

City Council endorses Main Street effort (May 2005)

The Moore Haven City Council at their regular meeting May 3 adopted a resolution in support of applying for designation as a Florida Main Street community.

The action was taken following a presentation by Laura Lee Corbett, now a consultant, formerly the Main Street coordinator for the state of Florida during a special town hall meeting April 26.

According to Ms. Corbett, the national Main Street program is 25 years old, active in 37 states. In Florida, since 1985, 100-plus communities have participated, 50 are still active.

The Main Street program emphasizes a four-point approach, focusing on design, organization, promotion and economic restructuring to revitalize historic commercial districts.

Ms. Corbett emphasized that Main Street doesn't provide a big revenue stream for revitalization, but does provide technical assistance, including architectural engineering and design review, marketing advice and networking opportunities with other successful Main Street programs. The program can be tweaked for smaller communities.

Once a community is designated, the state coordinator and consultants would make a site visit, and work with property owners, city officials and others to devise a blue print to move forward. The program provides three years of intensive technical assistance, including visits from preservation architects, landscape architects, and professionals to assist with market studies, fundraising and events planning.

“Revitalization through Main Street has to be a community wide effort,” Ms. Corbett said. “It is not an overnight fix.”

During her April 26 presentation, Ms. Corbett shared success stories from other Florida Main Street communities:

- **Milton, (population 8000) on the Blackwater River, was designated in 2000. Has seen \$550,000 in investment, 27 businesses have opened and 61 jobs created. Their Main Street has a Riverwalk and they funded a "Riverwalk Farmers Market," using a \$10,000 USDA grant and partnered with the University of Florida and growers within a 50-mile radius. The group recruited a local chef to perform cooking demonstrations as part of a Blue**

Jeans and Butter Beans festival, during which they crown a King and Queen. Milton's Main Street hosts a family-oriented Main Street nights concert series, featuring local high school teachers. The city waives permit fees, cops provide security without charging overtime, and the Main Street program raises funds selling mugs, t-shirts, and other items. The Main Street program also has brought back an alcohol-free Mardi Gras, including a kids' "Moon Pie Eating Contest." Novel ideas include converting an abandoned gas station to a restaurant.

- **Fort Walton Beach, designated in 1997, has brought in \$27.5 million in investment, 43 businesses, and 348 jobs. A regional ballet/arts focus in their historic downtown district was the catalyst. Foot traffic is encouraged as kids attend ballet class, often bringing their parents downtown with them. Other spin-offs include a photo studio, art school etc. The public library is also downtown. The Junior League of Emerald Coast adopted the historic Gulf View Hotel, built in 1906, and secured a Florida Department of State grant to assist with the building's rehabilitation. Fort Walton Beach's Main Street program hosts an annual festival, featuring Native Americans called Musical Echoes. The two-day festival draws 20,000 annually for arts, crafts, dance and other exhibits.**
- **Panama City, designated in 1995, has a community revitalization agency, a downtown taxing district, which has assisted them in paying for bricks and mortar acquisition and reconstruction. Even while rehabilitation of historic buildings was ongoing, the Historical Society hosted walking tours, so the area didn't look derelict. Events like "We're Diggin' Downtown" where kids were encouraged to wear hard hats and road around on the Bay Trolley tour, brought people downtown to view the work in progress and built interest. The event was also used to raise funds to other Main Street improvements. Panama City's Main Street program secured FDOT landscape funds and recruited the local Garden Club to maintain entrance signs. Their annual Festival of Nations celebrates 30 cultures and draws 30,000 visitors each year. Children are given passports to use as they visit displays," Ms. Corbett said, "And with the kids come their parents."**
- **New Port Richey, designated in 1990, has secured \$17 million in investment, 39 businesses; and 96 jobs. Site of Cotee River Seafood Festival and Boat Show, the annual event draws more than 100 boats, some docked above ground during the festival. "They did a market study, to determine what people wanted downtown," Ms. Corbett said, adding that when folks said they wanted an art gallery downtown, Progress Energy, which had located a big office downtown, installed an art gallery inside. Since that time, the Main Street organization has successfully restored the Suncoast Theater, utilizing a facade improvement grant (HUD) which includes signage. Now the group hosts monthly theater openings and the Main Street area is home to a number of art galleries.**

- **St. Cloud--designated in 1999, the Orlando-area Main Street Community has already recruited \$10 million in investment; with 84 businesses created, and 167 new jobs. Home of Bela Luna's coffee shop—A Main Street grant funded signage/awnings. A Jammer's Music Store, opened by an existing business seeking to expand, attracted by incentives, converted what was a derelict/glorified thrift store. The Music Store houses a recording studio and rents band instruments, generating 350 visits a day in foot traffic. The city acquired Woman's Club building, below market value, used it as a temporary city hall while a new city hall was built. The building was rehabbed and in exchange the Club meets there free forever. The St. Cloud Main Street organization issues a report each year, logging volunteer hours, demonstrating each year per parcel how tax base has gone up. used to show banks how successful the program is.**

“You can't argue with the numbers,” Ms. Corbett said, noting that Main Street programs garner public and private investment by demonstrating their success; consequently, one local bank contributes \$10,000 a year to the Main Street program. Special attractions include an historic band shell, built by Union vets, which is used by local churches for monthly gospel concerts.

- **Fort Pierce, designated in 1988, has brought in \$41 million in investment, 81 new businesses, creating 331 jobs. The Main Street group restored the formal Vaudeville Theater following a design charette asking what the community wanted downtown. A waterfront community, with an Arcade building built in 1926, features local artist murals and offers dining at night. Funded through a mix of public/private investment, the Main Street program secured a FIND (Federal inland Navigation) grant for some civic waterfront projects. Attractions include a Manatee observation center, while a First Friday festival brings people downtown every month.**

Overall, the response of city officials, and others at the Main Street meeting seemed positive. Glades Electric Cooperative Business Development Director John Martz said if the city's willing to go forward with a Main Street program and readopt their community redevelopment agency, the EDC is willing to partner anyway it can.

“There are organizations and companies who would love to step up to the plate to help the city and the EDC make Glades County a better place,” Mr. Martz said.

Moore Haven one of three new Florida Main Streets

Tallahassee, FL – Secretary of State Glenda E. Hood today announced the designation of High Springs, Moore Haven, and Starke as the newest Florida Main Street Communities. Designation brings with it three years of intensive training and technical assistance from the statewide Florida Main Street Program to support local revitalization and historic preservation efforts in each city’s traditional commercial area.

“I am pleased to welcome High Springs, Moore Haven, and Starke into the network of Florida’s Main Street Communities,” Secretary Hood said. “The program encourages revitalization of Florida’s traditional commercial corridors. Through these state-assisted local efforts, communities are rediscovering the special character of their city centers, improving important historic areas, re-energizing entire business communities, and rekindling civic pride.”

Secretary Hood’s designation was based on the August 25 recommendation of the eight-member ad hoc Florida Main Street Advisory Committee. Organizations represented on the Advisory Committee included: 1000 Friends of Florida, Florida Department of Community Affairs, Florida Division of Historical Resources, Florida League of Cities, Florida Redevelopment Association, Florida Trust for Historic Preservation, Leesburg Downtown Partnership (a local Main Street program), and the National Main Street Center (Washington).

High Springs, Moore Haven, and Starke join more than 90 communities across the state that have received historic preservation and downtown revitalization assistance from Florida Main Street since the program was initiated by the Department of State in 1985. Statistics provided by local Main Street programs reflect the positive change that has occurred in local program areas over the past 20 years. Public and private reinvestment in local program areas has exceeded \$1 billion. New construction and rehabilitation projects (many projects involving historic buildings) total more than 9,500. In addition, there have been more than 3,300 business starts and expansions, and more than 10,500 new jobs created. During the same period, the total state expenditure for the program has been approximately \$5 million.

High Springs (population 3,893)—High Springs was officially incorporated in 1892, although settlement of the area by English speakers dates to the late 1830s. Phosphate mining provided High Springs with its first economic boom in the late nineteenth century, and it soon became an important railroad center, with a large rail yard and extensive maintenance shops. Although the economic importance of its rail yard faded over the course of the twentieth century, High Springs has reinvented itself in the last 15 years as a tourist destination and center for ecotourism and outdoor recreation. The local program will be administered by High Springs Community Development Corporation, Inc., and will encompass High Springs’ historic downtown business district.

Moore Haven (population 1,639)—Moore Haven was founded on the banks of the Caloosahatchee River in 1915. The founding was followed by a tremendous volume of construction and an early population and building surge that established the town as a major commercial center for the entire Lake Okeechobee region. The city weathered both a devastating fire and hurricane in the 1920s and continued to modestly prosper thanks to the sugar cane industry. Although Moore Haven is no longer an area commercial center, it believes that Main Street will be a catalyst for revitalization and redevelopment that will help preserve the surviving historic and cultural resources of the city. The local program will be administered by the Glades County Economic Development Council.

Starke (population 5,593)—Settlers began moving to Starke as early as 1854. In its early days, cotton, lumber, and turpentine dominated its economy, with trade centered on the Atlantic to Gulf Railroad depot. By 1915, when the railroad began offering refrigerated rail car service, the strawberry became one of the county's main cash crops. World War II engendered an economic boom that included the expansion of the National Guard's Camp Blanding, and the 1950s brought industry to the area, with the discovery of heavy minerals. The local program will be administered by Main Street Starke, Inc.

Florida Main Street is a technical assistance program administered by the Bureau of Historic Preservation, Division of Historical Resources, Florida Department of State. The Bureau conducts statewide programs aimed at identifying, evaluating, and preserving Florida's historic resources. Main Street, with its emphasis on preservation, is an effective strategy in achieving these goals in Florida's historic retail districts. For more about Florida Main Street and other programs conducted by the Division of Historical Resources, visit <http://www.flheritage.com>.

Outgoing Florida Secretary of State Glenda Hood presented Main Street Moore Haven part time program manager and Glades County Economic Development Director Tracy Whirls with a plaque recognizing the city's designation as a new Florida Main Street during the Florida Main Street annual conference held Nov. 1-4 in Naples. The plaque can be viewed at Moore Haven City Hall.

Main Street Moore Haven part time program manager and EDC director Tracy Whirls, left, joined Florida Main Street coordinator Joan Jefferson, right, in presenting Moore Haven Mayor Brett Whidden with the city's new sign, officially designating Moore Haven as a new Florida Main Street. The sign has been turned over to Moore Haven High School FFA advisor Phil Cosby and students to design a decorative frame and pole to enable it to be displayed at the foot of the Mamie Langdale Memorial Bridge, near the entrance to Moore Haven's historic commercial district.

Main Street Moore Haven moves forward

Memberships for Main Street Moore Haven, Inc. are coming in, following a mass mailing campaign sponsored by the Glades County Economic Development Council.

EDC members were in the vanguard of the Main Street membership effort, continuing to show their support for the initiative aimed at revitalizing Moore Haven's historic commercial district and the area along the riverfront and beyond.

New Main Street Moore Haven members include, at press time, South Florida Water Management District, Ortona Community Association, Bayport Transportation, Wolff's Lawn Machines, Caloosahatchee River Citizens Association, Robin's Nest RV Resort, The Marina RV Resort, Fisheating Creek Campground, Lodge Construction, Sharon's Boutique and Salons, Stor-More Self Storage, Sunburst Tours, Moore Haven Yacht Club, Ruben Artiles, Rawls Real Estate, Northlake Marine, Inc. and Jim Schneider.

"Because Main Street Moore Haven will be a 501 c 3, memberships and donations to the program will be tax deductible," Ms. Whirls said. "We're counting on Moore Haven and Glades County residents' 'pride of place,' and sense of history to give generously to the program, to enable us to accrue funding for matching grants for facade improvements, signage and streetscaping projects, and promotion of the city and attractions as they come on line."

Founding memberships for Main Street Moore Haven are \$3,000. Partners, \$1500, Supporting members, \$500; Building members, small businesses and organizations, \$50 and individual/friend memberships, \$25.

The March 1 deadline for dues has been extended to March 31 after technical difficulties--the loss of a computer in the EDC office and the breakdown of a copier in the Extension Office which the EDC shares-- delayed the distribution of letters and applications to businesses not already members of the Economic Development Council.

"We want to thank staff at the Glades County property appraiser's office for assisting us in printing mailing labels from the occupational list, and Glades County School Board secretary Lisa Randolph for copying the letters and applications for us when the copier went down," EDC director and part time Main Street Moore Haven program manager Tracy Whirls said.

"While being such a small community and county sometimes has its draw backs, in that everybody wears multiple hats and the same folks are tapped to support every worthwhile endeavor, it's nice to know that when you run into problems, all you have to do is pick up the phone and someone will help you out. They have to pay for that kind of assistance in the city!"

Once the membership drive ends in March, the first annual Main Street Moore Haven membership dinner will be scheduled in April, to recruit committee members and elect an inaugural board of directors. The dinner date/location will be announced later.

In other Main Street related news:

Moore Haven's \$10,000 'start up' grant application will be reviewed by the state historic preservation ad hoc grant review committee March 27.

Moore Haven Main Street's design committee, chaired by Glades County Property Appraiser Larry Luckey and informally comprised of EDC members, property owners and prospective property owners will meet March 8 with Andrew Ham, a principal with Urban Trust LLC and Community Development Partners of Jacksonville to discuss

possible funding strategies which could be accessed to rehabilitate buildings in the historic district and finance other riverfront development.

The City of Moore Haven is currently advertising for qualifications from planning consultants to assist with needed amendments to the city's comprehensive plan and land development regulations to support the revitalization effort.

"Once we meet with Mr. Ham, we can begin to finalize an action plan and determine what kind of grant funding we need to pursue," Ms. Whirls said. "This might range from historic preservation acquisition and development grants to purchase and rehab some building or buildings, working with the Florida Department of Transportation to secure enhancement funding for sidewalks, streetscaping and other improvements downtown, or soliciting USDA or Economic Development Administration funding for additional dockage along the seawall downtown."

In addition to seeking funding for "big ticket" projects, Main Street Moore Haven will also be seeking grant funding for the installation of historic plaques, describing each of the remaining commercial buildings in the historic district on the National Register, to devise a brochure and map of the historic district for a walking tour and other projects.

"That's why the membership drive is so important," Ms. Whirls said. "It's less about the money, although we will need money to match grants, install signage and promote the area, than it is about securing the support of a group of individuals willing to assist in organization, economic restructuring, promotion and other activities.

"Securing the designation as a new Florida Main Street last August was just the first step. Now the real work begins!"

Ms. Whirls said shortly after the annual dinner, she hopes to schedule Main Street Moore Haven's site team visit, during which Florida Main Street coordinator Joan Jefferson and a host of Main Street experts will visit to assist the newly formed Main Street committees in the areas of organization, aimed at encouraging cooperation and building leadership in the business community; promotion, aimed at creating a positive image for the city by promoting the downtown as an exciting place to live, shop and invest; design, aimed at improving the appearance of the city and economic restructuring, aimed at strengthening and expanding the economic base of the city.

For more information about Main Street Moore Haven, Inc., phone (863) 946-0300 or email twhirls@gladescountyedc.com.

Main Street Moore Haven Inc. gets organized

Main Street Moore Haven, Inc. will hold its organizational meeting Thursday, June 1 at 6 p.m. at the Marina RV Resort, 900 CR 720. Refreshments will be provided courtesy of Joyner Development.

According to Main Street Moore Haven part time program manager Tracy Whirls, while the purpose of the meeting is to elect officers and directors and establish committees, the meeting is especially important as it is the first Main Street meeting held separately from the Economic Development Council.

“This meeting will launch Main Street as an entity apart from the EDC,” Ms. Whirls said, noting that only four EDC directors may also serve on the Main Street board to maintain compliance with rules regulating 501 c 3 charitable organizations.

So far, EDC members have led the vanguard in joining Main Street Moore Haven. United States Sugar Corporation, a platinum level EDC member, is the latest EDC member to join Main Street as a partner.

In the letter accompanying the \$1500 check from USSC Charitable Trust, USSC senior Vice President for Public Affairs Robert Coker expressed the company’s continued commitment “to help preserve the historic core of Moore Haven.”

Also joining Main Street Moore Haven this month are Stanley Planty, Patty Register, John Ahern, Paul Beck, David McGee and Tom and Arlene Johnson.

As many EDC members are also Main Street members, Ms. Whirls, who is also the EDC executive director, said creating the separate board doesn’t mean the EDC is abandoning Main Street or the effort to revitalize Moore Haven.

“This will give us an opportunity to broaden our experience base and bring fresh blood and new ideas to the table,” Ms. Whirls said, adding that she hopes the Main Street board and committees will attract city property and business owners, city officials and potential investors – the key stakeholders in the process – of redesigning the city and rebuilding the city’s economy.

“Moore Haven is the only city on Lake Okeechobee or on the Caloosahatchee this side of Ft. Myers that was designed to front on the river. We have naturally here what other communities in Florida are trying to create artificially—a waterfront community,” Ms. Whirls said.

The goal, the economic development director said, is to create a thriving riverfront with dining, shopping, lodging and entertainment on the water, in the historic commercial center as well as vacant areas north of US 27 and include in that mix new residential and office space.

During the business meeting, Main Street members and prospective members will hear about plans to meet with an urban planner during the summer to begin devising street, sidewalk, parking and other improvements aimed at accommodating motorists, boaters and pedestrians visiting the revitalized riverfront. Dockage, streetscaping, landscaping and greenspace will also be considered, with the goal of devising drawings for what a new downtown will look like going forward.

“Typically, redevelopment projects begin with improvements to infrastructure—sidewalks, parking spaces and the like. Once investors see that the city is willing to invest its resources in the needed improvements, they become more willing to invest in the property. Then the retailers will follow.”

Ms. Whirls said the consultant, funded by a technical assistance grant from Florida Main Street, will also assist Main Street Moore Haven and city officials in identifying funding to help pay for needed improvements.

Plans also call for Main Street Florida coordinator Joan Jefferson and a four member site review team to visit the city the week of August 1-3, to meet with Main Street members, property owners, city officials and others to complete an action plan. That plan will be unveiled at a dinner, hosted by Joyner Development at the Marina RV Resort, Thursday, Aug. 3.

To give folks attending the organizational meeting a preview of the kinds of attractions Main Street Moore Haven hopes to offer, Banana Bay Cruises will bring the Coconut Woman, a 50-passenger catamaran to the Marina RV dock to give those attending the event an opportunity to view the city from the water.

“We hope by taking folks out on the Lake, through the locks and a ways down the river, we can give them a new appreciation for what they have and a new perspective on what the future could bring,” the EDC director said.

The organizational meeting is open to the public, although voting will be restricted to Main Street members.

Main Street Moore Haven Inc. is a 501 c 3, making memberships and donations to the program tax deductible. Founding memberships for Main Street Moore Haven are \$3,000. Partners, \$1500, Supporting members, \$500; Building members, small businesses and organizations, \$50 and individual/friend memberships, \$25.

Anyone interested in becoming a member should contact jregan@gladescountyedc.com or phone (863) 946-0300. EDC and Main Street Moore Haven membership forms will also be available at the meeting.

Main Street Moore Haven Inc. names board

Main Street Moore Haven, Inc. took a big step forward June 1, electing new directors and officers to oversee the nascent organization, which held its organizational meeting Thursday, June 1 at the Marina RV Resort, 900 CR 720.

According to Main Street Moore Haven part time program manager Tracy Whirls, the meeting was especially important as it marked the first Main Street meeting held separately from the Economic Development Council.

“The Glades County Economic Development Council served as the sponsoring organization for Main Street, submitting the application to have the City of Moore Haven designated a new Florida Main Street last August, and participating in its first technical service, a visit by Historic Preservation Architect Bob Field last November,” Ms. Whirls said. “The new board will see the initiative through the next phase, including planning for infrastructure improvements downtown and ultimately, siting of new businesses on the riverfront.”

During the June 1 meeting, Main Street members voted to elect an inaugural board of directors, who later voted among themselves to name officers. New officers include:

President/Chairman David Danennhauer, owner of Mickey’s Bait and Tackle in Moore Haven, and long time member of the county’s planning and zoning commission as well as the EDC.

Vice President/Vice Chairman Dave McGee, who is also Moore Haven’s Vice Mayor, chairman of the Community Traffic Safety Team and owner of Dave’s Music.

Treasurer: Rhoda Planty of Joyner Development

Secretary: Kevin Thomas of CHL Holdings, Ltd., owners of the Hawk Trust property on First Street, just off the river, and one of Main Street Moore Haven’s first Partner level members.

Directors include Patty Register of Gatorama, Bob Joyner of Joyner Development, Roger Taylor, a new supporting member and owner of the Lundy Building, the former Moore Haven Bank Building, more commonly known as “Annetiques,” and the Causey barber shop, and Glades County property appraiser Larry Luckey, who chairs Main Street’s design committee.

In other business, the Main Street board, with the support of its members voted to contract with Ron Rollins, an urban planner with Miller Legg, to perform the second technical assistance service for the year-old Main Street. The consultant, funded by a \$3,000 technical assistance grant from Florida Main Street, is expected to put together conceptual sketches of the River Front area, designing sidewalk, parking, streetscaping and additional dockage, assist in setting architectural standards, and assist the city and Main Street in identifying funding to perform the work.

The EDC director and part time Main Street program manager informed those attending the Main Street meeting that the city will host a Main Street Site Review team in August. Comprised of Florida Main Street coordinator Joan Jefferson, historic preservation architect Bob Field, Main Street Deland Executive Director Taver Cornett and David Quinn of Handmade in America, the four-person team will visit Moore Haven Aug. 1-3, meeting with Main Street members and directors, city officials and others to assist in devising an action plan for the revitalization effort going forward.

The visit will conclude with a dinner, Thursday, Aug. 3 at 6 p.m. at the Marina RV Resort, during which the team will present its recommendations. The public is encouraged to attend.

Main Street Moore Haven is expected to meet monthly for the next several months, as committees are established, fundraising projects considered and goals are established. The next meeting is slated for Thursday, July 6 at 6 p.m. at the Glades County Public Library, Riverside Drive, Moore Haven. All members are encouraged to attend.

For more information on Main Street Moore Haven, or to become a member, phone (863) 946-0300 or email jregan@gladescountyedc.com.

Site team to tour Main Street Moore Haven

The City of Moore Haven will host a four person team of experts August 1-3 as the Main Street Site Review team comes to town to meet Main Street members, city officials, property owners and business owners, to help devise an action plan for revitalization.

According to Main Street Moore Haven program manager Tracy Whirls, "Over the course of a three-day visit, the Resource Team examines information about the community and of the local Main Street program, meets with community leaders, discusses ideas with the Main Street Board and committees and, finally, defines and suggests a strategy making the best use of the community's resources."

Comprised of Florida Main Street coordinator Joan Jefferson, historic preservation architect Bob Field, Main Street Deland Executive Director Taver Cornett and David Quinn of Handmade in America, the four-person team will visit Moore Haven Aug. 1-3, meeting with Main Street members and directors, city officials and others to assist in devising an action plan for the revitalization effort going forward.

"Bob is making his third visit to Moore Haven, having done a technical assistance service, a review of our historic commercial buildings and the redevelopment potential of the riverfront last December," Ms. Whirls said. "Bob has over 25 years of experience in architecture and related disciplines as both a project leader and a design professional, and for this visit, having already met several property owners and EDC members, he'll serve as the team leader and design professional on the team."

Experienced in creating master plans and real estate development projects that involve landscape architects, marina planners, site engineers, real estate specialists, and local stakeholders, Bob has worked on urban park planning with several Florida Main Street programs (Dunnellon, Fort Walton Beach, and Milton), as well as Tavares and Lake Worth. Bob has also led Main Street Resource Team consultants in a number of Florida communities, including Okeechobee, Clermont, Largo, Clearwater, Milton, Palm Harbor, Ybor City, and Clewiston. He received his BA from Brown University and a Master of Architecture from Yale University.

Also on hand is Taver Cornett, executive director of Main Street Deland, which was one of the five communities first selected for the Florida Main Street program in 1985. Main Street Deland received the Great American Main Street Award in 1997 and currently has an occupancy rate of 100%, with a waiting list of businesses interested in moving downtown. Prior to joining MainStreet DeLand, Taver, who will assist Main Street Moore Haven in devising a plan to help the city restructure its economy, enjoyed a career in the insurance industry that spanned more than 30 years.

Also on board for a return visit to Moore Haven is Joan Jefferson, Florida Main Street Coordinator. Prior to becoming the Coordinator, Joan worked as a community development specialist with private clients, and as a Florida Main Street consultant for seven years. She is certified in twelve of the seventeen services offered by Florida Main Street, and provided 48 Main Street services to 31 Florida communities. Joan is the former mayor of Stuart, and served on the Stuart City Commission for nine years. She has served on innumerable local and state committees, and has extensive business, real estate, and development experience. She and her husband, Peter Jefferson, FAIA, have owned and rehabilitated over 20 residential and commercial historic structures, including the 15,000 square foot Post Office Arcade in Stuart.

“This is Joan’s third official visit to Moore Haven,” Ms. Whirls said. “Besides visiting last fall to present Mayor Bret Whidden with our official Main Street sign, most people don’t know it, but Joan was on the original team which helped devise the original master plan for the Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail. I have in my office the design plan for the Alvin Ward trailhead and the proposed walkway that would have linked the city’s riverfront to the park across the river.”

Ms. Jefferson expects to help Main Street Moore Haven devise a strategy for increasing membership and community participation.

The final member of the site review team is David Quinn, of Asheville, N.C. with HandMade in America and their “Small Towns Revitalization Program.” Prior to working with Handmade, Quinn was the Senior Planner with the N.C. Department of Commerce’s Division of Community Assistance office. Quinn has many years of experience in land use planning, ordinance development and downtown revitalization. Quinn participated in the National Main Street Program’s original training program in Alexandria, Virginia in 1981. He has worked with many of the regions Main Street communities and provided technical assistance in developing and implementing the HandMade Small Town’s program since 1996. A member and chairman of the first Asheville Film Commission, Quinn will assist Main Street Moore Haven in developing a promotions strategy.

“Typically when the Resource Team visits, they’ll start with a tour of the community and the downtown, meet with Main Street board members, business owners, and representatives of community groups, and review background materials and reports,” Ms. Whirls said. “Because Moore Haven is so small, we think their visit will be a great opportunity to promote the Main Street program to folks who may not be familiar with what we’re trying to do.”

Ms. Whirls said the visit will kick off Tuesday, Aug. 1 at 11 a.m. when the team arrives in Moore Haven. She expects to escort them on a tour of the city, then meet with Main Street Chairman David Dannenhauer and other interested board members for lunch from 12:30-2 p.m. Following the general meeting, board members and others interested will be encouraged to participate in an organization and promotions committee meeting.

When the team returns to town on Wednesday, Aug. 2 at 11 a.m., they’ll meet with board members and design committee members and those interested in economic restructuring. Following that meeting, the Main Street team hopes to meet with owners and prospective owners of riverfront properties, to discuss their plans for redevelopment.

Ms. Whirls said she hopes that as many Main Street members and potential Main Street members who can will turn out to brainstorm with the site team members, to discuss issues like design of sidewalks, parking, and other infrastructure improvements downtown and to express their desires for the future of Moore Haven going forward.

“We’ll be visiting local businesses, and hoping to learn what their needs are—some may be interested in expanding, but need information on potential grant funding, or help selecting a new site,” Ms. Whirls said. “What I’m most looking forward to is learning how other successful Main Streets have created revolving loan funds that have assisted businesses with façade improvements, or how “Handmade in America” has worked with local artisans and crafters to start galleries for local arts and crafts projects. We have local artists and crafters whose work you only see during festivals, who need a place where their handiwork can be consigned and marketed year round.”

On Thursday, Aug 3 at noon, the site team will meet again with Main Street board members, to review their observations and recommendations going forward. Then Thursday evening, at 6 p.m., the site team will present its report during a barbecue dinner at Marina RV Resort.

“For the Team's recommendations to be best understood, it is important that they reach a large number of people,” Ms. Whirls said. “For that reason, Joyner Development will host a barbecue dinner, at no charge, at their Marina RV Resort and CHL Holdings will man the bar. We hope as many people as possible who are involved in the local Main Street program or who may simply be interested in hearing more about what the Main Street program involves will come out.”

For more information on Main Street Moore Haven, or to become a member, phone (863) 946-0300 or email jregan@gladescountyedc.com.

Avenue J is Moore Haven's Main Street

While the proposed demolition of the historic Arcade Building on Ave. J grabbed headlines and spurred a hotbed of activity aimed at saving it, the Main Street Board of Directors, city officials and other interested citizens continued working quietly on other issues with the goal of revitalizing downtown Moore Haven.

During the regular August board meeting, held Aug. 21 at the Glades County Public Library on Riverside Drive in Moore Haven, Main Street directors and others arrived at a consensus concerning design plans and other issues going forward.

The directors devoted most of the meeting to discussions of conceptual design plans prepared by urban planner Ron Rollins with Miller Legg of Pembroke Pines, funded by a technical assistance grant from Florida Main Street.

After visiting Moore Haven in July, Rollins had proposed a series of recommendations, among them:

Renaming Avenue J "Lone Cypress Avenue," or some other name to make it more marketable.

Making Avenue J one-way from First Street to Riverside, to force traffic entering the historic district from US 27 to travel through the district to access parking/shopping areas north and south of US 27 and to create space for angled parking in front of the historic buildings and along Tom Perry Memorial Park

Relocating the racquetball court, which blocks the view of the historic Moore Haven Hotel, and the vacant site of the former Altamount Hotel, which is proposed to be developed as a new apartment complex, as well as the tennis courts on First Street to a new city/county/school board sports complex. This would give the city the opportunity to sell or lease the lot, and the vacant lot adjacent to it, as the site of a new mixed use building, to create additional retail and residential space downtown, with offstreet parking proposed along First Street or perhaps in the alley behind the buildings.

In discussing the planner's recommendations, City Councilman and Moore Haven native John Ahern noted that Avenue J was once Moore Haven's Main Street. Historical Society member, Main Street director and Property Appraiser Larry Luckey noted that the first Chalo Nitka was held to celebrate the "tarring", not the paving, of Main Street in the 1930s.

Consensus of those present was to recommend that the City rename Ave. J, Main Street, as it is most commonly known by locals.

The directors and members present unanimously agreed not to make Ave. J one way, with Kevin Thomas of CHL Holdings, Inc., noting that as a former resident of West Palm Beach, many urban communities are moving away from one-way streets, which often only serve to confuse the locals.

A lengthy discussion of how Main Street and Riverside Drive might be landscaped, with consideration of installing Royal Palms along the riverfront, and incorporating native plants in curb cutouts followed, with Roger Taylor, Main Street Moore Haven director and owner of All Seasons Nursery in Stuart, agreeing publically to provide plants once a sensible design plan were adopted. Mr. Taylor said while live oaks or laurel oaks might be appropriate for Main Street in the more residential area west of First Street, Palatka holly or other trees might be more suitable for curb planting, as the oak trees have caused problems for other communities which have installed them downtown.

Following up on a recommendation from the Main Street site team visit Aug. 1-3, the board agreed that creating a fueling and pump out station for boats on the riverfront should be a priority, and asked Main Street part time program manager Tracy Whirls to convey the board's comments to the planner, asking him to finalize his conceptual plans for the riverfront by addressing parking, sidewalks, landscaping for Main Street and Riverside Drive and potential uses for the area under the Mamie Langdale memorial bridge, as well as design for the riverfront in the historic district.

Mr. Ahern informed Main Street members that the issue of sidewalks in the historic district would be discussed at the City Council's regular meeting Sept. 12, adding that the city is working with planner Jim Larue of Larue and Associates concerning design, land development regulations and zoning issues in the "marina" overlay and historic districts.

In other business, Mr. Luckey reported that in its first year, the community redevelopment area is expected to generate an estimated \$37,000 in tax increment financing funds, based on the 20 percent increase in property values in the community redevelopment area, which includes the area north of the Yacht Club and the Hawke Trust Property to CR 720, to Avenue L, as well as the commercial strip along US 27 to City Limits Road.

The City Council, as the Community Redevelopment Agency, controls the TIF fund, which is funded at 50 percent of the increased value. Mr. Luckey noted that the TIF program can last for 30 years with a 10 year extension option, unless abolished by the council. Funds generated by the TIF fund can only be spent on projects/programs devoted to the CRA district. Main Street Moore Haven's local program area boundaries mirror the CRA boundaries.

In other business the board:

Authorized Program Manager Whirls to work with Moore Haven NAPPA, the Glades County Fire Department and others to assist in organizing and promoting the fourth annual Glades County Cook-Off, slated for Saturday, Oct. 14.

The Main Street Moore Haven Board of Directors meeting is scheduled for Monday, Sept. 25 in the conference room at the Glades County Public Library at 6:15 p.m. All members are encouraged to attend.

For more information on Main Street Moore Haven, or to become a member, phone (863) 946-0300 or email twhirls@gladescountyedc.com.

What new businesses do you want?

Tell us at annual Main Street membership meeting May 17

Main Street Moore Haven will enter its second year as a new Florida Main Street by hosting a town hall meeting Thursday, May 17 to gather residents input concerning the type of new commercial businesses Glades County and city of Moore Haven residents would like to see come to Moore Haven's Main Street.

"Last fall, in conjunction with the Glades County Economic Development Council, we celebrated the grand opening of Moore Haven's first private practice physician's office, the Riverside Glades Medical Center and the opening of Travis Trueblood's new law office in town," said Glades County Economic Development Council executive director and part time Main Street Moore Haven Program Manager Tracy Whirls.

"This year we look forward hoping to see a pharmacy and antique mall in the historic commercial district, construction of a new Goodwill store and training facility on US 27, and opening a new restaurant on US 27, among other projects," Ms. Whirls said.

The Main Street program manager said Moore Haven's Main Street local program area, which extends from Ave. J south of the bridge, north to Tobias Avenue (CR 721) then narrows past the historic Glades County Courthouse to follow the commercial strip along US 27 to City Limits Road, mirroring the city's Community Redevelopment District (CRA) boundaries, is in a state of change, with many new exciting developments on the horizon.

"Anyone who's been to City Hall or the library recently will have noticed that the old barber shop building is gone. Robert Harstad has brought in a drag line and will be gutting his building, which abuts the Arcade, this week, preparatory to repairing the roof. Roger Taylor has been cleaning out the interior of the Lundy Building and hopes to have it ready for the Antique Mall to open by the end of May and has painted the former Moore Haven Bank Building, more commonly known as Annetiques," Ms. Whirls said. "Our next step will be to identify new businesses to lease the commercial space as it becomes available," the Main Street manager said.

Toward that end Main Street Moore Haven, through a technical assistance grant with Florida Main Street, has contracted with consultant Frank DiMarchi, former Executive Director of the Daytona Beach Partnership Association, now a private business development consultant to do a marketing and feasibility study of Moore Haven and its environs to determine the kinds of businesses which would attract area residents and tourists to shop, lodge and dine here.

While with the Daytona Beach Partnership DiMarchi was instrumental in devising a new business cluster in an 8-block district along the banks of the Halifax River, refocusing the river as part of the local economy as recommended in the redevelopment plan.

DiMarchi will produce a development feasibility and marketing study to identify business development opportunities, beginning with the city of Moore Haven riverfront and help design a marketing plan to identify and recruit new businesses.

"Our goal is to bring new commercial and residential development to the city of Moore Haven, to create entrepreneurial opportunities and new jobs for Glades County residents, while at the same time preserving and promoting those features that make Moore Haven unique," Ms. Whirls said.

The public is invited to attend the annual membership meeting, Thursday, May 17, 2007 at 5:30 p.m. at the Marina RV Resort. A short business meeting will follow, during which paid Main Street Moore Haven members will vote to elect new officers and/or directors. For more information on Main Street Moore Haven, or to join, phone (863) 946-0300 or email twhirls@gladescountyedc.com.

Consultant says Moore Haven's future is bright

Consultant to do economic analysis for Main Street Moore Haven

Saying Moore Haven is uniquely situated to re-position itself as a destination for tourists, boaters, bikers and RVers, Main Street consultant Frank DiMarchi told those attending Main Street Moore Haven's annual membership meeting at the Marina RV Resort May 17, "Moore Haven is ready for a level of success that just may surprise everyone." Uniquely situated in the center of the state along US 27, nearly equidistant between Fort Myers on the west coast and West Palm Beach on the east and within two hours north of Miami and south of Orlando, and built to front on the Caloosahatchee River, the intercoastal waterway connecting the Atlantic with the Gulf Coast, DeMarchi said the city is uniquely situated between travelers en route to other destinations.

DeMarchi, former Executive Director of the Daytona Beach Partnership Association, now a private business development consultant, will assist Main Street Moore Haven with a technical assistance project funded by Florida Main to determine the kinds of businesses which would attract area residents and tourists to shop, lodge and dine here.

While with the Daytona Beach Partnership DeMarchi was instrumental in devising a new business cluster in an 8-block district along the banks of the Halifax River, refocusing the river as part of the local economy as recommended in the redevelopment plan.

The consultant said among his tasks in devising a feasibility and marketing study for the city, will be to identify physical improvements and potential businesses along U.S. 27 which could encourage travelers to stop and stay a while.

"Luring tourists, boaters, bikers and RVers with services and attractions could identify Moore Haven as a "must see" stop before continuing on to other destinations," Mr. DeMarchi said.

DeMarchi will also conduct an economic analysis, researching and identifying what goods and services will have the greatest likelihood of success if added to the Main Street district. Main Street directors and members would then need to establish committees that will implement a work plan based on the findings of the analysis.

Using area zip codes and statistics compiled by the Department of Labor and others, Mr. DeMarchi will determine who Moore Haven businesses should target as customers, what sorts of goods and services should be available, down to how much sales revenue of a certain kind should be generated per square foot, what rentals should be, how customers spend their money and what businesses will be successful. He will also determine what the city's "leakage" is—that is, what goods or services that are being purchased elsewhere that residents would purchase here if it were available.

Once the analysis is done he will work with Main Street directors and members to determine how that new vision can be implemented in a successful promotions and marketing plan.

After spending the afternoon in the city, and reviewing information provided by Main Street, DeMarchi noted that revitalizing the city's business district will revolve around two different kinds of business: those situated in the center of downtown along the waterfront, which should be more pedestrian friendly, and the typical drive through or drive in businesses along US 27.

"The center of your downtown is the area around city hall and the library. It's already a focal point of families with children," DeMarchi said, with the existing playground, the

planned splash park and the proposed daycare scheduled to open in the old Post Office, along with the Riverside Glades Medical Center.

“You want to treat that as your ground zero and work to bring guests downtown, to the waterfront,” DiMarchi said. “Therefore, the events and economic investment should focus on the downtown.”

Then, he said, it would be a matter of signage, marketing and advertising to build the customer base, noting that the typical customer will drive at least 25 minutes for a new shopping or dining experience or event.

As to the potential market, Main Street members consensus was that motorcyclists, snowbirds and boaters should be targeted, in addition to local residents.

Boaters, the group agreed, are most interested in fuel, food and a nice dining place.

DeMarchi noted that Daytona has one of the largest marinas on the east coast, and with only 60,000 residents attracts 10 million visitors a year, more than visit Washington D.C. They have the beach, bike week and the Daytona 500, creating that market. For Moore Haven, a signature event, like a motorcycle rally, fishing tournament or other festival, coupled with a good restaurant and hotel, might be the catalyst for redefining Moore Haven as a destination.

‘People can only go so far in one day,’ DeMarchi noted, whether they’re traveling by highway or water. “You have to get the reputation that ‘you must stop here.’”

The consultant noted that in the historic district alone there is sufficient space, once buildings are rehabbed and new infill construction occurs, to site 20 new businesses, including a hotel or two, or a hotel and bed and breakfast, two-three new restaurants and other commercial and residential properties.

The long term vision for the revitalized downtown would include an assortment of eateries and shops and residential projects north and south of US 27, with the space under the bridge becoming additional parking, with paver bricks creating a pedestrian pass through linking the historic commercial district with the marina district.

DiMarchi said it was very likely that many of the shops downtown would be hybrids where several different goods and services, like the pharmacy/gift shop and soda fountain proposed for half of the Lundy Building, would be offered in the same location.

Among other future uses, might be a fueling station for boats docking downtown and a ships store.

One question the consultant will research is how many boats dock here now, versus how many would stop here if there were businesses on the riverfront to serve them.

DeMarchi is expected to return to Moore Haven for the July 19 Main Street Moore Haven board meeting, at 5:30 p.m. at the Glades County Public Library, Riverside Drive, Moore Haven.

Main Street elects new chair, files grant application

The Board of Directors for Main Street Moore Haven, Inc. reorganized during their annual Main Street membership meeting held May 17 at Marina RV Resort in Moore Haven.

Ellen Geake of Riverside Glades Medical Center was elected chairman. Vice Mayor Dave McGee remained vice chair, Kevin Thomas of CHL remained secretary and Rhoda Planty of Joyner Development remained treasurer. Jim Schneider was elected to the board of directors, replacing outgoing director Larry Luckey, joining Mike Pressley, David Dannenhauer, Bob Joyner and Roger Taylor on the nine member board.

In her report to Main Street members and directors, Main Street Moore Haven part time program manager Tracy Whirls noted the accomplishments in the city and the Main Street local program area in 2006 and gave a preview of what she hopes will be accomplished in 2007.

“Last fall, in conjunction with the Glades County Economic Development Council, we celebrated the grand opening of Moore Haven’s first private practice physician’s office, the Riverside Glades Medical Center and the opening of Travis Trueblood’s new law office in town. This year we look forward hoping to see a pharmacy and antique mall in the historic commercial district, construction of a new Goodwill store and training facility on US 27, and opening a new restaurant on US 27, among other projects,” Ms. Whirls said.

Moore Haven’s Main Street local program area, which extends from Ave. J south of the bridge, north to Tobias Avenue (CR 721) then narrows past the historic Glades County Courthouse to follow the commercial strip along US 27 to City Limits Road, mirroring the city’s Community Redevelopment District (CRA) boundaries, is in a state of change, with many new exciting developments on the horizon, the program manager said.

Among those are plans for Goodwill Industries a new store and training component on US 27, First Bank of Clewiston’s plans to build a branch on US 27 within the next year, and the renovation and anticipated lease of the former Cheeky Chews restaurant.

In other business the Main Street Board of Directors endorsed the program manager’s plan to apply for a special category grant to acquire and rehabilitate the Arcade. The grant application was submitted May 31.