



Welcome to Cheboygan Main Street!

Cheboygan's Main Street has changed dramatically in the last 7 years. Main Street is the focus of the city, its thoroughfare, its primary commercial zone. 7 years ago is also when Cheboygan became a member of the Michigan Main Street program, and a new attitude in downtown Cheboygan emerged.

The Cheboygan Main Street program has involved hundreds of volunteers, extensive training, countless meetings, and volunteer projects, to help change attitudes and bring stakeholders together working toward the same goals.

In 2016, there were more than 22 vacant storefronts along Cheboygan's downtown Main Street. Today, they are nearly all filled, with thriving new businesses. The Cheboygan Main Street program helped greatly to spur the transformation.

Extensive community input focused the Cheboygan Main Street team to adopt "Family Friendly, Arts and Entertainment" as the Cheboygan Main Street transformation strategy. That community vision is the guide to planning, programs, and investment, in the downtown district.

The weekly Cheboygan Main Street articles are designed to tell Cheboygan's stories. Written by entrepreneurs, business people, elected officials, religious leaders, service club representatives, realtors, volunteers, invested citizens, and visitors, the articles will detail progress and insights about Cheboygan's Main Street corridor. It will also tell how Main Street affects the surrounding community and county.

Success on Main Street also helps draw visitors to the magnificent natural resources nearby. Plentiful accommodations are needed for visitors coming to enjoy boating, hiking, biking, fishing, birdwatching, and more.

Why does Cheboygan Main Street matter? It's our living room. The largest city in Cheboygan County, it funnels traffic from all directions through it. Main Street is also a reflection of the success and real estate status of the entire county. If Main Street isn't thriving, visitors have no reason to stop while passing through.

On the other hand, when downtown is bustling with people browsing for unique merchandise in cute boutiques, shopping at the Farmers Market, gathering at Festival Square, enjoying a concert in Washington Park, coming across the footbridge from the ball fields or Children's Trail to get ice cream, dining outside at bistro tables, or river-gazing from a rooftop, who wouldn't want to stop to see what's going on? When Main Street looks vibrant, interesting, unique, and well-kept, it's an invitation to stop.

The Cheboygan Main Street program is in place to continue building on its success. Plus, Cheboygan Main Street wants people to know about it and to participate. Main Street always has a place for new volunteers who would like to be involved. There are many large projects coming up—and small ones, to pique the interest of prospective volunteers. To learn more about the Cheboygan Main Street program, visit cheboyganmainstreet.org.

Sherry Nelson is a retired newspaper business entrepreneur. Happy to be living in Northern Michigan, she enjoys hiking in the many parks and nature preserves nearby. She volunteers with Great Lakes Lighthouse Keepers Association, Earth Week Plus, the city Coast Guard Connection committee, and Bring IT Cheboygan!