

West Side Main Street Program Receives National Main Street Program Accreditation

Institute, WV – The efforts of the West Side Main Street Program, a program supported by a partnership of the City of Charleston and West Virginia State University Extension, over the past year have earned it recognition for commercial district revitalization by meeting standards for performance set by the National Trust Main Street Center. The West Side Main Street Program joins 650 other Main Street revitalization programs nationally recognized as 2007 Accredited National Main Street Programs.

“The national accreditation means the local Main Street program is meeting our national standards of performance for what a Main Street program should be doing,” said Doug Loescher, Director of the National Trust Main Street Center. “The organizations we name each year as National Main Street Programs are those that have demonstrated the skills and comprehensive perspective needed to succeed in Main Street revitalization.”

The annual accreditation process evaluates commercial district revitalization programs based on criteria ranging from having an active Board of Directors and paid professional management to track economic progress and preserving historic Main Street buildings.

“Rebuilding a district’s economic health and maintaining that success requires broad-based community involvement, active support from both the public and private sectors, and sound management,” said Loescher. “Having a solid organization at the foundation of that revitalization effort is so important to long term success.”

The organization’s performance was evaluated by the Main Street West Virginia Program, which is the coordinating organization for Main Street programs in West Virginia.

“We have spent the past two years getting our ducks in a row for the absolute rebirth of Charleston’s West Side, and this confirmation of our efforts and the outcomes yet to be realized is truly appreciated,” said Julia Moran, President of West Side Main Street.

Established in 1980, the National Trust Main Street Center helps communities of all sizes revitalize their traditional historic commercial districts. The Main Street Center leads the preservation-based community revitalization movement and has proven that historic preservation and community-driven economic development effect lasting change. Currently active in more than 1,150 downtowns and neighborhood business districts, Main Street programs have generated more than \$41.6 billion in new investment since 1980. Participating communities have created 349,148 net new jobs, 77,799 net new businesses, and rehabilitated more than 186,820 buildings, leveraging an average of \$25.76 in new investment for every billion spent on Main Street initiatives.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation is a private, nonprofit membership organization dedicated to protecting the irreplaceable. Recipient of the National Humanities Medal, the Trust was founded in 1949 and provides leadership, education and advocacy to save America’s diverse historic places and revitalize communities. Its Washington, DC, headquarters staff, six regional offices and 25 historic sites work with the Trust’s 200,000 members and thousands of local community groups in all 50 states. For more information, visit the Trust’s Web site at www.nationaltrust.org.

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