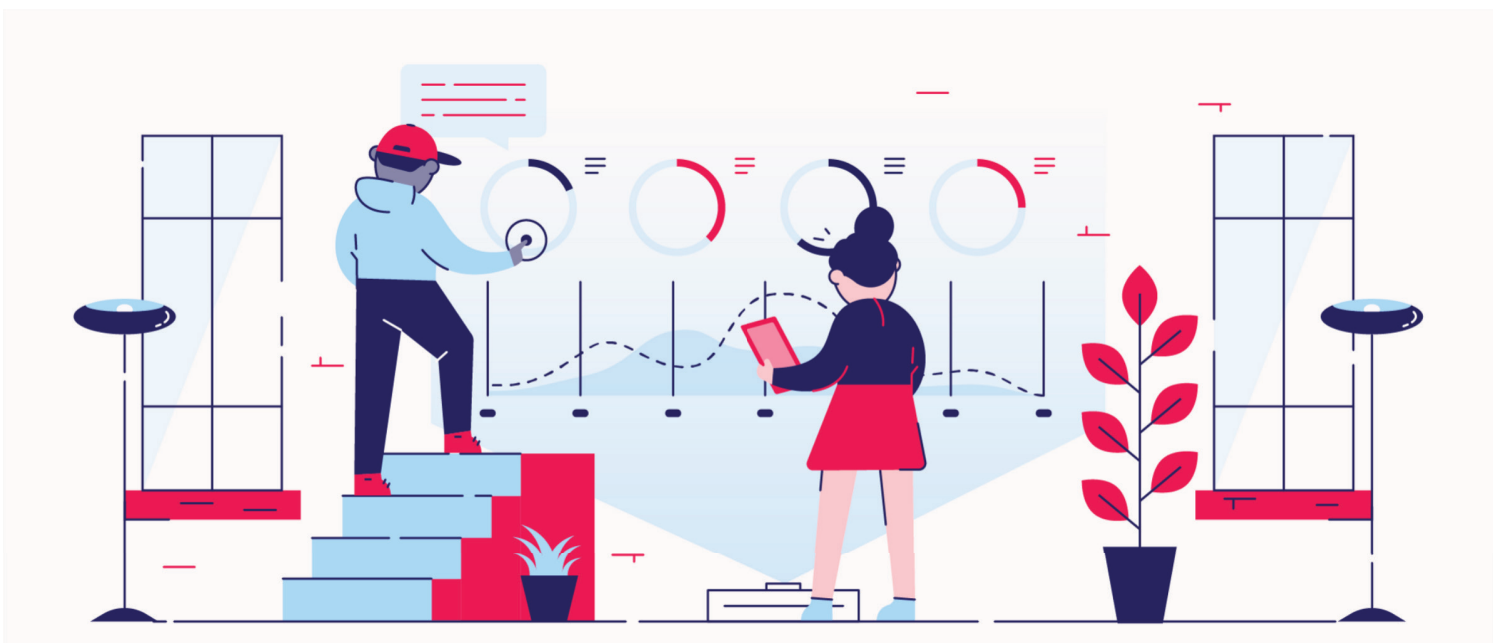
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**PLEASE NOTE: DUE TO STATEWIDE RESTRICTIONS RELATED TO
COVID-19 AND RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE CDC, THESE DATES
AND LOCATIONS ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE.**

EVENT	DATE	TIME	LOCATION
New Manager Training	Monday, January 25 - Thursday, January 28	9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.	Virtual
Manager's Meeting – Statewide Regional Leadership Forum	Wednesday, February 10	9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	Virtual
Community Revitalization Academy: Asset Enhancement	Monday, February 22 - Thursday, February 25	9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.	Virtual
New Manager Training	TBD	TBD	TBD
Community Revitalization Academy: Safe, Clean, & Green	Monday, April 26 - Thursday, April 29	9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.	Virtual
Annual Revitalization Conference	June 27 – 30	All Day Events	Reading, PA
Regional Leadership Forum	Sunday, June 27	1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.	Reading, PA
Manager's Meeting, Statewide	Tuesday, June 29	1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.	Reading, PA

*For more information or to register for an event or
training, please [visit our online events calendar.](#)*



*HARNESSING
THE POWER
OF DATA
THROUGH
UNCERTAIN
TIMES*

by
Kyle Bailey

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the face of our Main Street and Elm Street programs throughout the nation. With so many of our local organizations and small businesses facing unprecedented challenges, the Pennsylvania Downtown Center staff wanted to remind you that demographic, business, and market data is available to our member and designated organizations. As we continue to navigate through the pandemic together, taking an opportunity to understand this data will prepare us all to make a stronger impact in the future.

One of the most powerful data reports that we can provide access to is the **Retail Market Power reports**. Retail Market Power is what we commonly call opportunity gap which is based on the supply and demand of a product or service within the defined geography. Examining these reports can show us where there is greater

demand than supply. When this is the case, that would indicate that there is a gap in the market. This information can be used to attract a new business or help supplement an existing business. If the supply is greater than the demand this indicates that there is an over-saturation for this type of product or service. In some cases, however, this could also suggest that there is a niche market for a product or service which may indicate that the defined geography has become a destination for the described product. In this case, the product or service is attracting consumers from outside the defined geographic boundaries. Revitalization organizations should use this information in their business recruitment and retention strategies as well as other marketing efforts.

Also available are the **Prizm Premier Top Segments and Social Segmentation Distribution reports**. These

reports display information about the interests, lifestyles, shopping habits, and attitudes of the inhabitants of the selected geography. This data can be used to supplement a variety of program planning efforts including event planning and business recruitment and retention efforts. By utilizing this data to gain a better understanding of what types of events and businesses consumers will patronize, this can help us implement more impactful and successful programming.

Other available reports include general demographics, data on businesses, and traffic counts. Reports can be obtained for a large variety of geographies including county, municipal and local program boundaries.

If you are interested in learning more about these reports and how they can be utilized, reach out to a PDC staff member for more information.

membership

UPDATES

COMING SOON!



PDC is looking forward to implementing a brand-new membership management database in 2021. Over the next few months, we will be transitioning from our previous system to NeonCRM. This platform came highly recommended from the staff at PANO and will allow PDC members to have greater access to their membership account through an upgraded version of the Member's Only section of the PDC website.

We will be rolling out the new platform within the first few months of 2021, so keep an eye out for an email from Neon to access your new membership account. We hope you will love Neon as much as we do!

**Please note that your PDC Reporting System account login will not change – this update is for the membership section of the website ONLY*

Upgraded Membership Account Access

Members will be able to login and manage their membership account through the PDC website. Update your contact information, check your membership level and benefits, view your event registrations and more!

Seamless Online Membership Renewal

Never lose access to your membership benefits again!

Integrated Event Registration forms

Register for upcoming trainings and take advantage of member's only pricing by logging in to your account.

Access to Members Only Resources

Download resources exclusively for members directly from your membership account.

*Recognizing Our Designated Main
Street & Elm Street Programs*

by
Mary Tate



As 2020 comes to a close, I wanted to take a moment to acknowledge and recognize the designated Main Street and Elm Street programs, managers, and staff who have tirelessly and creatively responded to the needs of their communities. Each program has succeeded in being a steadfast place to turn for business owners, neighbors, employees, and community partners. Just as we as individuals have experienced the ups and downs of this unprecedented time, our programs have gone through a similar experience. Civil unrest, financial insecurity, language barriers, social service concerns, closures, and cancellations have all been sources of anxiety, and yet, I have witnessed a perseverance and adaptability that is admirable and noteworthy. Despite the above obstacles, micro-grants have been distributed, CARES Act money secured, public spaces created, events held, farmers' markets continued, businesses opened, e-commerce platforms developed, streetscapes designed, newsletters launched, food distributed, music played, murals depicted, and relationships strengthened. Thank you to the listed programs for your dedication and commitment!

- Downtown Bedford Inc.**
- Castle Shannon
Revitalization Corporation**
- Danville Business Alliance**
- Erie Downtown Partnership**
- Main Street Gettysburg**
- Downtown Hazelton
Alliance for Progress**
- Lansdowne Economic
Development Corporation**
- Downtown Lebanon**
- Mt. Lebanon Partnership**
- Oil City Main Street**
- SACA – SE Lancaster
Elm Street Movement**
- The Enterprise Center -
52nd Street Commercial Corridor**
- Wilkes-Barre Diamond
City Partnership**

Keystone Community Main Street and Elm Street Designation is granted by the Department of Community and Economic Development for a five-year period. The list reflects the current designated communities to date. It should be noted, however, that several programs exited their five-year designation during 2020. Their efforts and successes do not go unrecognized nor do those of our entire Pennsylvania network of revitalization organizations.

If your community or organization is interested in exploring designation, please reach out to PDC for more information.



Thinking Strategically About The Post-COVID-19 World

by
Bill Fontana

So, here we are, almost at the end of 2020 – a year unlike any other that most of us have ever experienced. And as we stand on the threshold of a much anticipated and very welcome New Year, the promise of world-wide distribution of various forms of the COVID-19 vaccine holds out the promise of some degree of a return to normalcy during 2021.

Is your organization ready to address the revitalization issues that will confront it during the 2021 recovery process and beyond? Let us look at some of the post-COVID-19 issues that we, as revitalization professionals, will need to confront:

Do you expect a reduction in upper floor commercial use because of “working from home” requirements imposed by COVID-19?

I believe that this issue, more than any other, will impact the use of commercial space in our downtown areas. I think that the loss of first and upper floor commercial office space will have a significant impact on our downtown economies. Your organization should be prepared to assist with converting upper floor units to housing and/or have updated marketing materials to assist property owners with renting vacant space.

Do you think the above question, if true, will result in a greater need for co-working space in your community?

Since I think the first question is true, then the answer to this question must be yes. Finding space in your downtown to develop co-working space, providing space for newly-work from-home focused businesses to meet somewhere downtown when they do

need to get together will be critically important. Having in place the telecommunications and broad-band capabilities (communications platforms, supportive meeting software and teleconference hardware) to support the need for rentable meeting space will be a new imperative. What can your organization do to assist with these efforts?

Do you think that there will be a greater need for facilities such as business incubators, makerspace, and commercial kitchens because of business closings resulting from COVID-19? Much like the above question, I expect the answer to this question to also be yes. This could be especially true with respect to certified, rentable, commercial kitchen space. After the financial crash of 2008-2009, this particular component of the “sharing-economy” grew dramatically. Many expected this “fad” to fade as the economy recovered, but it has not. The impact of the pandemic on the restaurant industry may well result in increased demand for these types of facilities as those in the food industry look to get back on their feet.

Will the growth of on-line retailing and restaurant delivery services permanently change the landscape of these two sectors and therefore negatively impact these two critical components of placemaking?

Yes and no on this question, in my opinion. I think many people who previously thought on-line shopping was too difficult have been forced to develop this skill set. I do think that this trend will carry over post-pandemic. Helping retail businesses develop their e-commerce capabilities should be high on your agenda if it already is not. On the other hand, I think as soon as people can get safely



get back out to restaurants, bars, taverns, pubs, etc., they will be flocking to these places. The issue here will be supply and demand. It may take a while for the supply of dining-drinking facilities to recover. Being prepared to assist food-related entrepreneurs with finding and developing vacant space should also be a priority for your organization.

Do you think there will be permanent changes to the way we use public space as a result of COVID-19? I am still on the fence on this one. I do know that many thought-leaders on community design are addressing this issue. Architects are thinking about the extent to which we have created airtight building environments when the need for fresh, outside air is so important. Planners are re-thinking the way we use the public right-of-way to assist with the outdoor seating and meeting requirements of private sector businesses. This is one of those issues that you need to stay on top of as it evolves. Beginning to review your zoning ordinance may be a prudent short-term step to be prepared for changes that this issue may bring to the fore.

Will we see a move from large cities to smaller ones? Perhaps. I think that this issue will be largely informed by the post-pandemic preparedness hearings / industry that will

undoubtedly follow in 2022 and beyond. You are already hearing the rumblings of being better prepared for “the next one”- God-forbid. Once again, if the thought-leaders predict more of these kinds of global disruptions in the

not-too distant future, then I think the answer will be yes. Where these people may move will largely depend on how they perceive the ability of a place to meet their lifestyle demands. So, addressing the previous questions may better position your community to take advantage of this migration, should it in fact take place.

So that is the task for the short term. Begin SOON to address these topics in your organization and amend your plans accordingly. By the time I write the next edition of this article, the personal recovery afforded by the promise of the vaccine should be well underway. So too will the recovery of those communities best

positioned to take advantage of the new opportunities. Do not be left behind.

Until then, stay safe, wear a mask, social-distance and try your best to have a happy holiday season. Merry Christmas, Happy Kwanzaa, Happy Hannukah, Happy New Year, and happy Festivus for the rest of us (I bet the airing of grievances will be overwhelming).

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Townie Roundtable

SHARED LESSONS

Previous Townie Award winners share their biggest lesson(s) learned and advice for their peers, and share helpful tips for replicating similar projects in your community.



VENTURE LITITZ

Holly DeKarske, Director

Special Events - Fire & Ice 2019

As with any project or program, you have a mission that guides your committee; events are no different. Lititz Fire & Ice's mission is to bolster the local economy during the bleak tourism days of winter. It is critical to always remind your board, sponsors, and committee of that mission, as it can be easy to get off track.

All events have a fundraising component for the nonprofit, but as a Main Street Program, they also need to have beneficial impact to town, both businesses and residents, and it is important to plan events with this in mind.

Know the mission, what do you want to accomplish beyond raising money and what is the actual impact to your town, businesses, community.

Anchor Building - Wilbur Chocolate Factory

Our Downtown Lititz 2008 Master Plan revealed opportunities to expand not just the square footage in our downtown, but also expand the opportunities. Although the strategies held true, the actual final locations of uses is quite different. Always remember that the best plans need to be flexible and fluid.

Good things take time and if you see the potential and set the strategies, someone else may then also. By setting the strategies, the foundation was set for good things to happen.

EASTON MAIN STREET INITIATIVE

Kim Kmetz, Manager

Organizational Development -

Easton's Community Communications

Business owners can become overwhelmed with so much information coming their way so it's important to hit them at least three times in three different ways in order to "get through". Some respond to text, others to FB messenger, others only to a visit or phone call. Emails tend to go unanswered, unfortunately. They might read it but taking action is another story! So finding the way that works best for each business owner can be somewhat tricky and frustrating.

Members of the community seem to be drawn in with numbers! A list of 7 Things to Eat in the Public Market, 10 Things You Can't Miss This Holiday Season, 13 Ways to Enjoy Summer in

The City. These suggestions become a challenge. Hit 'em all!

Our Community E-update that gets blasted out every Friday morning has really gotten traction over the years. We receive so many notes of thanks. Subscribers look forward to planning their weekend according to what we've shared in our e-update and business owners are totally "trained" to get us the news of their latest sales, live music, trunk shows and promotions by end of day Monday for the Friday blast. It's taken years but we've built our distribution list to over 10,000 emails!

Retail Promotions - Creative Holiday

We had been asking businesses to step up their holiday decor game for several years to no avail. So we decided to make it easy for them by placing the collective order for them from our Main Street florist. We offered the first wreath free of charge to get their attention and buy in. Who could say no to a free fresh wreath with a hand created bow? We started this in 2019 with 60 businesses. This year it grew to over 80 businesses participating and expanded into our former Elm Street district! And our florist gets a \$6000 order out of it. :) The ultimate "buy local" program. The message to the community is that our businesses are working together for a coordinated holiday look.

Re. the Cookie Crawl: Not much to say other than shoppers are motivated by cookies! Many merchants ordered their cookies from our local bakeries. Win -win!

The Staff Picks is a favorite of our co-workers at GEDP. Free lunches are a motivator! But seriously, this promotion got the rest of our staff out the door, exploring the many shops and drove home the "shop local" message beyond the Main Street staff. Many staff members are "behind the scenes" people so our followers got to know the personalities of our staff through their shopping adventures.

MONONGAHELA MAIN STREET PROGRAM

Terry Necciai, Manager

Youth Involvement - Ethan Gamble

The biggest lesson in the story of how Ethan Gamble helped to create our youth Main Street Program, known as "M.y. Main St" (the Monongahela Youth Main Street Program) is how important it is to be prepared for when the right opportunities arise and when people with certain special characteristics present themselves.

What we learned after Ethan joined our adult Main Street group was two-pronged. We often hear people lament that the younger generation (Millennials) gets distracted too easily and doesn't put

in the effort or stay with things persistently enough. We definitely experienced some of that with some of our young people. We tried to get a number of young people interested in our group, but they weren't ready yet to take it on. That's the first "prong" of what we learned; the second "prong" is that it can change quickly when the right leader comes along. When a natural leader arrives, especially an "old soul" who has already taken an interest in the downtown – in this case, a 16-year-old camera buff and cross-country team captain who already knew half of the downtown merchants, you have to be open to let him run with the things he's inclined to try. The lesson is: Empower the natural leader and the young people with other interests and strengths will follow.

DOWNTOWN INC (YORK)

Elaine Bonneau, Director

Community Partnerships

- Together for Better

A key element is ensuring stable funding. Meeting with stakeholders to get their commitment to continue funding both individual organizations, though becoming one, is vital to success. We also spoke with small businesses, entrepreneurs, and community members that both organizations work with, to answer their questions, hear their thoughts, and weigh their opinions. Community support is key, in every sense.

If your peers would want to replicate a similar project do you have helpful hints?

Communication is key. From community leaders and stakeholders, to every member of the team, listening to their questions, and working together towards success is what creates a cohesive and successful affiliation. Every member of the team played a role – from the senior leadership team, to our front-line business support team, to creative and marketing, to of course finance – everyone had a role in making this possible.

Really, anything to inspire! In under two years, through the affiliation, we've strengthened our team and impact. For example, we fundraised over \$115,000 that was turned into small business grants awarded to 30 Downtown York businesses. We've also pivoted our team during the pandemic to administer CARES Act

funding, as well as launched several successful virtual events. All these are due to the continued strength of the team, made possible by the affiliation.

MAINSTREET WAYNESBORO INC.

Bill Kohler, Director

Public Safety - One Brick at a Time

One thing I learned is to dream big and look at the big picture. One Brick at a Time started as a painting grant for a building, but now it's become a mantra for us. I looked at the Zoe's Chocolate building and saw the chance not just to paint, but to transform the area into a safe AND beautiful project. The community agreed and supported us with in-kind and monetary donations to make the project complete.

Always look at expanding your stakeholders. There are many non-traditional groups and businesses out there who can help. You never know until you ask!

We received low bids and donated service from groups who want to see a better town. They live here, they are raising their families here. Many companies have never been asked. Then, once the project is complete, we recognized them and throw a chocolate party.

Youth Involvement - Marcus Cooley

Interns – high school and college – are invaluable to nonprofits. ~~Reach out to your~~ local high schools and colleges to see what programs exist. You might be surprised what's available.

Get to know your interns. Find out their strengths, goals and aspirations. Make them a part of the team, or the company, and feed them. Kids love food, gift cards, T-shirts and coffee almost as much as they do money.

Once you find their strengths, give them room to grow and some ownership of projects. I knew Marcus was smart and capable as I had known him since he was in elementary school. He also was very driven toward success, which was what made the Downtown Now! Podcast work.

Try to set up a regular time(s) with your intern every week so they and you can have assigned tasks, and it's easy to work around your schedule.

*Good things take time
and if you see the
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From Top Left: Downtown York small businesses decked out for the holidays; Ethan Gamble and My Main St; Lititz Fire & Ice; Easton's Public Market



2020
TOWNIE
AWARD
WINNERS

The annual Townie awards provide an opportunity for us to celebrate these exceptional and inspiring community revitalization projects throughout our commonwealth. Our Main Street and Elm Street programs, staff, board, and volunteers work tirelessly throughout the year to make impactful change in their business districts and neighborhoods, and the Townies give us a chance to reflect on these success stories. The work of community revitalization is never done, it is an ever-evolving community effort. Although the 2020 award winners celebrate projects completed prior to the pandemic, PA's Main Street and Elm Street programs have continued to provide responsive and innovative programming throughout this past year as well

ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Organization Development

Easton Main Street Initiative, a subsidiary of Greater Easton Development Partnership
"Easton's Community Communications"

Community Partnerships

Downtown Inc, York's Main Street Program
"Together for the Better"

PHYSICAL IMPROVEMENTS & DESIGN

Individual Façade Restoration

West Reading Community Revitalization Foundation,
West Reading Main Street
"West Reading Motor Club" Formally the A-Z Building

Public Space Improvement

Downtown Connellsville, an initiative of Fayette County Cultural Trust
Connellsville Public Art – Leading the Way

PROMOTIONS & MARKETING AWARDS

Special or Neighborhood Events

Venture Lititz, Lititz's Main Street Program
Fire & Ice 2019

Retail Promotions

Easton Main Street Initiative, a subsidiary of Greater Easton Development Partnership
Creative Holiday

ANCHOR BUILDING AWARD

Venture Lititz, Lititz's Main Street Program
Wilbur Chocolate Factory

SAFE, CLEAN & GREEN AWARDS

Public Safety

Mainstreet Waynesboro Inc.
One Brick at a Time

CHAIRMAN'S AWARD FOR YOUTH INVOLVEMENT

Monongahela Main Street Program
Ethan Gumble, "M.y. Main Street"

Mainstreet Waynesboro Inc.
Marcus Cooley





**THERE'S NO PLACE
LIKE LOCAL.**



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PADOWNTOWN.ORG