

Walking in the Wiregrass

By Tanya Maloney, Field Services Specialist

It is hard to get to know our Network Communities and their assets and challenges over a zoom call. But finally, we can get out and see each other. My first trip on my “Network to Designation” tour was to the Wiregrass Region where Main Street is mentoring a few communities in its Network Program.



Luverne, located in Crenshaw County, is a small town with big love. With a population of 2,800, the heart of the community is its historic downtown. In the middle of downtown Luverne is a beautiful, restored building that houses the Crenshaw County Economic Development Authority. It is there where I met Robyn Snellgrove, the County Economic Developer. Robyn and her cohort, Councilwoman and downtown business owner, Kathy Smyth, have been attending Main Street trainings over the past few years taking back

ideas that are having a big impact in their downtown district – colorful banners, string lights draping across the street, businesses with Instagramable spots, and restored old murals are just a few of the stand outs discovered on our walk. Luverne is a town that has taken advantage of the Network Program and hopes to someday apply for designation. Just a simple walk in town and you know why you want to #loveonluverne.



Leaving Luverne, all tracks led to Ashford, pop. 2,468. Another small community just minutes east from Dothan, Ashford is getting itself spruced up to apply for designation. Brad Kimbro, Ashford Downtown Redevelopment Authority, met me late one evening to discuss how Ashford has been embracing the Main Street approach to prepare their community to apply for official designation as a Main Street Alabama community.



As Brad and I walk through downtown Ashford, it is clear that the Main Street Alabama approach is inspiring collaboration and economic activity. The group's most recent project was the creation of a street mural in the heart of their downtown district. To stay updated on Ashford's progress, follow their [Facebook page](#).

The Network Program is a first step in the Main Street journey. If your town is considering a downtown revitalization, Network is where you begin. To learn more, check out our [website](#).

If your town/city is interested in designation, check out our [Network Checklist](#) for pointers to get you started in that direction.