

STMS Award Nominations

Overview:

The NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center is proud to present the annual NC Small Town Main Street Awards competition, recognizing the hard work, dedication, and success of our NC Small Town Main Street communities and their achievements in the Four Points of the Main Street Approach® to downtown revitalization: Economic Vitality, Design, Promotion, and Organization.

- **Entry Deadline:** September 25, 2025 | 5pm
- **Awards Ceremony:** March 11, 2026 | 2025 NC Main Street Conference
New Bern

Eligibility:

- Any active Small Town Main Street community that met the statistics deadline for the most recent fiscal year
- Projects must have been completed within the past two years of the submission date

Guidelines:

- Each community may submit up to four nominations for downtown district projects
- A project may be entered in only one category
- The jury reserves the right to move an entry to a different category, if they believe there is a more appropriate fit
- The jury reserves the right to withhold an award in any category or to designate more than one winner if they deem appropriate
- Any previously nominated project that did not receive an award and still meets the two-year time limit may be resubmitted. We strongly suggest that you speak with the NC Main Street Director to find out why the previous nomination did not win before re-submitting
- **IMPORTANT:** All award-winning projects must respect the key architectural features and finishes of a building – regardless of the submission category or if the building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places or as a contributing property in a National Register District. The NC Main Street Awards represent the best examples of economic

development within the context of historic preservation and are used to represent best practices of the program long beyond the Main Street Awards ceremony. The NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center is not at liberty to recognize projects that do not meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, irrespective of whether or not the historic preservation tax incentives are used as a funding mechanism to complete the project.

- All materials will become property of the NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center
- Nominations must include the Small Town Main Street Coordinator's electronic signature. By signing the online submission, the Small Town Main Street Coordinator acknowledges the submission is on behalf of their town/board of directors

Instructions:

- Download this packet
- Download the budget form
- Read the descriptions carefully and determine the category. PLEASE refer to the last pages of this document. You will find a detailed description of each category and how to determine the economic impact for each category.
- Use the downloaded packet to write your submission
- Use the downloaded budget form to capture the submission's income and expenses
- Prior to online submission, make sure you stay within the word count, do a spell check, and then **have someone proof your submission**
- Block out at least 1 hour, per application to copy/paste the submission electronically. You will need to do this in one sitting
- Make sure your online nomination AND the supporting documents have been submitted online before the 5pm deadline

**The following pages are for you to
type, edit, and proof your draft
submission**

Nomination Working Document

Please use this word document to write your submission. You will need to make sure that word counts are adhered to. Answer all questions in paragraph format – **no bullet points**. Please make sure you do a spell check AND have **someone else to proof the submission before submitting online**.

Once you feel satisfied with your submission, you will copy and paste your information from this document to the online submission form.

****** IMPORTANT ****** We have added additional text below to help you build a better submission. This additional text is not included in the online form. If you do not use the form below to write your submission, and just go directly to the online form, you will miss this key information. Without that, your submission will NOT be as strong, so please do not skip over doing the section below FIRST. You can then copy and paste when you are ready to submit online.

Date of Submission:

Type here

Name of Project:

NOTE: Think about this carefully. If you win an award, this is the name that will be on the certificate.

Type here

Town Name:

NOTE: Do NOT use "Town of" OR "City of" We sort by name only)

Type here

Main Street Organization Name:

Type here

Program Director Name:

Type here

Program Director Email:

Type here

Program Director Phone:

Type here

Select Award Category - (Only Choose ONE from the list)

Organization

Promotion:

Economic Vitality:

Design:

DID the project involve construction or alterations to a building?

Yes

No

IF the project involved construction or alterations to a building, check all that apply

The project was a Historic Tax Credit Project

Part 1 has been approved by the National Park Service

Part 2 has been approved by the National Park Service

Part 3 has been approved by the National Park Service

Not a Historic Tax Credit Project

IF the project involved construction or alterations describe in detail HOW the project meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation - 350 words or less

Type here

IF the project involved construction or alterations to a building, did the changes meet the Secretary of Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation?

NOTE: If you are not certain, please contact the architect for the project or your SHPO representative. Either will be able to tell you, but you MUST do this well in advance.

[SHPO Contact Information](#)

Yes

No

NA

IF the project involved construction or alterations describe in detail HOW the project meets the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation - 350 words or less

NOTE: Below is an example of a previous award winner submission. This is the type of detail needed for the jury to be able to determine if your submission is eligible for an award.

Thornwell Properties hired local architect Gray Stout, AIA who has over 25 years' experience in preservation, restoration, and adaptive reuse of numerous properties in downtown Morganton, Salisbury and Lincolnton. All the designs and construction were under the direction of Stout and Sybil Argintar, owner of Southeastern Preservation Services in Asheville, NC who specializes in technical advice relating to property rehabilitation. The renovation included the following aspects: The historic garage was preserved and retained as a functional private parking garage for residents; The front space retained the original pressed tin ceiling, mezzanines and balconies and terracotta tile floors; Original Tupelo tongue -and -groove flooring was preserved except in cases where deterioration created unsafe conditions; The second floor was repurposed for six residential units (three one bedroom and three two bedroom); Existing heavy timber framing on the second floor was preserved and left exposed; Existing masonry walls of the second floor were preserved and left exposed; New mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems were installed sensitively to protect and reflect the original architecture. Additionally, windows and doorways were preserved and protected, original masonry and decorative elements were cleaned, preserved, and protected, and any additional architectural elements required by code or purpose were designed to aesthetically match the original design. The project provides space for Thornwell Books, a new bookstore and coffee shop in downtown, Van Noppen Marketing, and six apartment units. Van Noppen Marketing was able to move from a former downtown location to 202 South Sterling Street and expanded their business and number of employees.

Type here

WHO were the specific partners involved in the project or event? Include property owners, developers, municipal or county agencies or organizations, another nonprofit, etc. Were there any consultants involved such as an architect, landscape architect, engineer, etc. that played a significant role in the project? - 100 words or less

NOTE: We list the names of the business entities on the certificates and in the videos, therefore it is imperative that the names are accurate. List business names where appropriate, rather than individuals. Please double check the names that you have listed for spelling and accuracy.

SAMPLE: Thornwell Properties, LLC, Stout Studio Architecture, Southeastern Preservation Services

Type here

WHAT is the project? Describe it in detail - 350 words or less

NOTE: Assume that the jury does not know anything about the project. If this was a rehabilitation, redevelopment, or an improvement project, describe the physical changes that were made. Include before and after photos to show the details.

Type here

WHEN did the project begin?

Type here

WHEN was it completed?

NOTE: Eligible projects must have been completed within two years of the submission date. Please give month and year for the beginning and the end of the project.

Type here

WHERE is the specific site for the project (or where was the event) located?

NOTE: Provide an address for the project. Include a map of the district showing the site location of the project on the map. If you are submitting an event, the address is not needed but you do need to show on a map that the event took place IN DOWNTOWN.

Type here

WHY is this project a good example for other downtowns? - 350 words or less

NOTE: Describe how this project is an exceptional STATEWIDE example for downtown revitalization. Please consider before you even nominate this project, that while this project may be a good local project, this nomination should represent the BEST statewide example. Keep in mind the following when answering: Can it be replicated? Does it demonstrate the highest quality? Is it scalable for any community? Did it tie back to your downtown vision? Did it have a measurable economic impact?

Type here

HOW was the project accomplished? - 350 words or less

NOTE: What were the key elements that brought this project to fruition. If it was a rehabilitation, redevelopment, or an improvement project, include any incentives that were used.

Type here

HOW does this project fill a need in your downtown? - 350 words or less

NOTE: HOW does this project relate to your economic development strategies or your vision for downtown?

Type here

WHAT did the Main Street program do to assist in the project? (If any) - 350 words or less

Type here

ECONOMIC IMPACT: Briefly describe the economic, of this project, including any investment spurred, jobs created, and additional projects leveraged.

**** Refer to the following pages to find a category that best fits your project and information of how to measure the economic impact. -- 350 words or less**

NOTE: If you cannot measure the impact of the project through investment, jobs, retail sales activity, attendance, etc. you may want to wait a year to nominate the project.

Type here

Additional Project Information:

Type here if needed

UPLOADS

NOTE: Please have the following documents finalized prior to online submission. You will be required to upload each one.

Budget:

- Line-item project budget and total costs. If project materials were donated or in-kind, still indicate the approximate dollar value of the donation
- You must submit the budget on our standardized form

Photos:

- Must submit a minimum of 10 and maximum of 20
- Must be High resolution, at least 1024 x 768
- Must Include at least one picture with people
- Must be free of labeling, borders, timestamps on actual photo
- Must show furniture in the photo, if submitting an upper story residential project
- Must show before and after photo for any improvements made to buildings
- Must be saved as numbered 1-20, followed by town name, followed by photo name
 - 1_Golds_Before_Construc
 - 2_Golds_During_Construc
 - 3_Edenton_Vol_Ticket_Booth

Photo Script:

- Must be numbered 1-20 with photo name – MUST match up to the photos

Downtown District Map:

- Must show the project/event location

PROMOTION Category Nominations:

- Should upload files of printed/electronic promotional pieces such as brochures, rack card, newsletters, etc. If your project includes signs, banners or collateral items such as t-shirts, etc., include them as jpg photo images.

The following pages are to assist you in writing the economic impact of your submission. These categories are for the Main Street Award submissions; however, you can find one that best fits your submission and gain some good insight on how to write a compelling economic impact for your Small Town Main Street submission.

The following are descriptions of each award category and intended to help you determine the best fit for your project. It will also guide you on how to write an economic impact statement. You MUST include an economic impact statement, or your project will not be considered.

ECONOMIC VITALITY: BEST ADAPTIVE REUSE PROJECT

This award recognizes the best adaptive reuse of a building. The project includes the reuse of an underutilized building to meet current needs in the downtown district. Describe the economic impact of the project and include a detailed budget for the redevelopment project. Include a description of the scope of the work, project use, any energy efficiency component of the project, names of person(s) responsible and project architect as well as the local program's role, if any. Projects must meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and the nomination narrative must include a statement attesting to that fact. If possible, include documentation from the State Historic Preservation Office that verifies that the project meets the Secretary of Interior's Standards.

Measuring Economic Impact: Demonstrate the economic impact standards as applicable: The increased number of occupied square footage and the increased rental rate for the building, the increased number of businesses, upper story-residential units or jobs created due to the project, and the increased tax base and utilities generated as a direct result of the rehabilitation.

Previous Winners:

[2024 Monroe's Piedmont Lofts](#)

[2024 Salisburys' Bell Block Building](#)

[2023 The Salisbury Building](#)

[2023 Asheboro's Church Street Lofts](#)

ECONOMIC VITALITY: BEST INFILL BUILDING PROJECT

This award recognizes a local municipality, individual, or business involved in an outstanding new building project within the downtown district. The project should exhibit exceptional design quality and an appropriate relationship to its surrounding architecture. The nomination should include a project description, history of the site, economic impact of the project downtown, and a detailed budget. Projects that are additions to existing historic structures must meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and the nomination narrative must include a statement attesting to that fact. If possible, include documentation from the State Historic Preservation Office that verifies that the project meets the Secretary of Interior's Standards.

Measuring Economic Impact: Demonstrate the economic impact as applicable: Newly created square footage, rental rate for the building, increased number of downtown businesses, upper story-residential units or jobs created because of the project, and the increased tax base and utilities generated as a direct result of the project.

Previous Winners:

[2024 Pittsboro's Doherty's Irish Pub & Restaurant](#)

[2024 Fuquay-Varina's The Q](#)

ECONOMIC VITALITY: BEST UPPER STORY REDEVELOPMENT

This award honors the best example of upper story redevelopment. Projects in this category will be judged on design quality as well as their ability to fill an existing need in the community. For the project to be eligible, the converted space must be occupied. The nomination should include the economic impact of the project downtown, a detailed budget, a description of the scope of work, project use, any energy efficiency component of the project, names of person(s) responsible and project architect as well as the local program's role, if any. Projects must meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and the nomination narrative must include a statement attesting to that fact.

Measuring Economic Impact: Demonstrate the economic impact as applicable: The increased number of occupied square footage, the increased rental rate for the building, the increased number of businesses, upper story-residential units or jobs created, and the increased tax base and utilities generated due to the project.

Previous Winner:

[2023 Edenton's 415 South Broad Street Project](#)

ECONOMIC VITALITY: BEST ENDANGERED PROPERTIES RESCUE EFFORT

This award recognizes an organization or community-wide effort that saved a structure of historical or architectural value from impending demolition. The structure must have been returned to a productive use that serves the community's current needs, whether that use is different from or the same as the original. Both public and private properties are eligible, and the building must be in either the defined downtown district or an adjacent historic residential or historic commercial district. The nomination should include the economic impact of the project downtown, a detailed budget, a description of the scope of work, project use, any energy efficiency component of the project, names of person(s) responsible and project architect as well as the local program's role, if any. Projects must meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and the nomination narrative must include a statement attesting to that fact.

Measuring Economic Impact: Demonstrate the economic impact as applicable: The direct impact downtown such as job creation, investment, and other projects leveraged as a direct result of the project. Identify the dollars raised to save this property and/or the partners and volunteers involved with the rescue effort.

Previous Winners:

[2023 Goldsboro's The View at Wayne National](#)

ECONOMIC VITALITY: BEST BUSINESS RETENTION, EXPANSION, OR RECRUITMENT EFFOR

This award recognizes the best initiative directed at retaining, expanding, or recruiting a business. It must involve the identification of a need and the development of a comprehensive plan for securing or retaining a business or type of business. The nomination must describe the elements of the plan and the steps taken to achieve the goal. Eligible projects must be the result of an organized effort to gain or save a business and not the result of chance relocation.

Measuring Economic Impact: Demonstrate the economic impact as applicable: The increased number of occupied square footage, the increased number of businesses or jobs retained or created, and the increased tax base and utilities generated. Identify additional projects or efforts that were spurred as a result of the program.

Previous Winner:

AUTHENTIC PROMOTION: BEST DOWNTOWN SPECIAL EVENT OR EVENT SERIES

This award recognizes an outstanding creative downtown special event or event series. Your promotion event or series must be authentic! New and previously held events are eligible. Nominations should describe the theme and activities of the event or series. Projects will be judged on creativity, originality, authenticity, economic impact of the project downtown, participation of the organizing team, and value for the investment. Describe the economic impact of the project downtown and include a detailed budget for the event or series. Include electronic images of any event-related promotional materials including posters, flyers, brochures, social media, etc.

Measuring Economic Impact: Demonstrate the economic impact as applicable: The number of event attendees, the increase in downtown foot traffic, increased retail sales activity, the number of hotel rooms occupied, the increase in visitors, automobile traffic counts or gasoline sales generated, downtown articles, ads, publications, or website interactions, any other measurables for increased interest in downtown investment or business activity as a result of the special event or series.

Previous Winners:

[2023 Pilot Mountain's Outdoor Adventure Festival & Expo](#)

[2023 Goldsboro's NC Freedom Fest](#)

[2022 Belmont's Moonlight on Main](#)

AUTHENTIC PROMOTION: BEST IMAGE-BUILDING CAMPAIGN

This award honors the best image-building campaign for downtown. It must be a comprehensive effort with a clearly defined message and target audience. The campaign may include the creation and implementation of a new downtown brand, a comprehensive approach to image advertising or collateral materials, or the creation of downtown image building events. The nomination should include the results of the effort. If outside consultants were used, they must be identified in the nomination. Include electronic images of all visual elements of the campaign.

Measuring Economic Impact: Demonstrate the economic impact as applicable: The increase in marketing images and materials and any increase in consumer/visitor traffic generated because of the campaign. Measure any increase in retail sales activity generated from the campaign and any increase in public/private investment that is a direct result of the campaign.

Previous Winners:

SUSTAINABLE ORGANIZATION: BEST PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP IN DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION

This award recognizes a creative and positive partnership between the local government and the private sector. The nomination should thoroughly describe the project, goals, and outcomes as well as how the public and private sectors worked together, how the project has made a significant contribution to the downtown area and demonstrate the positive economic impact it had downtown. If this is a rehabilitation project, it must meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

Measuring Economic Impact: Demonstrate the economic impacts as applicable: The number of public/private partnerships, dollars leveraged from the effort, additional projects spurred, increase in downtown activity generated, and any additional increase in investment, businesses or jobs created directly from the effort.

Previous Winners:

[2024 Belmont's East End Facade Transformation](#)

[2024 Bessemer City's Bessemer City Juneteenth Festival](#)

[2024 Concord's Cabarrus County Courthouse](#)

SUSTAINABLE ORGANIZATION: BEST HEALTHY COMMUNITY INITIATIVE

This award recognizes worthy examples of improving the health of the community through innovation downtown. Healthy communities are places where all individuals have access to healthy constructed, social, economic, and natural environments that give them the opportunity to live their fullest potential regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, income, age, abilities, or other socially defined circumstance. Examples may include an effort to offer healthier food options, an increase in physical activity downtown after infrastructure improvements, or the creation of workforce housing. Define your goals and outcomes and demonstrate the initiative's positive economic impact on downtown. Nominations will be judged on their level of originality, inventiveness, and effectiveness.

Measuring Economic Impact: Demonstrate the economic impacts as applicable: The physical, economic, and social benefit to downtown created by the initiative.

Previous Winners:

[2023 Manteo's Downtown Market](#)

[2023 Waxhaw's Pedestrian Improvements](#)

SUSTAINABLE ORGANIZATION: BEST VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT, TRAINING, AND RECOGNITION

This award recognizes the most creative volunteer recruitment, training, and recognition program. The nomination should describe the goal of your volunteer program and the plan for execution as well as your training methods and volunteer recognition plan. Board and committee members may be included in your volunteer effort, but the program must also have a component dedicated to the individuals who assist in tasks such as putting together your newsletter, assisting with event setup, judging a contest, helping in your office, etc. Explain the outcomes of the program and the impact created.

Measuring Economic Impact: Demonstrate the economic impacts as applicable: The increase in the number of volunteers and hours served, the increased dollar value of the volunteers, and any direct measurables such as increased programs or projects that the organization was able to manage because of the volunteers.

Previous Winner:

[2022 Belmont's Volunteer Meeting & Appreciation](#)

QUALITY DESIGN: BEST FAÇADE REHABILITATION PROJECT

This award recognizes the best façade rehabilitation project in the downtown district. The physical design of the façade should enhance the commercial district in appearance or function and encourage further design improvements. The project must meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and the nomination narrative must include a statement attesting to that fact. Include a description of the scope of work, project use, any energy efficiency component of the project, names of person(s) responsible and project architect as well as the local program's role, if any. Projects will be judged on design quality, proper preservation techniques, creativity, and economic impact within budgetary and other constraints.

Measuring Economic Impact: Demonstrate the economic impact as applicable: The increased number of occupied square footage, the increased rental rate for the building(s), the increased number of businesses, upper story-residential units or jobs created, the increased retail sales activities generated for the tenant businesses, the increased tax base and utilities generated, and any additional projects that were spurred as a direct result of the rehabilitation.

Previous Winners:

[2023 Elkin's Frazier Building \(Best rehab for less than \\$15,000\)](#)

[2023 Manteo's Pioneer Theater \(Best rehab for more than \\$15,000\)](#)

QUALITY DESIGN: BEST PUBLIC BUILDING IMPROVEMENT

This award recognizes the municipality or Main Street organization that has designed and improved a public building in the downtown district. Projects must meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and the nomination narrative must include a statement attesting to that fact. Describe the economic impact of the project, include a detailed budget, a description of the scope of work, project use, any energy efficiency component of the project, names of person(s) responsible and project architect as well as the local program's role, if any. Entries in this category must contain a photo of ADA- accessible entrances.

Measuring Economic Impact: Demonstrate the economic impact as applicable: The increased number of occupied square footage, the increased services offered by the public entity and jobs created, and any additional projects that were spurred as a direct result of the project.

Previous Winners:

QUALITY DESIGN: BEST OUTDOOR SPACE IMPROVEMENT

This award goes to the individual, municipality or Main Street organization that has designed and improved a public or private outdoor space in the downtown district. Describe the economic impact of the project, a detailed budget, description of the scope of the work, project use, any energy efficiency component of the project, names of person(s) responsible and project architect as well as the local program's role, if any.

Measuring Economic Impact: Demonstrate the economic impact as applicable: The increased number of downtown activities and services offered in the space, increased foot traffic, customer traffic, automotive traffic, retail sales activity generated, and any additional projects that were spurred as a direct result of the project.

Previous Winners:

[2024 Mooresville's Liberty Park](#)

[2024 Waxhaw's Downtown Park](#)

[2023 Pittsboro's SoCo Patio](#)

[2023 Reidsville's Sky's the Limit All-Inclusive Park](#)

QUALITY DESIGN: BEST HISTORIC REHABILITATION PROJECT

This award highlights the work of an individual or business that has completed an outstanding historic rehabilitation project in the downtown district. The project must include exterior rehabilitation, and though not required, may include interior rehabilitation. Describe the economic impact of the project, include a detailed budget, a description of the scope of work, project use, any energy efficiency component of the project, names of person(s) responsible and project architect as well as the local program's role, if any. Projects must meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and the nomination narrative must include a statement attesting to that fact.

Measuring Economic Impact: Demonstrate the economic impact as applicable: The increased number of occupied square footage, the increased rental rate, the increased number of businesses, upper story-residential units or jobs created, and the increased tax base and utilities generated as a direct result of the project.

Previous Winners:

[2023 Elkin's Royall's Building](#)

[2023 Mount Airy's Coca-Cola Bottling Plant](#)

Budget - example

Revenue for the Project	Amount
20 lines to itemize revenue	
Total Project Revenue	(auto calculated)
Expenses for the Project	Amount
20 lines to itemize expenses	
Total Project Revenue	(auto calculated)