

Mary's Minute

Main Street Districts are the ultimate "business recovery zones"

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis in the United States, the National Main Street Center (NMSC) and State Coordinating Programs like Main Street Alabama have been providing guidance and support to communities throughout the country, disseminating best practices, sources of funding, and other valuable tools to help small businesses. NMSC created a well-organized, easy-to-use website directing users to the most relevant and useful resources for Main Street communities. Click [here](#) to be directed to the webpage.

Downtown Professionals Network created a website (reopenmainstreet.com) taking a look ahead at the "new reality" possibilities and continue to compile potential reopening strategies, ideas, hints and tips for businesses, business districts and organizations as we enter the COVID-19 recovery phase.

Main Street Alabama released a series of free on demand videos providing specific strategies to aid businesses from how to set up their business online to merchandising tips as well as a graphics package our local programs are using to create professional signage to promoting social distancing, leading customers to curbside pickup areas, promote online sales, etc.

Phase 2 of our COVID Response was kicked off in late June courtesy of the Walker Area Community Foundation on a pilot project to manage the impact of COVID 19 in downtown Jasper.



Main Street Alabama provided a day-long workshop led by nationally recognized revitalization experts on the following topics.



- Merchandising for profitability in the COVID 19 environment
- Online market platform - how to set up, deliver and maintain
- Social media for businesses
- Employer/Employee Safety Measures
- Funding for businesses moving forward

For the pilot we provided a packet of materials for each participating business that included; door foot pull openers (2 per business), *branded graphics* package containing 2 general door signs for social distancing, 6' separation floor stickers (3 per business); plexiglass shield for check-out counter (1 per business); 4 hand sanitizing stations located throughout Downtown Jasper. The experts then visited businesses to provide specific advice on safety measures and marketing strategies.



To generate interest in the district and create a sense of place, we provided a bold intersection treatment featuring the Jasper Main Street logo.

Long-term, MSA will continue to adapt our training and services to the evolving needs of our communities. Our involvement with the NMSC gives us access to national experts and insight into what is working or not working in other parts of the country. Main Street Alabama's team of seasoned Main Street experts will continue to assess and respond to the needs of each of our communities as we all work together to recover from this unprecedented crisis