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PRESS RELEASE

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Missouri Communities Earn Downtown Revitalization Awards

Missouri Main Street Connection presented 15 awards for excellence in revitalization during its state-wide conference August 10 – 13 in St. Louis. The awards went to Cape Girardeau, Chillicothe, Clinton, Joplin, Kirksville, Lee's Summit, Warrensburg and Washington.

“With these awards, we are proud to honor the dedication and investment that communities across Missouri are putting into their downtown revitalization programs,” said Steven Hoffman, professor of history at Southeast Missouri State University and President of Missouri Main Street Connection. “Their efforts reveal the most cherished values of citizens who choose to preserve their downtowns and improve the quality of life for everyone in their communities.”

Downtown Washington, Inc. won the Greatest Achievement Award as the best downtown organization exemplifying the Main Street philosophy of revitalization in all its activities. In 1989, the Missouri Main Street program chose Washington to be one of the first five pilot programs in Missouri. Washington has maintained its status as a Missouri Main Street Program and a National Main Street Program to this day. Downtown Washington Inc. balances historic preservation with economic development, the past with the future, while promoting the town's many charms, and facilitating positive activities. The organization has a rich mix of special events that help fund the annual goals. The Board of Directors and staff have worked tirelessly to find a balanced mixed of sustainable funding, and laid the foundation for a strong revitalization program that will persist into the future.

Joplin City Hall won the Outstanding Window Display Award. Demonstrating a strong desire to help revitalize downtown, the city's leadership relocated to downtown and restored the Newman Building and its traditional window displays.

The Elks/Kreisler Complex, in Downtown Clinton, won the Best Large Scale Project Award for replacing a collapsed building with a new structure that is compatible with its historic neighbors. The project was developed through an innovative partnership of a not-for-profit and a private enterprise.

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Chillicothe took awards in three categories: The Silver Moon Plaza won for the Best Downtown Public Improvement. The Main Street Chillicothe Design Committee, in cooperation with the non-profit owners of Threads, a thrift clothing store located in a significant historic building downtown, won the Award for Top Façade Rehabilitation Project under \$10,000; and the Mural Project won the Outstanding Public Partner Award for a downtown economic development project completed with public and private funding.

Two businesses in Downtown Cape Girardeau were honored with awards: The Rust Family's Concord Publishing/Rust Communications/The Southeast Missourian won the Business Excellence Award for their investment of a new \$ million-plus printing plant downtown, for their benevolence to the community and especially their understanding that improvements to downtown need to extend beyond their own property lines. In addition, Downtown Cape's Breakaway Bar & Billiards won an award for Top Façade Rehabilitation Project over \$10,000.

Travelers Hotel, in Kirksville, won the Award for Best Adaptive Reuse-Preservation Project for preserving a local landmark and providing a mixed-use project with office space and much needed affordable housing for the area. The project was undertaken by Gardner Development, Inc.

The SHOW ME Missouri Award went to Downtown Lee's Summit, Inc., recognizing its achievement as one of the Great American Main Street Award winners at the National Main Street Conference this year in April. The Downtown Lee's Summit Business Report also won the award for the Best Economic Restructuring Story. Lee's Summit's Chocolate Crawl won the award for Top Special Promotional Event, and the Rusty Spur Couture in Downtown Lee's Summit won the Best Exterior Signage Award.

Warrensburg Main Street won the Best Creative Fundraising Project Award for its Wreaths and Wits project, a unique event that has shown growth over the years and involves the community in planning and execution of the event.

The Volunteer of the Year Award, recognizing volunteers, board members, committee members or merchants whose long-term commitment to the downtown revitalization effort has generated value for downtown and the community as a whole. This prestigious award was presented to three individuals this year: Jim and Teresa Maurer of Old Town Cape, Inc., and John Vietmeier of Downtown Washington, Inc.