

Main Street In Motion

Nov. 2008 - Jan. 2009 The Main Street West Union Newsletter Volume 2, Issue 4

Special Points of Interest:

- Impact of being a "Great Place"
- Committee Reports & Information
- AmeriCorps VISTA member to join our team!
- Why Shop Locally?
- Back-in Parking Pros
- Raffle Winner announced!

Inside this issue:

- President's Corner 2
- Calendar of Upcoming Events 2
- Promotions Committee Update 3
- Organization Committee Update 3
- Director's Column 4
- Business Improvement Committee Update 4
- Design Committee Update 5
- Mystery Pics 6

For our children and grandchildren

By Mary Anne Hoey, Organization Committee

I have been a part of Main Street West Union for about a year. I became interested in the program after being invited to a meeting and began volunteering at a couple fundraisers. I now attend the Main Street Organization Committee meeting monthly.

As a mother of five children, all born and raised in West Union, I continue to see all the progress taking place in West Union: the new library, the hospital and clinic additions, Rec Complex, Performing Arts Center, aquatic center, and so much more! Though my children had grown and moved on long before these wonderful additions, I, like many people in West Union, will be happy seeing my grandchildren enjoy the many amenities that our town has made possible.

I take much pride in West Union and what it has to offer. Our businesses are continuing to grow. Making our downtown more accessible and more welcoming to consumers should be considered nothing but a positive move from the residents of our community. When we think of all the changes beginning to slowly occur downtown and the change that is slated to come, we may think, "This won't affect me much, so why do it?" The reason to do it I have mentioned above...for our children and our grandchildren.



To see how much has already occurred in our community since my own kids' childhood to seeing all that is now being offered to my young grandchildren, I can only anticipate what is in store for them as they continue to grow – from wonderful concerts in the PAC to baseball games at the updated Rec Complex.

And to know that I had even a small part of such a large impact to their lives is reason enough for me to be a part of Main Street West Union.

As we are nearing the end of 2008, we are getting closer to seeing the Streetscape Project become a reality. By working together as a community, we can ensure West Union will be a greater place to live, work, shop and bring our friends and family to enjoy our wonderful city.



Volunteer Spotlight



* President's Corner

MSWU helps make West Union truly a 'Great Place'

By Greg Ptacek, MSWU Board President

In the last newsletter I wrote about Main Street's involvement in the Streetscape Project and the Green Pilot Community Project. At this same time, Main Street was partnering with other organizations in West Union to submit an application to become an "Iowa Great Place."

A few weeks ago, West Union was notified that its application was successful, and thanks to the efforts of many individuals, West Union can now officially call itself an Iowa Great Place!

What does all of this mean to West Union? I believe it means a great deal. Perhaps the best way for me to demonstrate this is to relate this thought:

...Over the last several years I have had the opportunity to be involved in many discussions concerning the development and economic betterment of West Union. At times during these discussions, there was a general state of frustration as to how to get economic leaders at the state level to take notice of West Union...

I can assure you that West Union is a stranger to the Iowa Department of Economic Development no more! In fact, over 43 state, federal and private organizations have shown a positive interest in our projects and have stated a willingness to help wherever possible. Currently, research and

additional design work is being completed. With this additional detailed information, West Union – working with the Iowa Department of Economic Development – will be able to partner with these various resources to get its projects completed.

The Main Street Organization has been one of many key players throughout this process and continues to share a leadership role. In order to continue in this capacity, Main Street relies upon the many pledged donations it receives from West Union citizens and businesses, along with support from the City, County, and other local economic development organizations. These donations provide Main Street's operating budget each year.

In June 2009, Main Street West Union will be three years old. The initial group who committed to three-year pledges will expire at that time. Some from that group have already re-committed to a second three-year pledge term.

On behalf of Main Street West Union, I am asking those of you who made the initial pledge and have not yet committed to a second term to consider doing so. Your continued support will be greatly appreciated and will enable Main Street to continue its shared leadership role to make West Union a vibrant place to shop, work and live.



Together we
can do it!



Mark Your Calendars...

November

- November 5** - Fayette County Entrepreneurs' Club
- Nov. 6 & 7** - Water Retention Demonstration Project at Woodard's
- November 7** - Iowa Great Places Presentation in Des Moines
- November 15** - "Let's Warm WU Up" Weatherization Blitz
- November 27** - Thanksgiving - office closed
- November 30** - Santa visit and light display at the Recreation Complex

December

- December 4** - Santa comes to WU; Main Street provides luminaria to light the way!
- December 1** - Santa's Store & Cookie Walk @ Zion
- December 11** - Ladies' Shopping Night in WU!
- December 14** - Community "Messiah" Performance
- December 18** - Men's Shopping Night in WU!
- December 18** - NF Holiday Concert
- December 24** - Christmas Eve - office closed at noon
- December 25** - Christmas - office closed

January

- January 1** - New Year's Day - office closed
- January 17** - Community Awards Banquet
- Jan. 30 & 31** - Upper Iowa Ag & Home Show

For more information on these events, contact the Main Street/Chamber Office 422-3070.

An 'exciting year' for this new volunteer

By Nancy Davies, Promotions Committee

About a year ago, I was invited to a Main Street West Union meeting. I listened to a committee tell what the Main Street program is all about, as well as the different projects that are going on. I had the opportunity to join a committee and to pledge to the Main Street West Union program.

What an exciting year it has been!

West Union has been chosen to be in the Green Pilot Community program. With all the grants and projects going on, West Union will not only meet the needs of our residents, but also be able to reach the surrounding communities. We want West Union to be a fun place for tourists to visit also.

WU-STOCK was the first big event that I served on. Lots of planning, helping hands, talent and skills went into this project. From "BRAWU" (Bike Ride Around West Union) to the very popular wrestling event, WU-STOCK was a big success. We received lots of great comments, as well as suggestions for things that could be added for fun next year.

By the time this update comes out, our committee will have presented the second annual "Ghosts of WU." What a great way for our eighth-graders and our community to experience the history of our downtown!

Our next project is December 4. Our luminaria will be set up on the courthouse square, all beautifully lit to welcome Santa.

Being on this or any other Main Street committee is a great way to meet other people in our community. If you like to have fun together and be a part of an exciting project, there is a MSWU committee for you: Business Improvement, Design, Organization, or Promotions. The meetings are short; the rewards are endless.

Come, join us! WE NEED WU!!!!



Raffle winner Hayden Schott from Boscobel, WI, shows his excitement to be the new owner of the Dale Earnhardt Jr. replica race-car - just days before his birthday! Thanks again to Mike & Sharon Schroyer for donating the car!

Boy, have we been busy!

By Sue Wolf, Organization Committee

Mamma Mia!

Here we go again,

My, my... !

Time already for another update on what our Organization Committee has been up to since last May! I thought I'd write this time in verse form, just for something different. Bear with me...here goes!

In May we learned
Something brand-new:
"Bella Serata" will help
brighten the view.

August arrived
With an ice-cream social
For Main Street volunteers –
We think they're special!

Cash for grants
To improve those stores
Whose back façades
Need something more.

We gave out goodies
At the State Fair;
As communities go,
We're a gem so rare!

That's not all,
As you will see;
We'll promote West Union
On a new DVD!

WU-STOCK got us
Groovin' again;
Music and games –
And lots of friends!

June brought us Dairy Day,
With sun and blue sky,
The crowd was huge,
My, oh my!

We were in charge
Of quenching your thirst;
When you got hot,
You ran to us first!

Lots to eat,
Lots to drink;
What's there to do?
More than you think!

That NASCAR mini?
Yep, it was there,
Tempting the kids,
Just like at the fair.

The '70s parade
Was cool and groovy;
Did you see those entries –
Should've made a moo-vie!

The raffle concluded,
And the cute little car
Got a new home
After traveling far.

And what was that –
That Hula-Hoop Brigade?
Those brave Main Street folks
Strutting in the parade!

Fall is now here,
So's our Pledge Drive;
You three-year donors
Have helped us thrive!

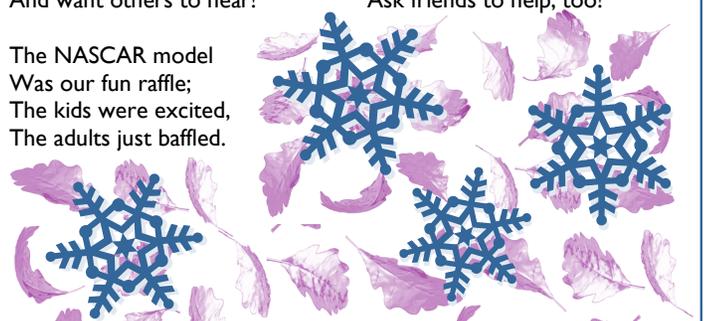
With 4-H and shows
In July came the fair;
We worked in our booth
To show that we care.

We'll be asking again,
As you might guess;
Obtaining new donors
Will be our quest.

Main Street folks
Leading the cheer –
We love our program,
And want others to hear!

You know about us
And all that we do;
We need the money,
Ask friends to help, too!

The NASCAR model
Was our fun raffle;
The kids were excited,
The adults just baffled.



Shop locally this holiday season!

By Robin Bostrom, MSWU Director

We have enjoyed beautiful fall weather here in northeast Iowa, and before long the holidays will be here, as well.

If you haven't begun your holiday shopping yet, I encourage you to really think about shopping local this holiday season.

What does it really mean to shop local?

It means looking to our local businesses first, before you leave to spend your dollars elsewhere.

At the National Main Street Convention we learned about "Shop Local" programs and the impact they have on our local economy. As we all face uncertain economic times, one thing we can all do is support our local businesses.

Every dollar spent within West Union turns over six times, creating an impact on many people. When you spend a dollar in a local business, you contribute to the payroll for that store. You also contribute to the tax revenues of our city, which helps fund our local infrastructure, including streets, sidewalks, city services, and our park system.

Those local businesses also purchase goods and services from other local businesses, including banking services, utilities, office supplies, and more. They contribute to our local school programs and civic organizations, including the Main Street program, with their contributions.

Studies show that about 75 cents of every dollar spent with a locally-owned business stays in the community in some way compared to the 30 cents of every dollar that stays local if spent in a chain or box store.

Consider also the amount of time and gas money it takes to leave the area to shop. All good reasons to check out the West Union shops first!

So we encourage you to "Shop Local" this holiday. Get a holiday punch card available through the Chamber holiday promotion. You'll have a chance to win some great prizes, including local gift certificates. Not only will your family and friends benefit from the gifts you purchase locally, but the entire community grows as well!

Happy Holidays!



Zip Code Survey coming your way!

By Troy Johansen, Business Improvement Committee

Is your business concerned about where your customers are coming from? Or are you a business that would like to know where your business is *not* coming from?

If you answered "yes" to either of these questions, then you will be interested in taking part in the upcoming Zip Code Survey, which will be happening soon community-wide.

Each business will be provided with the necessary survey forms by the Main Street West Union office. All we ask is that each business take the time to jot down the zip codes of each customer for an entire week. These results will be tabulated by Main Street staffers and a report will ensue.

This information may surprise some businesses – to find out exactly where our customers are coming from, or where we need to focus our efforts. This survey will take little effort from staff, but the information will be very valuable.

Look for details on the Zip Code Survey coming from Main Street staffers in the near future.

Have you renewed for MSWU? If not - please renew your 3-year pledge today! We need WU!

A New Face in the Office!

Thanks to the Iowa Department of Economic Development, you will see a new face in the Main Street/Chamber and Fayette County Economic Development office! Michelle Zander, an Ameri-Corps VISTA volunteer, will be working in our office to help with our West Union green projects, the Housing Trust Fund and the Food and Fitness Initiative. We are excited to have her! Please stop by to meet her - she should be settled in by December 1st!

Way-finding signs... and that back-in parking!

By Jon Biederman, Design Committee

New way-finding signs have been placed by the Iowa Department of Transportation along the Iowa Highway 150 and U.S. Highway 18 corridors within West Union. Some of you may have noticed the extra length of signpost above the new signs. New sign caps, designed and provided by West Union, will be placed above these new way-finding signs in the near future. A mock-up of the cap design has been created and approved for fabrication. The signs will be a great addition to West Union by directing visitors to their destinations and showing community pride.

I have heard many comments relating to the back-in angle-parking concept for the Streetscape Project. Like many of you, I was skeptical when this idea was first mentioned to me. My first thought was this is a ridiculous idea – why would any city want to punish its citizens by making them park in this manner?

The more I thought about the concept and educated myself, the more my mind changed, and now I feel this is a good idea. Safety is a big advantage. With forward angle-parking, backing into the traffic lane with a large vehicle in the adjacent space blocking sight can be a problem.

With back-in parking, the view to the oncoming traffic is unobstructed. Other advantages include the following:

* Doors opening in the direction to allow direct access to the sidewalk and keep children who quickly exit the vehicle from running into the street;

* The trunk of a car or rear door of a van is at the sidewalk, ready to be loaded or unloaded.

We all know it will take a little time for everyone to get used to this new way of parking, but once we are accustomed, it will be second nature.

Expect more discussion on this topic in the future, along with some temporary parking space markings downtown for everyone to practice on before a decision is made.



What do we need in WU?

Whether we are looking to recruit a new business or encourage an existing business to launch a new product, conducting a market analysis is the first step in determining if there is a need or audience for an idea. Knowing our market's needs and how it is currently serviced provides us with key information that is essential in developing our community marketing plan. Early next year, thanks to assistance from Main Street Iowa, we will be conducting a market analysis in West Union. With help from community volunteers, survey tools and census data will be compiled to:

1. **Understand the Downtown Economy:**

- Who are the downtown businesses? What is the business mix?
- Who is the competition?
- Who are the customers?
- What are the needs of business owners?
- Where are the customers from?
- What are the downtown's assets?

2. **Identify Market Opportunities:**

- What are the development opportunities?
- What sectors have the greatest potential?
- What is the market niche?

3. **Develop Market-Driven Strategies:**

- How can existing businesses sustain and grow and attract others?
- What new businesses should be recruited?
- How can space be used to the greatest advantage?

With the information provided by the analysis, our community and businesses can make informed decisions on future growth. If you are interested in helping out with surveys, please let the Main Street office know!

West Union Santa Sightings!



Santa will be making a couple of stops in West Union this year to collect those wish lists from the little ones! He will be at the Recreation Complex on November 30th and in downtown West Union on December 4th. The Recreation Complex will be decorated by a wonderful group of volunteers and, in addition to Santa, horse-drawn carriage rides will be offered. Plan on being there around 4:00 p.m. For Santa's downtown visit on the 4th, the Main Street West Union Promotions Committee will be lighting the way with a luminaria display. Santa should be arriving at the courthouse by fire truck at 5:00 p.m. Ho-Ho-Ho!



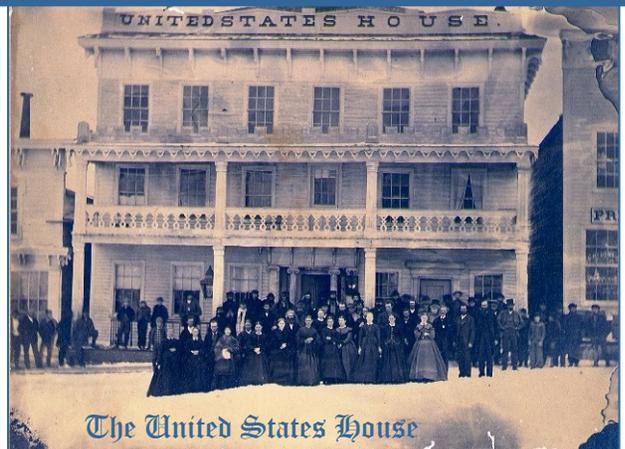
101 North Vine Street • West Union, IA 52175

Main Street West Union Mission Statement

The mission of Main Street West Union is to preserve and enhance the vitality of our downtown through the education and encouragement of all citizens to work together to promote our community as a vibrant place to shop, work and live.

Main Street West Union Board Members

Greg Ptacek, President
Ron Saboe, Vice President
Troy Johansen, Secretary
Dick Woodard, Treasurer
Robin Bostrom, Executive Director
Mike Baldwin
Neal Bentley
Merlin Dunt
Gail Hackman
Mike Lauer
Mark Moser
Karla Organist
Jim Updegraff
Kara Wedemeier
Joe Winter
Teresa Yauslin



The United States House

Mystery Building



Answer is hidden somewhere in this issue!

Can you identify where this West Union building was? We've given you two pictures to help you figure it out!