

Main Street In Motion

Feb. 2009 - April 2009 The Main Street West Union Newsletter Volume 3, Issue 1

Special Points of Interest:

- "March Madness"
- Committee Reports & Information
- Meet our AmeriCorps VISTA member
- Rebate program announced
- Lending WU a Helping Hand
- Community Awards Banquet Recap

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Come have a ball with us on March 27!

By Nancy Dunt, Organization Committee

You probably just got comfortable to read this newsletter, but there is something you need to do right now!

Get out of your chair, go to your calendar, and circle this date on your calendar – **Friday, March 27, 2009!**

We Main Street folks are busy planning the Third Annual Meeting/Fundraiser ...aka P-A-R-T-Y...and this is one you surely won't want to miss! It's call "**MAIN STREET MARCH MADNESS**" and will be so much fun!

It will be held at the school again this year, and with the theme of "March Madness," you know it will have a basketball theme – but unlike the NCAA, here you will laugh till your sides hurt and really have a marvelous time. (Hey, have we ever steered you wrong?)

Of course, there will be a meal of "**good eats**" perfect for a night of basketball. *Yum!* And the **basketball "STARS"** will be FUN-tastic! There is terrific entertainment planned at halftime and between games – rumor has it that the **Smothers Brothers** will be making a special appearance!

You'll want to buy some **raffle tickets**, too, to win some *very nice gifts* donated by local merchants and other generous folks. You may buy your tickets that evening or get a jump on the fun by buying them in advance from any Main Street committee member!

One thing that's needed for this party to be a success is **volunteers!** Some of you have so graciously helped the past couple of years, and if you can do so again, please call the Main Street office (422-3070) and get your name on the list!

There will be more publicity for this big event with more details as they become available, but for now, **mark your calendars** and don't miss out! We look forward to seeing you there and **having a ball!**



New goals, new challenges, new opportunities

By Robin Bostrom,
MSWU Director



Happy New Year! Here we are, beginning another new year. Another fresh start with new goals, new opportunities, and new challenges. Our nation has a new president, and our local Main Street program will have new board members, as well as new committee members.

I would like to thank three board members who have served our organization so well since it began in 2006. Merlin Dunt, Karla Organist, and Teresa Yauslin will all be stepping down from the MSWU Board as replacements are found, and we thank them for all the time and talent they have shared with us. They will all remain active on committees and continue to help Main Street West Union grow. It has been a pleasure for all of us involved with Main Street to work with them.

New board members, Jon Biederman and Erin Heins will be joining the board for three-year terms. We thank them in advance for sharing their time and talents with our organization!

On my recent trip with the NF Danceline to perform at the 2009 Outback Bowl, I had the opportunity to meet parents from all over the country. We shared stories about where we are from, what we do, and how we came to all be together at this event. I'm always proud to explain how our community supports our kids as they work to earn money for their trip.

In responding to a phone call this week, I explained to the caller how our Performing Arts Center came to be a reality, and how community events as well as school events are held there. Her response was "It's great to see a community that works together."

As we stand at the beginning of a new year, it can be overwhelming to think about everything that needs to be done and the challenges that lie ahead. But as I look back at all that has been accomplished here in West Union, I'm encouraged to begin a new year and continue working to make our small town a big success – one small step at a time!

* Design Committee Update

Rebate program to assist businesses

By Jon Biederman, Design Committee

Main Street West Union, along with the Iowa Department of Economic Development (IDED) is sponsoring an energy-efficiency rebate program for businesses that have had energy audits completed. This program will generally match the rebates offered by Alliant Energy and Black Hills Energy.

The types of improvements covered are easy to make and should offer a quick increase in the energy efficiency of our local businesses.

An emphasis is made on improving lighting systems by offering additional funding for these modifications. Energy audits showed that

outdated, inefficient lighting systems were common in the majority of our businesses. With the proposed rebate assistance and the energy savings from making these improvements, the payback period will be very short.

West Union is the only city in Iowa to have this opportunity, and we are encouraging all those eligible to participate. Application forms and program details will be available in the near future.



Mark Your Calendars...

February

- February 3** - Fayette County Entrepreneurs' Club
- Feb. 5 & 6** - Main Street Winter Workshop, Des Moines
- February 17** - Main Street Design Consultant in West Union
- February 18** - Iowa Great Places Legislative Breakfast in Des Moines
- February 26** - WU-Light Special @ Spirits & Such/Miss Drew's Closet/Stephen's Windows

March

- March 1-4** - National Main Street Conference, Chicago
- March 8** - Dr. Seuss Breakfast
- March 24** - Local Buyer/Producer Breakfast @ Tap't Out
- March 27** - Main Street March Madness

April

- April 10** - Good Friday—office closed at noon
- April 11** - CIVIC Club Easter Basket Hunt
- April 17** - Main Street Iowa Awards
- April 18** - Antiques Appraisal Fair @ Historical Center
- April 18** - NF High School Annual Carnival and Variety Show
- April 25-25** - Barn Quilts of Fayette County Quilt Show and Workshop @ NF High School

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

Lending WU a helping hand

Editor's Note: This month we'd like to welcome guest columnist Michelle Zander, who works in the Chamber/Main Street West Union/Fayette County Economic Development office with Robin Bostrom, Karla Organist and Carol Weidemann. Her work as a VISTA enables her to assist West Union with several important projects. She enjoys volunteering for MSWU, too. The next time you're downtown, stop by the office to say hi to Michelle!

Who is Michelle Zander?

My roots are in central Iowa – from Boxholm to Denison, you'll find my family. My maiden name is Jors, and I am of German descent. My father was a butcher, and my mother a U.S. Postmaster and Master Decorative Artist.

I married Jason Zander, my banker of 14 years, and have one daughter, Megan, who is attending NICC.

Wanting to make a new home together after the loss of my parents, we empty-nesters heard the mighty Mississippi beckon us. With all the scenic byways calling out for our motorcycle exploration, and a location much closer to the Zander family, we set our sights on relocating to Northeast Iowa.

Kerndt Brothers Savings Bank offered an employment opportunity that was the challenge Jason sought. When we visited West Union, we found a town that seemed just right...large enough to offer necessary resources, yet small enough to call home.

I wanted to be active in the community and am passionate about continuing youth ministry. As an AmeriCorps VISTA and the Confirmation teacher for a local church, I found in West Union all I was seeking, too.

What is a VISTA?

"Volunteers In Service To

America" commit to serve full time for a year at a nonprofit organization or local government agency. Historically, VISTAs have played key roles in establishing many of the best-known anti-poverty programs, including Head Start, Upward Bound, and the credit union system.

What do VISTAs do?

VISTAs strive to strengthen communities, help with natural disaster recovery efforts; work to improve education and enrich local health services; design, develop and implement programs that fight poverty.

How did West Union get a VISTA?

The Main Street West Union and Fayette County Economic Development offices applied for one.

Who can apply?

Public, private, and faith-based nonprofit organizations—as well as local, state and federal organizations—can apply with the state to sponsor an AmeriCorps VISTA.

How are VISTAs' hosts chosen?

AmeriCorps state offices look for organizations that use media and technology to strengthen communities with clearly defined capacity building projects that 1) increase the amount of resources; 2) improve the utilization of resources; and 3) improve the management and allocation of resources.

The goal is primarily to "build capacity." Capacity-building is defined as the "process of developing and strengthening the skills, instincts, abilities, processes and resources that organizations and communities need to survive, adapt, and thrive in the fast-changing world."

What will an AmeriCorps VISTA do to "build capacity" in West Union?

With passion, commitment, and hard work, I will focus my year on the following:

- * Researching funding opportunities;
- * Coordinating volunteers;
- * Promoting attitudes and practices in the community that are socially, environmentally and economically sound;
- * Bringing citizens and businesses together to support three programs: 1) West Union's Green Pilot Community program, 2) Fayette County's Local Housing Trust Fund, and 3) Northeast Iowa Food & Fitness Initiative.

What will a Green Pilot Community program do?

The Green Pilot Community Program encourages the implementation of environmentally conscientious practices like improving water quality.

The goal is to eliminate contamination to local wildlife through the use of new water mains/systems, green roofs to cleanse runoff, porous pavement to reduce runoff rates, and plantings to increase groundwater retention.

The program also strives to educate and encourage business owners and residents toward energy efficiency. By tracking each effort, the impact made on our environment will be easy to see.

What is the purpose of the Local Housing Trust Fund?

The LHTF provides financial



assistance for projects that rehabilitate, repair, or create safe and affordable housing in Fayette County. Activities funded serve only households with incomes less than 80 percent of the statewide median and units situated in Fayette County built prior to 1980.

What does the Food & Fitness Initiative do?

The Northeast Iowa Food & Fitness Initiative raises awareness about locally grown food; increases interest in trails, playgrounds and fishing access; and advocates walkable/bikeable communities.

What can you do?

Register as a volunteer now! Visit Volunteer Central by going to www.westunion.com, click the "Community" link in the left column, click on "Volunteer Opportunities" to view current needs and complete the volunteer registration form online.

Get to know your VISTA. Stop by the Chamber/Main Street office at 101 North Vine Street in downtown West Union, or call 563-422-3070.

We received such a warm welcome from the community, and our neighbors are so friendly. I really look forward to meeting everyone here!



Community Awards Banquet fun for all!

Main Street West Union and the West Union Chamber of Commerce teamed up this year to bring us the annual Community Awards Banquet. The banquet was held on January 17th and drew 150 people. As usual, the wind was howling out at the Echo Valley Speedway and Banquet Center. However, it was very warm inside. Individuals from the community were recognized for their generous volunteerism within our community. The stars of the show were Kevin and Pam Cline, Community

Service; Ron & Emm Moore, Education; West Union Ministers, Religion; Richard Klinefelter, Health Care; Joe Winter, Youth Community Service; and the 2009



Citizen of the Year, chosen by Jerry Blue of The Fayette County Union went to **Roy Guenther**. We had the pleasure of hearing

from all of these well-deserving award winners who spoke about giving back to their community. The message from each of these folks was that they volunteer in their community to make West Union the best place to call home.

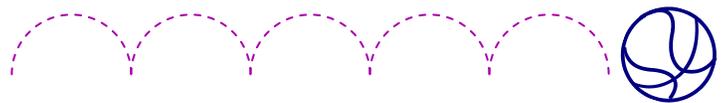
How lucky are we to live among these fine folk!



Burnham-Wood Funeral Home, West Union Rotary, Fayette County Dairy Promotion Board, West Union Lions, and Palmer Lutheran Health Center all deserve a big thank-you for sponsoring the hors d'oeuvres and dessert. We also say thanks to the planning committee for furnishing and putting up the decorations, as well as the setup, and cleanup. Please join us again next year to celebrate the spirit of volunteerism in West Union. Mark your calendar for the third Saturday in January.

Mystery Picture: The building sits at the corner of Main & Vine, Jay Villont's building!

**WU-LIGHT
SPECIAL!**
4:00 - 6:00 p.m. February 26th
Spirits & Such
Miss Drew's Closet
Stephen's Windows



* Business Improvement Committee Update

Bringing shoppers and merchants together

By Dick Woodard
Business Improvement Committee

The Business Improvement Committee is busy making plans for 2009 activities. We will be active participants in the market analysis that is planned for early in the year. The information gathered will be helpful in determining what products and services are currently not available in West Union. With those details we hope to determine if it is economically feasible for current businesses to add the items or new businesses to fill storefronts providing those products or services.

Another promotion involving a fun working relationship between merchants and shoppers is planned for the spring. Please watch upcoming newsletters and articles for details as they become available.

This committee will also be working with our fellow committees on a fundraiser for Main Street West Union's commitment to the local Iowa Great Places project. A couple fun events are planned for the day of May 9.

One that we can disclose at this time is an auction at Echo Valley Banquet Center. If you have quality items that you don't care to hold on to, we would welcome a donation. We are a 401c3 organization, so donations are tax-deductible. Please note that clothes and tires are not accepted, and we respectfully request this not be an alternative to the landfill.

Best wishes from the Business Improvement Committee for a profitable 2009!

**PAINT WUTIFUL
UPDATE**

Thanks to the businesses that participated in the interest meeting held on January 29th! We discussed the specifics of the Paint Iowa Beautiful Grant, talked about environmentally friendly paint and taking advantage of a design visit from Michael Wagler on February 17th.

Twelve businesses have voiced interest in a cooperative painting project. Besides applying for a Paint Iowa Beautiful grant, we will be working together as a group to defray equipment cost, coordinate volunteers, and increase the visual impact with synchronized efforts. We decided to tentatively plan the painting for mid-July and will meet again in April after we've received grant notification.

What drive and Determination can accomplish

By Greg Ptacek
MSWU Board President

Looking back over the last 12 months, it is truly amazing the number of events and activities in which Main Street West Union has been involved.

At the beginning of the year, the Organization Committee was concentrating its efforts on the 2008 MSWU Annual Meeting, the "Bella Serata" Italian dinner and Variety Show; the Business Improvement Committee was working on sponsoring a Small-Business Week Promotion; the Design Committee continued its efforts on the way-finding signs and its rear-entry façade grant program; and the Promotions Committee was busy with its "Wild WU Poker Run" event to increase sales for local merchants.

As we moved into the spring of the year, Main Street worked with the Chamber on Dairy Day and Motorloway. Also during this part of the year, we were informed that West Union had been chosen as one of two Iowa communities to participate in the Green Pilot Community program that was being put together by the Iowa Department of Economic Development. The fact that West Union is a Main Street Community played an important role in the selection process.

The Organization Committee was also beginning the planning for a MSWU booth at the Fayette County Fair. Promotions was beginning its planning for WU-STOCK; Business Improvement was laying the groundwork to get a market analysis completed for West Union and implemented a fun Downtown Employee Parking Lot-to promotion designed to open up downtown parking for retail customers.

The latter half of the summer saw a successful WU-STOCK and the completion of the Parking Lot-to promotion; the Design Committee continued to award façade grants as applications came in and funds were available.

The strong MSWU program also became a focal point in West Union's application to become designated as an Iowa Great Place.

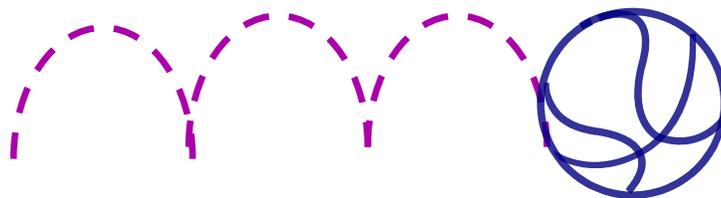
The Promotions Committee was working on its "Ghosts of WU" event.

Even with all of these activities taking place, Main Street West Union continued to be a key player in the local Downtown Streetscape Project.

So you can see that Main Street was very busy in 2008. The key element that allowed MSWU to be this active is the drive and determination of all its volunteers working together. This determination remains strong today as we look ahead now to 2009.

Again, the Downtown Streetscape Project, the Green Pilot Community program, and the Iowa Great Places project will all be important in 2009. Main Street West Union will continue to play an important role in those projects, as well as in new projects being developed.

By continuing to promote the spirit of "Volunteerism" and working together, we will make West Union a better place to shop, work and live.



Loads of fun planned for WU in 2009!

By Karla Organist, Promotions Committee

Our job as the Promotions Committee is to promote downtown (and West Union) "as the center of commerce, culture, and community life for residents and visitors alike." In a nutshell, we plan retail promotions and special events.

Our committee has been busy planning for a year of fabulous events for WU in 2009.

Beginning in February and occurring every couple of months throughout the year, we are planning "WU-Light Specials," gatherings in various retailers' stores and offices throughout the community.

Our first WU-Light Special will be held on February 26th at Spirits & Such, Miss Drew's Closet and Stephen's Windows. All are invited to stop by the store between 4:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. for some treats, in-store specials and a chance to win a nice door prize!

We are seeking other interested businesses that may want to host such a gathering on a date and time of their choosing. Our committee will provide the treats, a door prize and promotion for these

events, and we are hoping that the business will offer some sort of "special" during the two-hour get-together.

We are also planning a **Women's Spring Fling** on May 29th which will include a nice dinner with a fashion show or inspirational speaker. Local businesses will be featured and every participant will take home a nice coupon book to use all summer long.

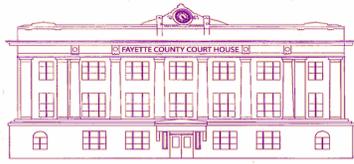
We'll be helping as needed with the **Dairy Day** celebration in June and will be kicking off our June **Bingo** promotion at that event. More details on this will follow.

Our largest event, **WU-STOCK**, will be held on August 29th. Once again, expect a really fun day of music, entertainment and activities for all ages!

All of these events take time to plan and implement. The Promotions Committee is always seeking volunteers and/or committee members to help out. The more folks who can put in time and effort on events, the more fun it is for everyone involved! Please consider joining our team of West Union Promoters! We'd love to have WU!



Main Street West Union



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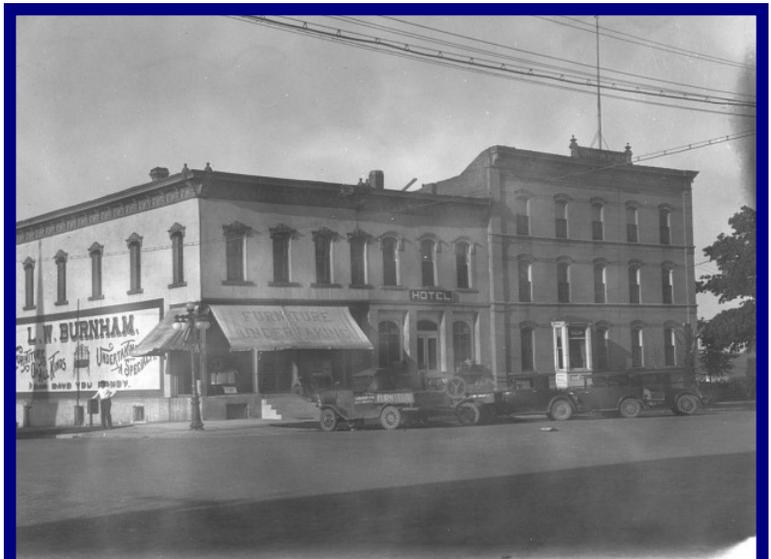
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Main Street West Union Mission Statement

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
Jon Biederman
Gail Hackman
Erin Heins
Mike Lauer
Mark Moser
Karla Organist
Jim Updegraff
Kara Wedemeier
Joe Winter



Mystery Building

Burnham-Wood Funeral home now has a different resting place. Can you guess where this building is, and who haunts it now?
The answer is hidden somewhere in this issue!