

Branstad, Reynolds announce new Main Street Iowa Communities

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Avoca, Guthrie Center and Newton receive designation

(DES MOINES) – Gov. Terry Branstad and Lt. Gov. Kim Reynolds today announced that three Iowa communities were selected to join the Main Street Iowa program: Avoca, Guthrie Center, and Newton. The announcement was made during a special ceremony held at the Iowa State Capitol in Des Moines.

“Iowa’s historic main streets are the heart and soul of our communities,” said Branstad. “We will continue to do whatever we can to keep Iowa’s downtowns strong and vibrant for business owners, workers, residents and visitors. I am pleased to welcome each of these communities into the Main Street family, and wish them much success in the future.”

For more than 27 years, the Main Street Iowa program and its communities have been looked upon as the “best of the best” in a national effort to revitalize downtowns across the country. The addition of these new communities brings the total number of Main Street communities in Iowa to 52.

“In their applications and presentations, the selected communities demonstrated strong partnerships, a high level of volunteerism, and a commitment to the revitalization of their

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downtown districts. We are confident that these three cities will thrive and grow for many years to come,” said Debi Durham, Director of the Iowa Economic Development Authority, the agency that houses the Main Street Iowa program.

Becoming a designated Main Street Iowa community is no easy task. Community representatives must attend rigorous training sessions before even being eligible to apply. They must demonstrate support from local organizations, businesses, and lawmakers; funding and in-kind support must be secured and documented; strategic plans outlining short- and long-term goals must be in place. Most importantly, community officials, business owners, and volunteers must agree to work together with the common goals of 1) preserving Iowa’s historic buildings and unique commercial business districts, and 2) improving the local economy by adopting and following the Main Street Four Point Approach® to historic commercial district revitalization.

“After seeing the results of the Main Street Iowa program had on my hometown of Osceola, Iowa, I’m excited for the communities receiving the designation today,” said Reynolds. “The process was not easy, nor was it quick, but it certainly showed results and brings new energy to the community.”

While it may be challenging to become a Main Street community, designated communities reap many benefits. During the first three years of the program, each community receives approximately 40 days of on-site training and technical assistance from Main Street Iowa, National Main Street Center staff and private consultants, as well as 30 days of training for volunteers and local staff, valuing the state’s investment at \$120,000. Main Street communities each receive continuing training and technical assistance valued at \$10,000+ annually.

Over the years, by working together with the state, Main Street Iowa communities have realized the benefits of more than 2.4 million hours of volunteer time invested into improving their city centers, a significantly increased job and business base, and over \$1.3 billion in private investment to purchase, construct and rehabilitate downtown property.

For more information on the Iowa Economic Development Authority’s Main Street Iowa program, visit www.iowaeconomicdevelopment.com , or call the Main Street Iowa office at [515.725.3051](tel:515.725.3051)

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For more information about the local programs, contact:

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Guthrie Center: Marian McQuaid, [641-740-0319](tel:641-740-0319)

Newton: Darrell Sarmiento, [641-792-5545](tel:641-792-5545)

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