

Main Street Solutions - another home run!



CEDF and CMSC join forces once again

This past fall, Downtown New Haven played host and living laboratory for **Main Street Solutions**, the state's only commercial district revitalization conference. Over 250 people from throughout the state joined exemplary speakers, conference sponsors and City of New Haven representatives for the day-long conference, held at the Omni New Haven Hotel at Yale. Expanding considerably from the first year of **Main Street Solutions**, the 2003 conference featured 15 educational sessions, 5 walking tours of downtown New Haven and adjacent neighborhoods and simultaneous closing receptions at two of the top restaurants in the downtown New Haven. The Luncheon Keynote address, given by New Haven Mayor John DeStefano, presented a timely report and reflection on the State of Connecticut Blue Ribbon Commission Report on Property Tax Burdens and Smart Growth Incentives, release just days earlier.

The Community Economic Development Fund (CEDF) and Connecticut Main Street Center (CMSC) have pooled their expertise and networks in order to craft this statewide conference that has been called: "...a high quality event." The belief in a managed and comprehensive approach to commercial district revitalization that builds partnerships is at the core of CEDF's and CMSC's operating principles. Together, they have launched this annual conference to bring together the multitude of individuals and agencies throughout



Regina Winters, former Director of New Haven's Liveable City Initiative and Project Manager for Kenneth Boroson Architects, moderates a panel on how to strengthen and connect residential neighborhoods with their commercial districts in Good Neighbors Make Great Customers.



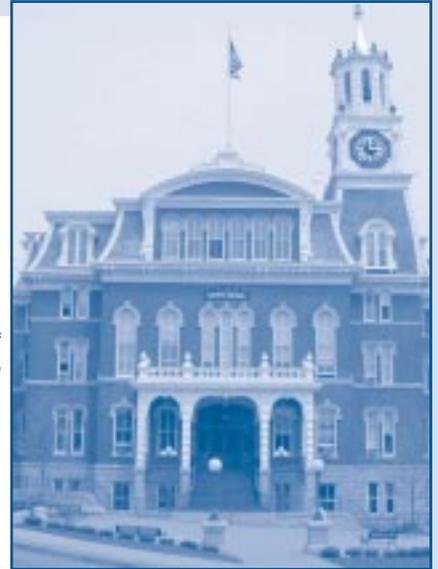
Portland representatives compare notes. (from left) Portland PRIDE Board members Linda Cunningham and Bob McDougall, and Town Planner Nancy Mueller.

the state related to commercial district revitalization to learn from national and regional experts on how to:

- promote the importance of a managed and comprehensive approach to commercial district revitalization.
- educate participants on all of the components of a revitalization program, learning from national experts, and each other, on how to build capacity and get results.
- reinforce and build the network of people and organizations dedicated to commercial district revitalization throughout the state.

Over 250 attendees from 52 municipalities attended this day-long conference, chock-full of information, ideas, checklists, advice and inspiration. From Crime Prevention Through Community Partnerships, to Attracting The Best Developers, to best practices in Downtown Housing, attendees had a plethora of educational sessions to choose from. At the end of the day, **Main Street Solutions** spilled out onto the streets of downtown New Haven, with walking tours of downtown and

Norwich Designated Connecticut Main Street Community



Norwich City Hall

Governor Rowland Declares "It's Norwich's Time"

Governor John G. Rowland joined over 100 enthusiastic people at a press conference announcing Norwich's designation as a Connecticut Main Street Community. Filling a sunny space at the Norwich Discovery Center was the entire Norwich City Council, Norwich Mayor Arthur L. Lathrop, State Senator Edith Prague, officials from the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation and the Board, Committees and Volunteers of Rose City Renaissance, the non-profit public/private partnership that took the lead in applying to the Connecticut Main Street Center. President Brett Bernardini welcomed everyone by explaining that for more than two years, an enormous group of people "have worked tirelessly, endlessly - all to improve the quality of life in our own community." Bernardini continued: "Today is a celebration of what MANY people can achieve when they come together for a common goal, a unified purpose and the willingness to do so without remuneration or recognition. Today is a celebration of what can start when everyday heroes achieve more together than they ever could alone."

Connecticut Main Street Center Board member Lisa Bumbera congratulated Norwich by stating that the decision to embrace the Main Street program in its efforts to revitalize downtown shows a deep commitment to its heritage. Explaining that the CMSC Selection Committee had recently convened to hear of progress in their application to the Center: "Rose City Renaissance has built a great deal of community support and awareness of the Main Street program, surpassing all fundraising goals and had even hired their Executive Director, Richard B.

Kramer. At this point we knew, with or without official Main Street designation - there was no stopping Norwich!"

Governor Rowland took the stage proclaiming November 14, 2003 as "Rose of New England Day". Norwich's Main Street press conference was the Governor's first and he was impressed with the enthusiasm and eloquence of the local Main Street organization. "Norwich is no longer a well-kept secret - and the best is yet to come." Referring to Mayor Lathrop as a "tireless advocate" for the city, the Governor stated that Norwich has benefited from state dollars being spent in the city as a result. The state has pumped \$143 million into the city over the past eight years of his administration and Rowland surprised the entire crowd by announcing an additional \$600,000 in state aid to assist with the completion of remediation and development of 5 acres of ball fields, picnic areas and

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Governor John G. Rowland congratulates Rose City Renaissance representatives and welcomes Downtown Norwich into Connecticut Main Street program (from left Richard B. Kramer, Executive Director of RCR, Governor Rowland, and Brett Bernardini, President of RCR).

Downtown Waterbury

The Newest Connecticut Main Street Community

Connecticut Main Street Center has announced that downtown Waterbury has been selected as the newest Connecticut Main Street community. There will be a public ceremony scheduled in December, where Governor Rowland, officials from Waterbury Main Street, the City of Waterbury and Connecticut Main Street Center will kick off the program, discuss what it will mean for Waterbury and outline what happens next.

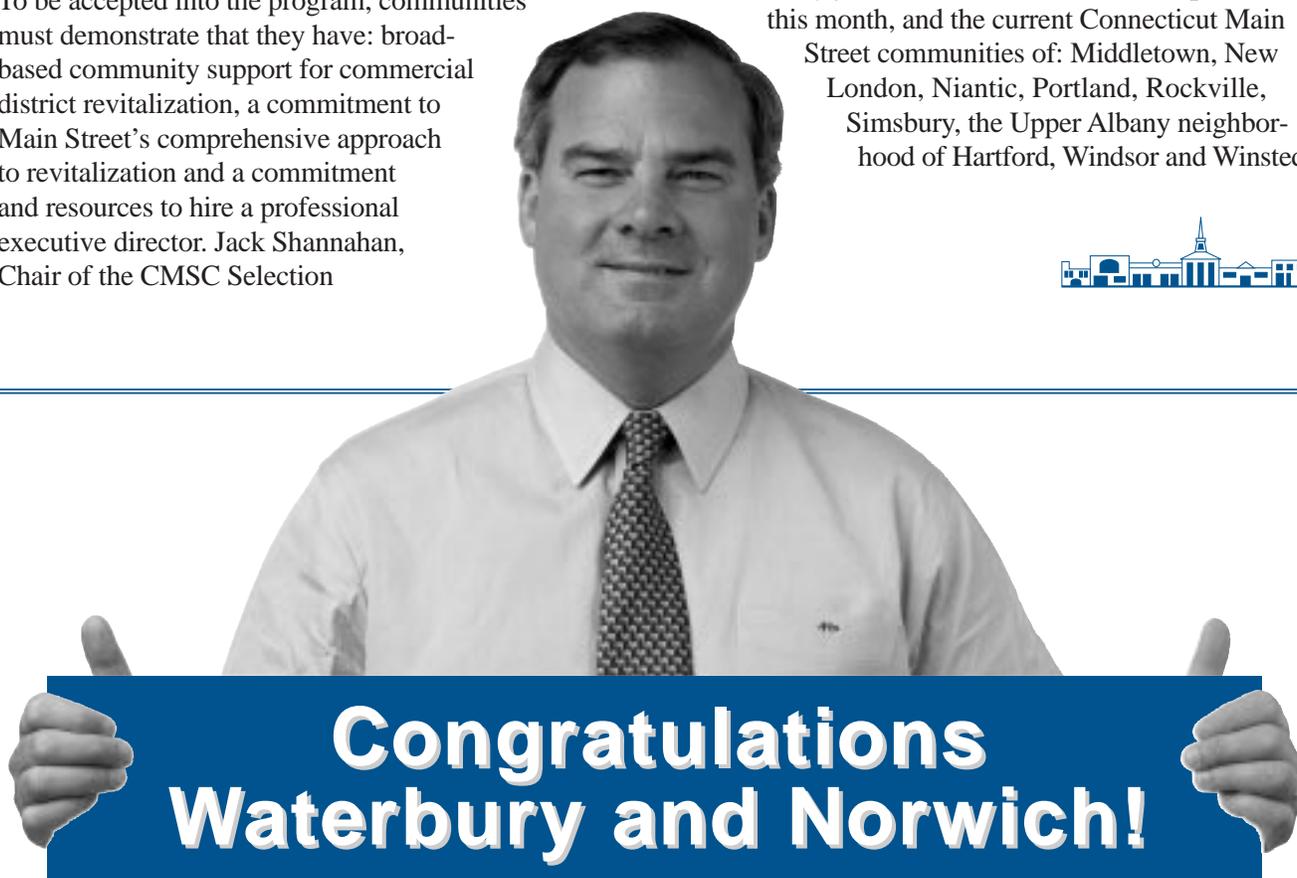
“We are delighted that all of our hard work has paid off. The experience and technical assistance that CMSC brings to the table coupled with the enthusiasm and commitment we have generated locally makes us confident that we can make a significant difference over time here in downtown Waterbury.” states Karen Pollard, President of Waterbury Main Street, the organization which took the lead in submitting the application to the Connecticut Main Street Program.

To be accepted into the program, communities must demonstrate that they have: broad-based community support for commercial district revitalization, a commitment to Main Street’s comprehensive approach to revitalization and a commitment and resources to hire a professional executive director. Jack Shannahan, Chair of the CMSC Selection

Committee and past Chair of the CMSC Board of Directors says, “Waterbury is now ready. They have already demonstrated evidence of widespread community, corporate and municipal support that can add value to the overall revitalization of their historic central business district. A local Main Street program can help coordinate, leverage and add value to what is already happening with new initiatives, a comprehensive work plan and an inclusive approach.”

The Connecticut Main Street Center is the state’s leading resource for cities and towns seeking to comprehensively revitalize their “main street” districts. CMSC, a member of the respected National Main Street network, is committed to bringing Connecticut’s commercial districts back to life socially and economically. CMSC is a non-profit organization whose major sponsors are the Connecticut Light & Power Company and the State of Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development.

Waterbury joins downtown Norwich, accepted earlier this month, and the current Connecticut Main Street communities of: Middletown, New London, Niantic, Portland, Rockville, Simsbury, the Upper Albany neighborhood of Hartford, Windsor and Winsted.



**Congratulations
Waterbury and Norwich!**

Jack Shannahan Spends Retirement Collecting Awards

The National Trust for Historic Preservation has presented John (Jack) W. Shannahan, recently retired State Historic Preservation Officer for Connecticut, with its prestigious National Preservation Honor Award. Shannahan was one of 21 national award winners honored by the National Trust in October at its 2003 National Preservation Conference in Denver, CO.

The National Trust's 2003 Preservation Awards illustrate the great diversity of our country and honor the dedication of citizens, organizations, and public and private entities who have worked to ensure that the best parts of our past are preserved for the future. "There is no single individual in the state of Connecticut, and few across the country, who have made such enormous contributions to historic preservation as Jack Shannahan," said Richard Moe, President of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. "For his innovative leadership and willingness to take risks to ensure the protection of Connecticut's valuable historic resources, the National Trust is pleased to honor Jack with a National Preservation Honor Award. His retirement this year marks a great loss to preservationists and leaves a void that will be extremely tough to fill."

"Connecticut is very fortunate to have Jack Shannahan's knowledge and commitment to our communities and to our heritage. We are very pleased to see that our partners at the National Trust are also honoring him for his tremendous work."

*Andrea Pereira, Chair
CMSC Board of Directors*



Jack Shannahan surrounded by officials from the National Trust for Historic Preservation (from left): Richard Moe, President; Preston Maynard, Board of Advisors (CT); Jack Shannahan; Anita L. Mielert, Board of Advisors (CT); William B. Hart, Chairman.

A few short days later, AIA Connecticut, the state chapter of the American Institute of Architects, awarded Jack its 2003 Public Service Award. Established to recognize individuals who have demonstrated public service in Connecticut by either enhancing the built environment, educating the public, supporting the architectural profession or meeting particular challenges posed by an architectural project, the Public Service Award is based on nominations from AIA Connecticut members.

In his letter of nomination, Roy Gilley, AIA, of Gilley Design Associates, Architects, wrote: "As an administrator, Jack has been responsible for creating the Connecticut Historical Commission as we know it today. He has assembled and directed the work of a team of dedicated professionals creating a preservation organization without peer in the United States. No other state organization has the national

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*Connecticut Main Street Center is generously sponsored by
The Connecticut Light and Power Company and the State of Connecticut Department of
Economic and Community Development.*

Connecticut Main Street 2002/2003 Annual Report



To our supporters, partners and friends:

As we look back on fiscal year 2002/2003, we mark the third year of operations as a non-profit institution carrying forward the mission and focus of the Connecticut Main Street Center, launched by CL&P in 1996. We have had much to celebrate in these three years. The number of local Main Street communities has more than doubled from 5 to 11. The total amount of public and private investment in our Main Street commercial districts has grown by 225% from \$63 million to \$225 million.

Just as impressively, the number of volunteer hours dedicated to our local Main Street districts has increased by over 250% from 26,000 to 65,000 hours over this same period of time. Volunteers are the back bone of any Main Street program. They make downtown revitalization a self-determined process and provide the capacity to get things done.

Successful Main Street programs must also forge partnerships with both the public and private sectors. It takes time to build trust and understand how various parties can work together towards common goals. We are now seeing a wonderful maturation process take hold within our local Main Street communities. They are gaining the respect of their respective municipal governments and civic organizations as being the primary resource to turn to regarding downtown revitalization. Local Main Street organizations are being asked to play leadership roles in initiatives relative to downtown such as the creation of downtown-focused chapters in the Plan of Conservation and Development, streetscape improvements, parking management strategies, niche market opportunities, zoning and code changes and community policing.

As we look to the future, we envision a growing network of people and resources focused on the continued revitalization of commercial districts throughout the state. Healthy commercial districts are crucial to building and maintaining livable communities that keep our state in the forefront as a place of choice to live and do business.

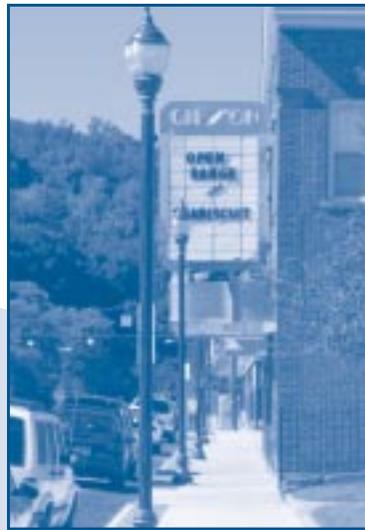
Recently, the State of Connecticut's **Blue Ribbon Commission on Property Tax Burdens and Smart Growth Incentives** issued its report and it is clear that downtown revitalization and the Connecticut Main Street Center can be one of the key partners in supporting the report's recommendations.

Here are some of the report's observations and recommendations:

- The report urges the state "to attain the vision of a Connecticut that develops fiscal and land-use policies that grow well-paying jobs, invest in people, while at the same time preserving and enhancing the unique character of the state's quality of life that is so crucial to its economic success and vitality."

- One of the report's recommendations is, "Promote land-use policies that support transit alternatives to the automobile by creating the density needed to support such alternatives."

Connecticut's Main Street programs embody the spirit of the Blue Ribbon Commission's report on a daily basis. Bringing a commercial neighborhood back to life is the epitome of smart growth because it involves:



The Gilson Café & Cinema, an anchor in Downtown Winsted.

- Spurring economic development within the context of historic preservation. Commercial districts are revitalized by utilizing their unique assets - their historic buildings. Almost without exception, the only commercial districts in Connecticut that retain any semblance of community identity and history are our town centers and neighborhood commercial districts.
- Utilizing existing infrastructure while creating new businesses and jobs.

- Filling vacant buildings and developing infill construction which can house thriving businesses and housing units within the existing footprint of the commercial district and thereby increase the tax base without utilizing new land.
- Improving the pedestrian environment and supporting multi-modal transportation alternatives.

Connecticut's town centers and commercial neighborhoods are blessed with an abundance of historic and natural assets that collectively provide the state with much of its unique character. Our state's compact, historic centers speak to the great quality of life we have to offer today and for future generations while they tell the story of Connecticut's distinct history and culture.

Connecticut Main Street Center pledges to play a leadership role convening and building the network of people, organizations and municipalities focused on commercial district revitalization. We envision this network to be a growing and positive force to advocate for the right policies and resources to ensure that our wonderful town centers are not just sleepy reminders of Connecticut's past, but vital contributors to Connecticut's future.

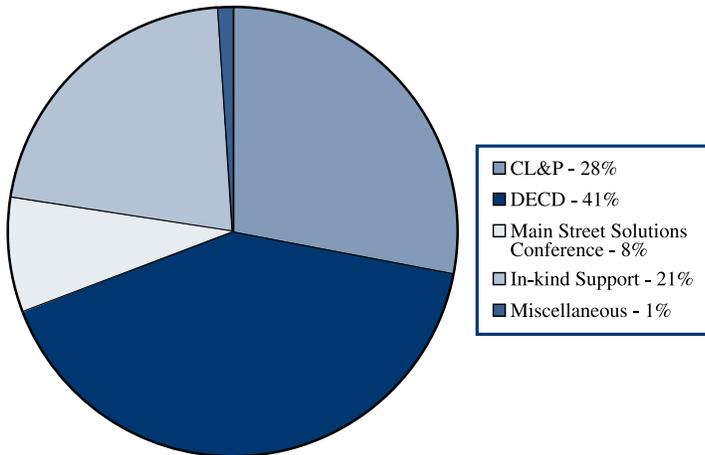
Sincerely,

Andrea Pereira
Chair

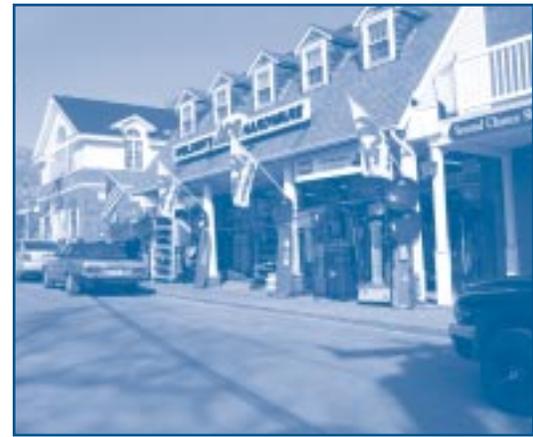
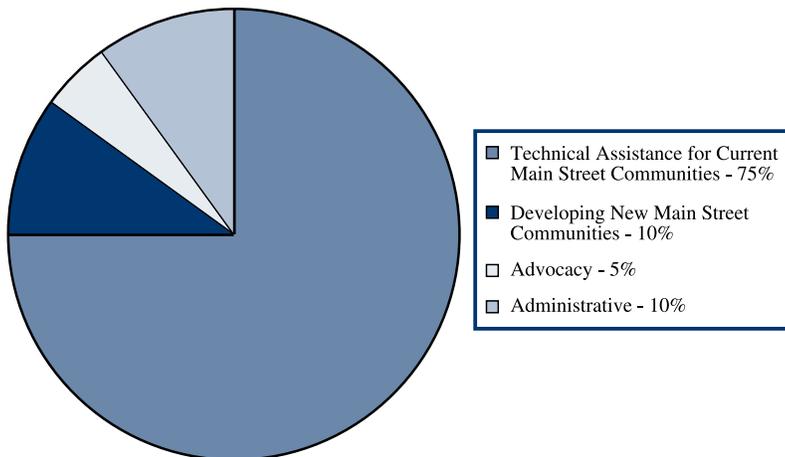
John Simone
Executive Director

Connecticut Main Street Center Sources and Uses of Funds July 1, 2002 - June 30, 2003

Sources of Funding: \$348,700 July 1, 2002 - June 30, 2003



Uses of Funds: \$348,200 July 1, 2002 - June 30, 2003



Simsbury's Town Center

Connecticut Main Street Center Highlights from 2002 - 2003

■ In keeping with our commitment for growth, we welcomed three new Main Street communities (Niantic, Norwich and Waterbury) bringing the total number of programs in the state from 8 to 11.

■ In partnership with the Community Economic Development Fund, we inaugurated the first statewide commercial district revitalization conference, Main Street Solutions, in the fall of 2002. We launched this annual conference to bring together the multitude of individuals and agencies throughout the state related to commercial district revitalization to learn from national and local experts and to reinforce and build the network of people dedicated to commercial district revitalization in Connecticut. The conference was a sell-out with over 280 registrants representing 67 different towns. Our second annual Main Street Solutions conference was presented in downtown New Haven in the fall of 2003.



Yale Urban Design Workshop student fellow Jessica Niles and director Alan Plattus work with CMSC staff on the development of the Main Street Design Manual.



Winners of the 2003 Connecticut Main Street Center Awards for Excellence in Downtown Revitalization.

Connecticut Main Street Center Highlights from 2002 - 2003 — *continued*

■ In partnership with the Yale Urban Design Workshop, we have developed a publication entitled “Renewing Connecticut’s Communities: A Main Street Design Manual” that will help commercial districts audit and improve their own physical environment. The number one indicator of a healthy commercial district is people on the streets walking, shopping, eating or just people watching at all times of the day. While most of Connecticut’s downtowns were built to accommodate pedestrians before the onslaught of our “auto-centric” lifestyle, over time, our historic commercial centers have seen their pedestrian environments eroded with the intrusion of more auto-oriented strip-style development. The central focus of the design manual is on building an understanding and appreciation for good “urban design,” which addresses the relationships between people, buildings, sidewalks, the street, parking and public spaces so that all these elements work cohesively to support a safe and friendly pedestrian environment. The design manual will help local Main Street communities identify their respective design assets and liabilities and craft plans that allow their districts to re-emerge as special places to visit, shop, live and enjoy.

■ One of the tenets of the Main Street program is to “celebrate your successes.” In order to highlight local Main Street successes, this past year we inaugurated the Connecticut Main Street Center Awards for Excellence in Downtown Revitalization to recognize outstanding projects, individuals and partnerships. At our annual meeting, 8 award winners were announced and 16 volunteers were recognized for their considerable investment of time and energy in their local Main Street communities.

■ Over the past year, we made 104 on-site visits to our designated Main Street communities. Some of the services provided included market analysis and developing niche strategies, visual merchandising, developing a communications plan for your Main Street program, small business development workshops, planning and coordinating special events, promoting your Main Street district, and strategic planning.

Reinvestment On Connecticut’s “Main Streets”

The Main Street Approach to Downtown Revitalization™ is one of the most powerful economic development tools throughout the nation. Here are the cumulative reinvestment statistics for Connecticut Main Street communities from 1996-June, 30, 2003:

Public Improvements	131
Net New Businesses	194
Net New Jobs	1,384
Construction Projects	675
Number of Volunteer Hours	91,748
Public Investment	\$76,949,958
Private Investment	\$128,506,234
Total Investment	\$205,456,192

For every \$1 spent on a local Main Street Program’s operating budget, \$54.81 has been reinvested into Connecticut Main Street Downtowns.

The Connecticut Main Street Center is the state's leading resource for cities and towns seeking to comprehensively revitalize their "main street" districts.

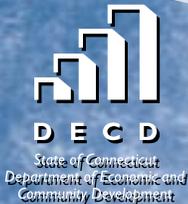
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CMSC is a non-profit organization whose major sponsors are the Connecticut Light & Power Company and the State of Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development.



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Light & Power**

The Northeast Utilities System



DECD
State of Connecticut
Department of Economic and
Community Development

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Land Use Lawyer
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VP, Community Development
& CRA Officer
Webster Bank

MAIN STREET SOLUTIONS — continued from page 1



Officer James Howell, City of New Haven, and Sheila Masterson, Director of Whalley Avenue Special Services District, enjoyed the session on Community Partnerships Fight Crime.



Mitchell Young, Publisher of Business New Haven, a Premium Sponsor of Main Street Solutions.



Funding Your Revitalization Organization featured speaker Luise Ernest, Executive Director of the Rockville Downtown Association.

adjacent neighborhoods that highlighted the Ninth Square, Upper Chapel Street, College Street and the New Haven Green and Yale University. On this cold and windy day, tour participants appreciated the opportunity to step into either Caffè Adulis or Bentara to grab a bite to eat and some refreshment before heading home. “WOW is just about all that needs saying...other than Thank You for doing this wonderful conference,” said conference speaker, Helen Higgins, Executive Director of the CT Trust for Historic Preservation.

Webster Bank is the title sponsor of **Main Street Solutions**. Major sponsors of the conference include: JP Morgan Chase, Wachovia and Business New Haven. Fleet Bank, New Haven Savings Bank, CERC, CL&P, DECD Peoples Bank and Citizens Bank round out the list of sponsors for this year’s event.

“My favorite segment of the day was the walking tour of downtown. I wish I had all day to view the façade and interior improvements. I’m spellbound by the beauty of New Haven.”
 Brigitte Rouleau, President
 Friends of Main Street, Winsted

“What a fantastic conference! The sessions I attended dovetailed perfectly with my present area of concentration. I can immediately apply what I learned.”
 Tana Parseliti, Director
 Downtown Manchester Special Services District



Sponsors














JACK SHANNAHAN — continued from page 2

respect that Connecticut has.”

Shannahan’s retirement this year has given Connecticut residents an opportunity to celebrate his achievements. Under his leadership, more than 70,000 properties were inventoried and documented in the statewide Historic Resources Inventory, and almost 1,400 individual properties and districts have been listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Highlights of his many accomplishments include helping to create Connecticut’s first national park, spearheading the adoption of some of the nation’s strongest preservation laws, overcoming great political opposition to secure recognition and preservation of the famed Merritt Parkway, serving as the chief advocate for establishment of the Connecticut Main Street Center, serving as a mentor for the statewide Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation, and managing four museums.

Jack Shannahan is the former Chair of the Connecticut Main Street Center Board of Directors. He was awarded the 2003 Connecticut Light and Power Company Award for Outstanding Contributions to Main Street Revitalization at CMSC’s Annual Meeting last June. Shannahan

continues to serve on CMSC’s Board of Directors and currently chairs the Selection Committee, which annual reviews applications to CMSC from Connecticut communities working to revitalize their downtowns or neighborhood commercial districts via the Main Street Approach.



“The last three decades saw the achievement across the country of ever lower standards in wretched exurban sprawl and heartbreaking urban demolition. During those decades Jack fought the good fight for Connecticut, in countryside and city centers alike. It is thanks to his efforts, and of all those he quietly led to stand with him, that today in this state there is still so much to care about and, on his example, defend.”

Patrick L. Pinnell, AIA

Check out these GREAT websites!

Growing Economies From Within

www.sirolli.com

The Sirolli Institute- Based on the belief that the future of every community lies in capturing the passion, energy, imagination and resources of its people, the mission of the Sirolli Institute is to promote economic and community revitalization by capturing the passion, intelligence, imagination and resources of local entrepreneurs.

www.sfu.ca/cedc/index.htm

The Community Economic Development Centre - Community Economic Development is a process by which communities can initiate and generate their own solutions to their common economic problems and thereby build long-term community capacity and foster the integration of economic, social and environmental objectives.

NORWICH DESIGNATED MAIN STREET COMMUNITY — *continued from page 2*

nature walk ways at Occum Park, named for a famous tribal chief. Mayor Lathrop said: "The Mohegan tribe has agreed in principle to a \$500,000 commitment to [help] remediate this park." Claiming that "Vision, Investment and Partnership create the pebble effect", the Governor praised Norwich's perfect location and great quality of life and welcomed Rose City Renaissance into the state Main Street program.

Media coverage of the event was extensive. All three major TV network affiliates with camera crews and reporters joined a local radio station and the press. The

Norwich Bulletin and The Day have covered Rose City Renaissance's progress in the Main Street initiative and each played a critical role in educating the public and helping to build support for the program. The Norwich Bulletin ran a series of editorial features in early September, providing readers with updates on Rose City Renaissance's fundraising and encouraging community support. In one September Op-Ed, the Bulletin stated: "Rose City Renaissance offers something to get excited about. Let's push it over the top and get on with the job."



What's NEW?

Visit the CMSC website!

Log onto www.ctmainstreet.org to learn the latest about the revitalization of Connecticut's Main Streets.

Our website tells you about CMSC, how to become a Main Street Community, lists the services we provide. You can also link to over 100 resources in downtown revitalization and download a copy of this newsletter, *CT's Main Streets*.

www.ctmainstreet.org



is the quarterly newsletter of Connecticut Main Street Center. We welcome submissions of articles, editorials and photos. Permission to reprint any article must be granted in writing by Connecticut Main Street Center

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Name and address updates requested

Connecticut Main Street 2002/2003 Annual Report/Newsletter Issue



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