



**Wisconsin**  
**MAIN STREET**  
**35<sup>TH</sup> AWARDS • WAUSAU**

**March 19, 2026**  
The Grand Theater, Wausau

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Barb LaMue – On Broadway Inc., Green Bay
- Wisconsin Main Street Hall of Fame (co-winner):  
Jim Holperin – Eagle River

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- Downtown Racine

# Schedule and Organizers

## Schedule of Events

**1:45-3:30 p.m.** Registration

**2-3:15 p.m.** Tours of the Grand Theater and  
Wausau Downtown area

**3:30-5 p.m.** Awards Ceremony

**5-6:30 p.m.** Cocktail Hour Reception

## Awards Presentation

Community Champions

Business of the Year

Best Business Support Initiative

Best Small-Scale Placemaking Project

Best Large-Scale Façade Rehabilitation

Best Retail Event

Best Special Event

Best Business Marketing Campaign

Best Total Building Transformation

Best Large-Scale Placemaking Project

Best Small-Scale Interior Renovation

Small Connect Community Award

Large Connect Community Award

Best Community Marketing Campaign

Best Small-Scale Façade Rehabilitation

Best Large-Scale Interior Renovation

Best New Construction

Wisconsin Main Street Hall of Fame

Wisconsin Main Street of the Year



## WEDC Leadership

**John W. Miller**

Secretary and Chief Executive Officer

**Sam Ridders**

Deputy Secretary and Chief Operating  
Officer

**Mike Ward**

Senior Vice President, Business and  
Community Development

**Errin Welty**

Senior Director of Downtown  
Development

**Joe Lawniczak**

Downtown Design Specialist

**Adriana Humbert**

Downtown Development Senior  
Program Manager

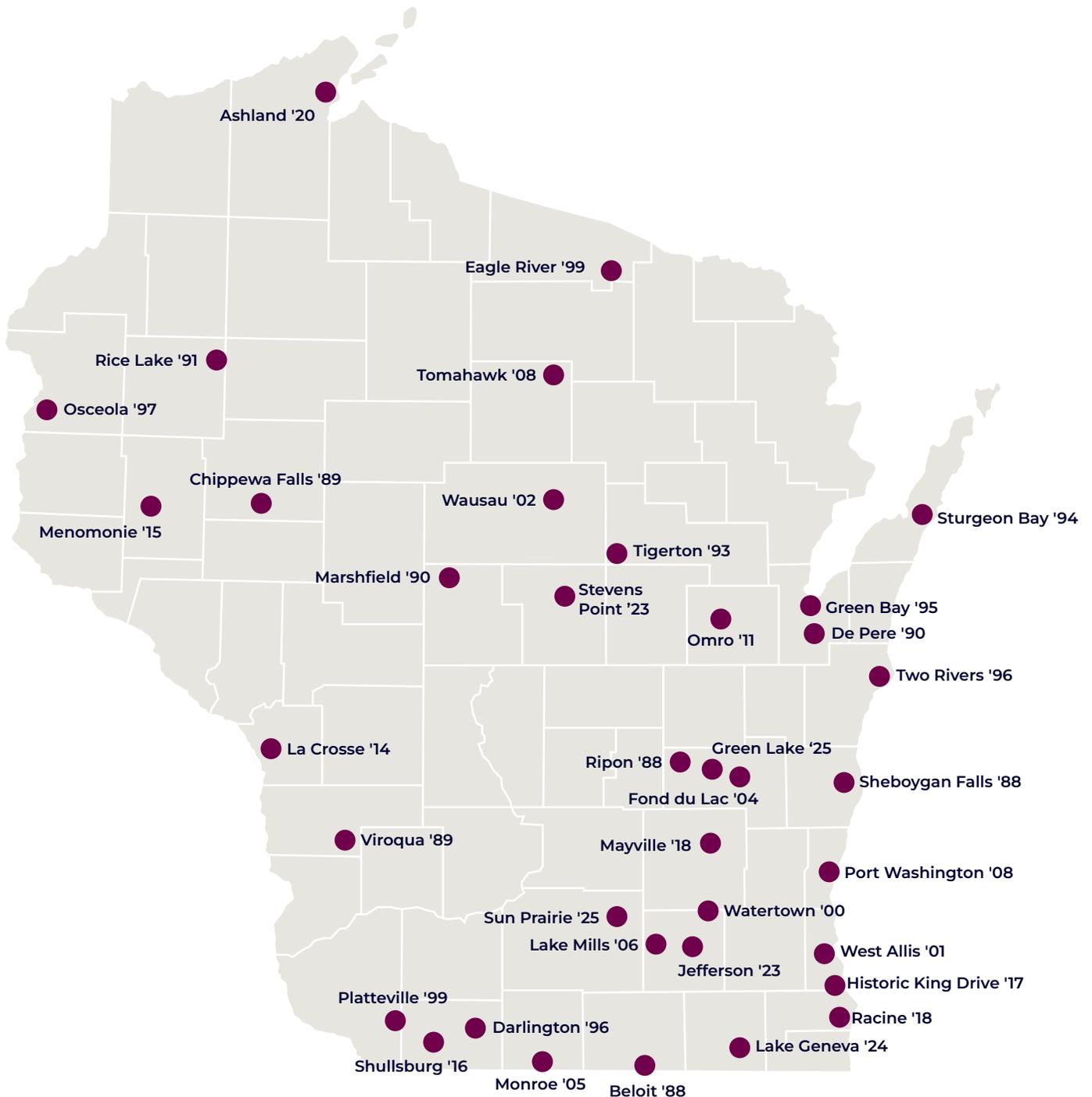
**Brendan Zeinstra**

Downtown Development Intern

# About Wisconsin Main Street

The Wisconsin Main Street program was created in 1987, and is affiliated with the National Main Street Center. The Main Street America™ program is designed to provide technical support and training for organizations dedicated to downtown or commercial corridor revitalization activities.

The program is flexible in its ability to accommodate a wide range of community sizes and situations. Successful programs will have established a strong local base of support which enables them to undertake a broad spectrum of initiatives specifically designed to foster local success.



## 2025 Nationally Accredited Programs

Ashland	Platteville
Beloit	Port Washington
Chippewa Falls	Racine
Darlington	Ripon
De Pere	Sheboygan Falls
Eagle River	Shullsburg
Fond du Lac	Stevens Point
On Broadway - Green Bay	Sturgeon Bay
La Crosse	Tigerton
Lake Mills	Tomahawk
Marshfield	Viroqua
Mayville	Watertown
Historic King Drive - Milwaukee	Wausau
Monroe	West Allis

## Executive Directors Years of Service

### Five years

Dawn Gindt, Mayville

Jennifer Turkiewicz - Tomahawk

### 10 years

Brian Johnson, On Broadway, Green Bay

### 15 years

Teri Ouimette, Chippewa Falls

## New Programs in 2025

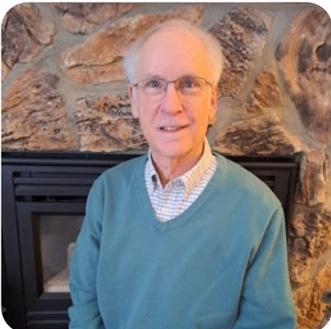
Welcome to Green Lake and Sun Prairie!

## 2025 Community Champions



### **Matt Dohmeyer – Beloit**

In 2025 alone, Matt dedicated more than 45 hours to supporting the Downtown Beloit Association, giving his time and energy wherever it was needed most. Whether he eagerly volunteered or was “voluntold,” he showed up ready to work and gave every task his full effort. From setting up, assisting during, and tearing down the Beloit Farmers Market to dressing in costume for the Halloween Parade and Party—and hauling and delivering countless boxes of wine for the Fall Wine Walk, Matt has been a dependable and enthusiastic presence behind the scenes. These are only a few examples of the many ways he strengthened Downtown Beloit’s events. His reliability, positive attitude, and commitment have made a meaningful and irreplaceable impact on the organization this past year.



### **Byron McNutt – Eagle River**

For years, Byron has been a steadfast business and property owner and committed Rotarian in the Eagle River community, consistently championing the Eagle River Main Street program. He has worked tirelessly to help plan, guide construction of, and secure funding for the downtown Rotary Community Square. His leadership was instrumental in bringing the Pavilion to life, featuring four restrooms, an enclosed seating area, and a food service space that supports nonprofit organizations during community events and fundraisers. The square also offers welcoming outdoor seating and a clock generously donated by the Eagle River Rotary. Byron has a unique ability to open doors, build partnerships, and generate meaningful support. His credibility, visibility, and dedication have strengthened Main Street’s impact and positioned the program for continued success well into the future.

## 2025 Community Champions



### **Black & White Barbershop – King Drive (Milwaukee)**

Black & White Barbershop exemplifies the spirit of a Community Champion through resilience, leadership, and a deep commitment to people. Founded in 2016 by Nicholas Berlin and Jay Whisenten, the shop has grown from a small startup into a thriving team of eight professionals serving a diverse, multigenerational clientele in the Historic King Drive neighborhood. Beyond delivering high-quality barbering and loc services, the business strengthens the district by generating steady foot traffic and fostering an inclusive, welcoming environment. Black & White consistently gives back—offering haircut vouchers through nonprofit partners, supporting neighboring businesses, participating in block parties, and assisting flood-displaced residents. Nick also serves as a part-time educator at Milwaukee Area Technical College, mentoring the next generation and investing in workforce development. Through generosity, professionalism, and authentic community connection, Black & White Barbershop has become a true cornerstone of the district.



### **Melisa Schmidt-Zettle – Monroe**

For more than a decade, Melisa has been the steady, guiding force behind Main Street Monroe's annual Lighted Christmas Parade, braving frigid temperatures while directing walkers, floats, and vehicles with confidence and the best voice on the route. As co-chair, she remains calm, organized, and quietly effective, often helping countless participants without seeking recognition, ensuring that the event shines year after year. Her dedication extends far beyond the parade: Melisa readily steps in where needed—selling raffle tickets, setting up events, assisting with pony rides, managing merchandise at car shows, and helping organize Main Street Monroe's 20th anniversary gala for more than 200 guests. She also strengthens connections across the community through her involvement with the state's largest women's club chapter and the local curling club. Melisa doesn't just volunteer – she elevates every event and organization she supports, making her a truly deserving Community Champion.

## 2025 Community Champions



### **Mai Nu Vang – On Broadway Inc. (Green Bay)**

Mai embodies the true spirit of a Community Champion through her leadership, creativity, and unwavering commitment to inclusion. She steps into roles others might overlook, strengthening the entire organization through action. Mai translated Hmong farmers market vendor applications to expand accessibility, led the Hmong Musical Festival for the Levitt AMP Green Bay Music Series, and actively served on the Levitt Hype Team and Committee to engage diverse audiences. She also organized trash pickup efforts at three farmers' markets, demonstrating hands-on dedication. Bringing culture and celebration to the forefront, she led a vibrant pop-up Hmong fashion show down the center of the farmers market, creating a powerful moment of connection and pride. Her initiative, passion, and ability to unite the community through service and culture make her an exceptional volunteer and Community Champion.



### **Steve and Maggie Kleisath – Platteville**

For more than 15 years, Steve and Maggie have quietly strengthened Platteville through unwavering service to our senior citizens' community. Recognizing the growing challenge of food insecurity, they began purchasing fresh produce at Amish auctions to support the local food pantry—an effort that soon expanded into weekly summer and fall distributions at seven locations, including the Main Street district. Two days each week, they sourced the freshest fruits and vegetables, then sorted and delivered them to the Platteville Food Pantry, Senior Center, and five senior housing facilities. As need has grown, so has their impact. With support from the Platteville Main Street Program, they distributed more than 7,000 pounds of produce in 2025 alone. Over 15 years, their contributions have exceeded \$300,000, providing critical relief to seniors and ensuring access to healthy food. Their dedication exemplifies the very best of community volunteerism.

# 2025 Community Champions



## Suzanne Bostwick – Stevens Point

Suzanne, owner of Lily and Vine Floral & Gifts in Downtown Stevens Point, exemplifies the true spirit of a Main Street Community Champion. Her generosity, creativity, and deep love for downtown shine through in everything she does. Suzanne continually supports the Stevens Point Downtown Business Improvement District with her time, talent, staff, and resources – bringing thoughtful details that elevate events and inspire others to spread joy. From festive hot cocoa during Downtown Christmas to imaginative décor for Discover Downtown, the Dozynki Downtown Polish harvest festival, and Trick-or-Treat, her contributions create memorable experiences for residents, visitors, and fellow businesses. She is also a dedicated mentor, sharing her expertise with local students through hands-on floral education in the SPASH Agriscience program. Through celebrations, milestones, and moments of remembrance, Suzanne fosters beauty, connection, and community—qualities that merit the Community Champion designation.



## Linda Kerneen – Tigerton

Linda has been a driving force behind Tigerton Main Street for many years, serving as both an active committee member and a dedicated board member. She invests countless hours in fundraising, gathering donations, and helping guide the program forward with steady commitment and care. Beyond Main Street, Linda is deeply involved throughout the community, supporting events and organizations such as her church, Applefest, the Fourth of July Block Party, and the Cookie and Soup Cookoff. She is always ready to lend a hand wherever help is needed. Linda gives her time, energy, and heart generously, consistently going above and beyond to strengthen Tigerton. Her positive spirit, integrity, and unwavering dedication exemplify true volunteerism. Because of her commitment, the community is stronger, more connected, and better supported.

## 2025 Community Champions



### **Gina Stehl – Three Lakes**

Gina is a driving force behind the revitalization of downtown Three Lakes. As secretary of Downtown Three Lakes Inc., co-owner of the Brew Station and the Supply Station, and a full-time remote professional, she leads with vision and action. In 2025, she transformed a simple boardroom idea into a vibrant Summer Solstice Night Market—researching models, launching a Patronicity crowdfunding campaign, and propelling Three Lakes to a second-place national finish for individual donors. She booked entertainment, managed logistics, and developed all the marketing, drawing young families and new visitors downtown. At her own businesses, Gina fuels year-round energy with live music, food trucks, and community events, even during slower seasons. She also leads grant research and applications, including efforts to enhance the downtown pop-up park. Gina doesn't just champion downtown—she builds its momentum and future.



### **Rainmakers – Tomahawk**

When Tomahawk needs a little extra help from Mother Nature, the Rainmakers answer the call—water cart and all. Bruce, Cindy, Dick, Kathy, and Phil rise by 6 a.m. to keep the Foster Flower program thriving, watering beds and baskets, weeding, and tidying downtown so it stays bright, beautiful, and welcoming. Their steady dedication ensures the streets of downtown Tomahawk remain in full bloom all season long. Supporting the effort are Rose, Deb, and Jane, who lend their time and care through weeding, mulching, and tackling anything left behind. This remarkable volunteer team plays a vital role in maintaining Tomahawk's vibrant downtown showcase. Special thanks also go to the city crew for maintaining the water cart and to Cerny's for planting the flowers. It truly takes a village—and the Rainmakers help it flourish.

# 2025 Community Champions



## Nathan Kronforst – Two Rivers

For the past four years, Nathan has been an indispensable force behind Two Rivers Main Street. A board member for six years, Nate provides steady leadership and meaningful impact beyond the boardroom. He and his wife, Theresa, along with their three daughters (and an occasional boyfriend), operate the beverage tent at the Cool City Show, Bryan Lee Memorial Blues Festival, and Ethnic Fest. From setup to teardown, their family-run crew saves countless hours and ensures each event runs smoothly. Nate's business also sponsors bands, offering generous financial support that is rare and deeply appreciated. He has successfully recruited four new board members in the past two years, strengthening the organization's future. Perhaps most uniquely, Nate serves as a calming presence downtown, acting as a peacekeeper among neighbors and fostering cooperation. His leadership, generosity, and steady influence make him a true Community Champion.

# Business of the Year

## JoAnne's Dress Shop

**Monroe**

**Population: 10,579**

**Schedule:** Six-month business transition period

**Owners:** JoAnne Leuenberger (until July 1, 2025) and Lisa Buol (starting July 1, 2025)

**Partners/Sponsors:** Main Street Monroe Inc.

**Jobs Retained:** 10-12 part-time

**Project Goal:** Continue operating and growing JoAnne's Dress Shop into another generation: a boutique-style clothing store with quality items for women aged 40 to 100.

**Project Outcome:** Lisa Buol purchased JoAnne's Dress Shop on July 1, 2025, from JoAnne Leuenberger. Recent efforts include a store redesign, new brands, and remaining on the historic square. JoAnne's remains a genuine anchor, mentoring other women-owned shops and fostering a welcoming space for customers ages 40 to 100 who value in-person shopping.



# Best Business Support Initiative

## Main Street Makeover

**Fond du Lac**

**Population: 44,469**

**Schedule:** January – August 2025

**Partners/Sponsors:** City of Fond du Lac Public Works and Community Development

**Budget/Financing:** \$17,000

**Project Goal:** The goal of the Main Street Makeover initiative was to proactively support downtown businesses during Main Street reconstruction by encouraging continued visitation, maintaining access and communication, and reframing construction as a positive, community-focused transformation. In late 2024, the DFP Marketing Committee began proactively planning how to make the best of the upcoming Main Street reconstruction project in the Summer of 2025. The theme “Main Street Makeover” was created to emphasize the positive long-term outcome, encourage downtown visitation, and promote a sense of fun and optimism while construction was underway.

**Project Outcome:** The Main Street Makeover initiative successfully mitigated the economic impact of major reconstruction by maintaining downtown visibility, access, and customer confidence, resulting in business sales that remained consistent with previous years despite prolonged construction. The project was completed one week ahead of schedule, in time for downtown’s largest annual event, Fondue Fest. A ribbon cutting was held with local media. Feedback from downtown businesses indicated sales were comparable to previous years—an outcome widely viewed as a success given the scale and duration of the construction.



# Best Small-Scale Placemaking Project

## Urban Forest Walkway

**De Pere**

**Population: 25,453**

**Cost:** \$100,000

**Schedule:** January – August 2025

**Partners/Sponsors:** City of De Pere,  
Definitely De Pere

**Budget/Financing:** American Rescue Plan  
Act (ARPA)

**Project Goal:** To transform an underutilized downtown walkway into an engaging, art-forward, and nature-inspired public space that enhances walkability and community connection.

**Project Outcome:** The Urban Forest Walkway is now a vibrant placemaking destination that encourages foot traffic, celebrates local art, and elevates the overall downtown experience.

**Property History:** The Urban Forest Walkway is a \$100,000 streetscape and public art project that transforms an underutilized pedestrian corridor spanning the 200 block of Main Avenue into a

vibrant downtown destination within the Main Street program area. Extending behind six buildings, the project reimagines a previously overlooked space as a nature-inspired “urban forest” that enhances walkability, visual interest, and community connection.

**Planters:** Landscape Artisans

**Artists:** Shanna Koltz (2D panels and the trilliums), Naomi Moes-Jenkins (Mother of the Forest sculpture), and Andrew Linskens (mural)

**Year Built:** 2025

**Former Uses:** Pedestrian walkway

**Features:** Design considerations include durability, safety, space, seasonal interest, and sustainability. Large-scale planters introduce trees, shrubs, and perennials to soften the hardscape and create a welcoming pedestrian experience.



# Best Large-Scale Façade Rehabilitation

## 311-319 State Street – Beloit

**Population:** 36,633

**Cost:** \$1.64 million

**Schedule:** March – August 2025

**Owners:** Hendricks Commercial Properties

**Budget/Financing:** \$240,000 in Upper Floor Housing Grants

**Project Goal:** Update and modernize a historic building, including 10 second-floor studio apartments and three to five first-floor retail spaces.

**Project Outcome:** Offer a contemporary experience while keeping the building's original architecture. The façade of the buildings is fully complete. All of the apartments were filled prior to them being ready to move in. The storefront spaces are still being finished, but announced tenants include Poke Green and Bodacious Shops. Pizzazz Gift & Apparel Boutique (displaced during construction) has committed to moving back into the block when it is complete.

**Building History:** While removing the previously updated façade, they uncovered historical architecture such as the original vestibule.

**Contractors:** Corporate Contractors Inc.

**Major Repairs:** Fully renovated upper floor apartments, building façade, and first-floor commercial units.

**Year Built:** 1880

**Former Uses:** Retail and apartment spaces, Stanton Shoes, Always & Forever Formal Wear

**Features:** This was a two-phase project, upgrading the retail spaces as well as creating 10 loft/studio style apartments.

- Great traffic and visibility
- Ample parking - street parking in front, public lot in back
- Walkability to downtown dining, retail, residential and entertainment
- Flexible lease terms



# Best Retail Event

## Galentine's Day

**Fond du Lac**

**Population: 44,469**

**Cost: \$7,000**

**Schedule:** January 2025 (ongoing)

**Partners/Sponsors:** Sunny 97.7, Downtown Fond du Lac Partnership (25 participating downtown businesses)

**Budget/Financing:** \$1,000 in costs, \$5,000 in event income

**Attendance:** 500 participants, 10,793 downtown during the day of the event

**Impact/Generated Revenue:** \$39,818

**Project Goal:** The goal of Galentine's Day was to boost late-January retail activity by creating a fun, free, women-focused shopping event that encouraged downtown visitation, cross-shopping among local businesses, and increased sales during a traditionally slow time of year.

**Project Outcome:** Galentine's Day successfully drove high foot traffic and increased retail sales during a traditionally slow season by engaging 250 VIP shoppers and hundreds of attendees in a fun, community-focused experience that encouraged women to shop, connect, and support local businesses.



DOWNTOWN FOND DU LAC

# GALENTINES

## Day

JANUARY 31  
9 AM - 3 PM

 DOWNTOWN FOND DU LAC Partnership

 SUNNY97.7

# Best Special Event

## Wausau Night Market Series

**Wausau**

**Population: 39,994**

**Cost:** \$9,529 (estimated)

**Schedule:** June – August 2025

**Partners/Sponsors:** Wausau River District, Wausau Parks and Recreation, T. Wall Enterprises, Festival Foods, IncredibleBank, Miron, Midwest Communications, approximately 65 makers and six to eight food truck vendors

**Budget/Financing:** \$3,000 in event costs and \$1,200 in income

**Attendance:** Approximately 2,000 people per event

**Impact/Generated Revenue:** \$18,925 (estimated)

**Project Goal:** The Wausau River District's (WRD's) goal was to elevate and expand the annual Night Market series by increasing vendor and district business participation, enhancing live music and entertainment, and strengthening cohesive branding and marketing efforts. These strategies served the larger objectives of attracting a broader local and out-of-town audience, showcasing local makers and food vendors, and intentionally driving downtown foot traffic, economic activity, and placemaking—ultimately positioning Wausau as a vibrant destination for events, shopping, and dining.

**Project Outcome:** In 2025, the WRD Night Market more than doubled attendance (to more than 2,000 people per event) by expanding to about 65 makers (a 40% increase) and six to eight food trucks (a 100% increase) per event, adding a full live music stage with professional sound and multiple performers, increasing district business participation, elevating the WRD Canned Alcohol Cart, and strengthening overall event branding and marketing.



# Best Business Marketing Campaign

## Andy's Pontoon Saloon

**Eagle River**

**Population: 1,681**

**Cost: \$8,126**

**Schedule:** June – November 2025

**Owners:** Andy Lichtfuss

**Attendance:** 1,500 unique participants

**Budget:** \$6 per T-shirt

**Impact/Generated Revenue:** More than 1,500 visitors to downtown during off-peak hours



**Project Goal:** Get Eagle River residents and visitors active, outside, and downtown on Saturday mornings. Andy's Pontoon Saloon Run Club was created with a simple goal: to give Eagle River locals and visitors a reason to be active, get outside, and visit downtown Eagle River on Saturday mornings.

**Project Outcome:** Thousands of locals and visitors were active, got outside, and patronized not only the Pontoon Saloon but other businesses in downtown Eagle River as well. Andy was hopeful that 250 people would participate throughout the summer; ultimately, more than 1,500 unique participants joined, with many returning every week. The event became so popular that Andy extended it into the fall and added a walking group so people of all ages and abilities could participate. On average, there were about 110 participants each week, with the highest single-week turnout reaching about 330.

From a business standpoint, the event series was brilliant. Each T-shirt costs \$6.28, and the average price of a beer is \$7. If someone stayed for one beer, the cost was recouped. Most participants stayed and purchased multiple beers, Pontoon Saloon merchandise, and pizza.

This event series had many positive outcomes, including:

1. Participants had a reason to be active, be outside, and receive a free T-shirt.
2. Andy's was jam-packed the moment it opened at 11 a.m.
3. The success spilled over into the community, as other downtown Eagle River businesses were flooded with people wearing Run Club T-shirts for hours every Saturday morning.

By the end of the series, people were coming from all over the Midwest to participate. The momentum will carry into the 2026 season.

# Best Total Building Transformation

## Violet Inn, Lounge & Spa

**Two Rivers**

**Population: 11,214**

**Cost:** \$1.4 million

**Schedule:** November 2023 – December 2025

**Owners:** Melissa Nyssen, Amanda Hanley

**Budget/Financing:** Two Rivers Main Street Façade Grant, City of Two Rivers

**Jobs Created:** 10

**Architect:** Brandt & Reynolds (original)

**Contractors:** Hamann Construction

**Year Built:** 1926

**Former Uses:** Elks Lodge, bar

**Project Goal:** Renovate a derelict former bar into an inn, lounge, and spa. The renovation aims to bring fresh life to downtown Two Rivers while honoring the building's historic roots, preserving its solid 1920s craftsmanship while introducing nature-focused design.

**Project Outcome:** Opened a beautiful inn, lounge and spa after a project involving a complete gut renovation, removing the walls down to the studs while still working to preserve the building's character keeping original details intact—including the original stone exterior, pine ceilings and beams, 12-foot ceilings, and maple and terrazzo flooring, all preserved alongside new modern electrical plumbing and HVAC systems, ADA accessibility, state-of-the-art fire protection, and hospitality-grade finishes.

**Building History:** Built in 1926, the building at 1415 16th Street originally served as the home of Elks Lodge No. 1380. For many years, the Two Rivers lodge hosted dinners, dances, and events, creating a welcoming place where residents gathered to connect and celebrate.

**Features:** Eco-friendly features have been woven throughout the space, from energy-efficient and water conservation systems and salvaged waste-reducing products to nontoxic cleaning practices and native landscaping. Deeply rooted in place, the Violet Inn reflects a commitment to community collaboration and local artistry. The owners partner with nearby makers and artists to showcase the creative spirit of Two Rivers, allowing guests to experience not only the comfort of the inn but also the character and craftsmanship of the community that surrounds it.



**BEFORE**



**AFTER**

# Best Large-Scale Placemaking Project

## Main Street Monroe Pocket Park

**Monroe**

**Population:** 10,579

**Cost:** \$1,078,863

**Schedule:** October 2024 –  
September 2025

**Owners:** City of Monroe

**Partners/Sponsors:** Main Street Monroe Inc., City of Monroe, Studio GWA, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

**Project Goal:** Create a downtown pocket park with public restrooms.

**Project Outcome:** Public restrooms opened on the square on Sept. 20, 2025, thanks to 250 donors, with individual donations ranging from \$8 to \$150,000. The pocket park project transformed a long-vacant downtown lot into a vibrant community gathering space that enhances the beauty, accessibility, and economic vitality of Monroe. Designed as a welcoming green space, the park features landscaped gardens, shaded seating, bike racks (including for e-bikes), programmable electronic kiosks, and areas for people to enjoy coffee, meals, and conversation while spending time downtown.

**Property History:** A key component is the addition of four-season, fully ADA-accessible public restrooms, addressing a need first identified more than a century ago. In 1902, a local newspaper called for public restrooms on the square, highlighting a longstanding community concern finally realized through this project which began in earnest with Main Street’s Design Committee co-chairs, John and Donna Glynn. Most historic buildings downtown lack compliant facilities, making these restrooms an essential improvement for residents, visitors, and event-goers.

**Contractors:** Harmony Construction

**Architect:** Studio GWA

**Major Repairs:** Interior space improvements and window restoration

**Year Built:** 2025

**Former Uses:** Empty lot



# Best Small-Scale Interior Renovation

## Rae's Barbershop

**Tomahawk**

**Population: 3,390**

**Cost: \$20,000**

**Schedule:** January – June 2025

**Owners:** Rachael Budzynski

**Budget/Financing:** Self-financed

**Impact/Revenue Generated:** New rent for owners

**Jobs Created:** One new position

**Contractors:** Eleet Custom Carpentry, H&H Electric

**Architect:** Ascend Design (renovation)

**Major Repairs:** Interior space improvements and window restoration

**Year Built:** 1936

**Project Goal:** To make the old new again

**Project Outcome:** To provide the community with a one-stop shop for men's and boys' styling needs. With the updated space, Rae's can

offer ADA accommodations—and with another barber, Elicia, on site, you can be sure, whether you need a quick trim or a confidence boost before a big day, that their chairs are the place to be. On top of great hair care, Rae's offers a variety of products to keep your style looking brand-new every day. From grooming goods to fluoride-free whitening toothpaste and from deodorant to soap, Rae's has a full line to keep you feeling and smelling fresh!

**Former Uses:** Originally a mercantile and most recently an optometrist



# Small Connect Community Award

## Staple & Fancy

**Mineral Point**

**Population: 2,560**

**Cost: \$1.1 million**

**Project Schedule:** March – October 2025

**Owners:** Kassi and Brian Blanchette

**Partners:** WEDC, Mineral Point Chamber of Commerce, City of Mineral Point

**Budget/Financing:** WEDC Community Development Investment Grant

**Jobs Created: 5**

**Project Goal:** The relocation of the medical clinic and associated service providers to a new facility left 11,700 square feet of vacant space in the heart of downtown. Additionally, limited residential options existed in the community, with an exceptionally low rental vacancy rate.

**Project Outcome:** The project has created a destination where there would otherwise have been a void. Staple & Fancy fills a critical need in the community, as residents have gone without a local grocery store since 2021, often traveling 10 miles or more for necessities. By bringing fresh, locally sourced food back into the heart of downtown, Staple & Fancy's mission is to ensure that all Mineral Point residents have convenient access to healthy, affordable options. The renovated upper floor includes six high-quality rental units.



# Large Connect Community Award

## Hoya Hop House

**Waupun**

**Population: 11,344**

**Cost: \$971,930**

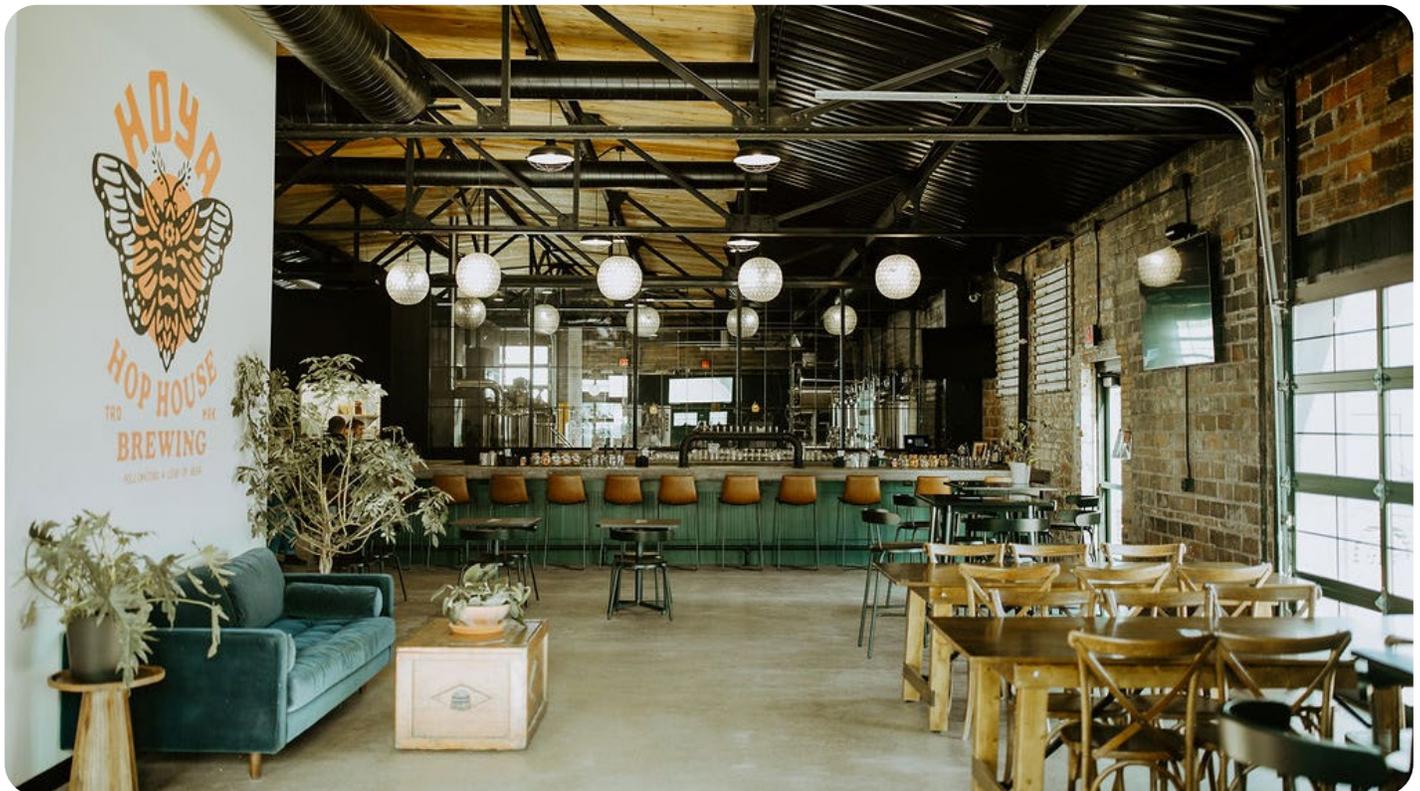
**Project Schedule:** December 2023 – April 2025

**Partners:** City of Waupun, Waupun Community Development Authority, Waupun Business Improvement District, Horicon Bank, Envision Greater Fond du Lac, Fond du Lac County Capital Resources, WWBIC

**Budget/Financing:** Tax Incremental Financing (TIF), Business Improvement District (BID), Streetscape Sponsorship Program, WEDC Community Development Investment Grant

**Project Goal:** The project goal was to revitalize the long-vacant building at 514 East Main Street, transforming it into a vibrant brewpub that serves as a regional destination and economic catalyst that fosters further downtown redevelopment.

**Project Outcome:** The owners of Hoya Hop House invested \$971,930 to renovate a vacant 5,400-square-foot former auto body shop at 514 East Main Street in Waupun, restoring the historic façade and transforming the interior space into a revitalized brewpub that stimulates economic activity, supports tourism, and contributes to the ongoing redevelopment of downtown Waupun.



# Best Community Marketing Campaign

## Touchdown Downtown - On Broadway, Inc.

### Green Bay

**Population: 106,311**

**Cost:** \$30,000 in marketing expenditures

**Schedule:** April 23-26, 2025

**Partners/Sponsors:** City of Green Bay, Green Bay YMCA, Downtown Green Bay, Historic City Stadium, Green Bay Parks, Recreation & Forestry Department, Draft City Music Fest, Green Bay Saturday Farmers Market, CBS Sports and other local, state, and national media outlets

**Budget/Financing:** \$30,000 marketing budget

**Volunteers:** 1,385 hours completed by 275 volunteers

**Attendance:** Approximately 600,000 over three days (ESPN/NFL estimation)

**Impact/Generated Revenue:** \$104.7 million statewide, \$94 million Brown County, \$20 million local (Green Bay Packers estimates from the overall NFL Draft)

**Project Goal:** Touchdown Downtown was a four-day, collaborative placemaking initiative designed to drive awareness and foot traffic to downtown Green Bay during the NFL Draft. The event was built through extensive partnerships with local nonprofits, performers, and small businesses, showcasing the flavors, sights, sounds, and stories that define the region. A strong emphasis was placed on local history, particularly downtown Green Bay's deep connection to the Packers' legacy.

**Project Outcome:** Ultimately, Touchdown Downtown delivered a cohesive, safe, and welcoming cultural experience rooted in place, elevating Wisconsin's heritage on a national stage while strengthening the local economy and reinforcing Green Bay's reputation as a vibrant, culturally rich destination.



# Best Small-Scale Façade Rehabilitation

## Call It New/Call It Antique

### Stevens Point

**Population:** 26,465

**Cost:** \$150,000

**Schedule:** May – October 2025

**Owners:** RCE LLC (Rand Erbach)

**Partners/Sponsors:** Chuck Kunze (contractor), WEDC downtown development team, City of Stevens Point Downtown BID

**Jobs Retained:** 67 vendor businesses retained

**Contractors:** Chuck Kunze

**Major Repairs:** Masonry repair and painting

**Year Built:** 1897

**Former Uses:** Grocery store, bar

**Project Goal:** The goal of this project was to rehabilitate the exterior façade of 835 Main Street to better reflect its historic character, strengthen its role as a gateway into downtown Stevens Point, and support long-term economic vitality through thoughtful, cost-effective design.

**Project Outcome:** The completed façade transformation revitalized a highly visible downtown landmark, enhanced the streetscape, increased curb appeal, and reinforced community pride while encouraging continued investment in the historic district.

**Features:** This large two-story brick and concrete block building occupies a highly visible and iconic location overlooking the Downtown Square, serving as a primary gateway into downtown from both the riverfront and the main highway corridor. Recognizing the building's prominence and historic potential, the owner undertook a comprehensive exterior façade rehabilitation beginning in May and concluding in October 2025.



# Best Large-Scale Interior Renovation

## Summer of '85

**King Drive, Milwaukee**

**Population: 563,531 (14,000 in BID)**

**Cost:** \$1.5 million

**Schedule:** May – September 2025

**Owners:** Paul Burgess and Julie Lukas

**Budget/Financing:** Building \$685,000, construction \$500,000, furniture and fixtures \$250,000

**Contractors:** Retailworks, Inc., Mesh Construction

**Architect:** Ascend Design (renovation)

**Major Repairs:** Interior renovation of furniture and fixtures

**Year Built:** 1936

**Former Uses:** SkyBox Sports Bar

**Project Goal:** Through design elements drawing inspiration from the '80s, create a viable bar and restaurant setting where people from all ethnic backgrounds feel welcome and come together for a totally tubular time.

**Project Outcome:** A destination bar, restaurant, and lounge on King Drive, in the historic Bronzeville neighborhood of Milwaukee, that specializes in groovy nostalgia with a retro hip-hop and pop vibe

**Features:** Through thoughtful visioning by the owners (one who has been a resident of the neighborhood since a child) and a bold, creative, seasoned design team, this eye-catching project involved renovating an existing vacant bar to create a new bar and dining area incorporating an '80s theme. The bar has two levels, with the main floor being more upscale (with a performance and DJ ramped stage/alternate seating) and the lower level reflecting a “rumpus room” vibe.

Some unique décor elements include a Flux Capacitor (a la “Back to the Future”), LED neon, and graffiti murals. The teams specified commercial-grade, high-quality materials to stand up to bar/cafe usage to last for years.



BEFORE



AFTER

# Best New Construction

## Main Street Apartments

**Viroqua**

**Population: 4,407**

**Cost:** \$23,874,675

**Schedule:** August 2024 – July 2025

**Owners:** ACC Management Group Inc.

**Partners/Sponsors:** Viroqua Chamber, Vernon Economic Development Association, Vernon County, Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan Inc.

**Budget/Financing:** \$6 million Wisconsin Neighborhood Investment Fund, City of Viroqua, Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA), Oshkosh Kids Foundation, Old National Bank, Federal Home Loan Bank of Chicago

**Impact/Jobs Created:** 65 new child care spaces and 6 jobs created

**Developer:** Northpointe Development

**Architect:** Vierbicher, Knothe & Bruce Architects LLC; Sol design + consulting

**Contractors:** Northcentral Construction, Sarah Pederson with Lucid Painting

**Former Uses:** Vernon County Highway Shop

**Project Goal:** The goal of the project is to create a vibrant, mixed-use workforce housing community that combines housing, child care, and retail to remove barriers for working families while strengthening the local economy.

**Project Outcome:** The project results in a vibrant, mixed-use workforce housing community.

**Building History:** Built in 1926, the building at 1415 16th Street in Two Rivers originally served as the home of Elks Lodge No. 1380. For many years, the Two Rivers lodge hosted dinners, dances, and events, creating a welcoming place where residents gathered to connect and celebrate.

**Features:** This mixed-use project brought new downtown housing, two ground-floor storefronts, and the Bumble & Bloom Early Learning Center to Main Street, thoughtfully responding to real needs voiced by Viroqua residents and businesses.

- 65 low-income residential apartment units
- 3,100 square feet of additional retail space
- 6,000 square feet day care facility
- Solar panels and electric vehicle charging stations
- Additional recreational space and community gardens



# Wisconsin Main Street Hall of Fame

## Wisconsin Main Street Hall of Fame (co-winner): Barb LaMue – On Broadway Inc., Green Bay



Barb is a visionary leader whose impact has shaped communities across Wisconsin. In her six years as president and CEO of New North Inc., she united 18 counties around bold regional strategies for business growth and talent development. Her leadership extended beyond traditional economic development, championing placemaking, cultural vitality, and the belief that thriving communities are built when people feel connected and heard. She has also served as board president of On Broadway Inc. and continues to mentor and advocate for the program through numerous board roles. Barb’s nearly three decades of influence reach far beyond any single position—leaving a lasting legacy on Main Street programs, the region, and the entire state.

## Wisconsin Main Street Hall of Fame (co-winner): Jim Holperin – Eagle River



For decades, Jim has been a steadfast champion of the Eagle River Main Street Program and the vitality of downtown. A retired state legislator, dedicated Rotarian, and longtime downtown business and property owner, Jim has consistently invested his time, talent, and leadership where it matters most. He served for many years on the Main Street board and played key roles in the Economic Vitality Committee, the BID Board, the Community Square Committee, and Friends of the Square. Whether shaping strategy or rolling up his sleeves, Jim has always led by example. When fundraising needs arise, he is the first to step forward—leveraging his experience, relationships, and skilled negotiation to secure critical support and financial backing. Jim’s dedication has strengthened Eagle River’s downtown economy and community spirit, leaving a lasting legacy worthy of Hall of Fame recognition.

# Wisconsin Main Street of the Year

## Downtown Racine Corp.

**Population:** 77,816

**Budget/Financing:** The Downtown Racine Corp. budget includes a mix of BID, sponsorships, grants, and event income.

**Volunteers:** 580 volunteer hours in 2025

**Attendance:** In 2025: 2,225,426 average yearly foot traffic, 118,000 event attendees

**Jobs Created:** In 2025, 20 new businesses with 11 net new jobs.

**Program Success:** In 2025, Downtown Racine Corp. demonstrated exceptional revitalization success through strategic economic development, innovative programming, and strong collaboration across public, private, and nonprofit sectors. Downtown Racine Corp. has grown its organizational impact while delivering measurable economic

outcomes, strengthening placemaking efforts, and engaging the community in meaningful and sustainable ways. Recent success includes the addition of 100 new residential units, opening of a boutique hotel space, placemaking installations along 6th Street, and selection as one of six national programs to receive an Unlocking Capital Grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to support property rehabilitation and small business success.

