

NATIONAL MAIN STREET ACCREDITATION FOR DOWNTOWN NATCHEZ ALLIANCE

NATCHEZ, MS, UNITED STATES, July 18, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The [Downtown Natchez Alliance](#) (DNA) has been designated as a Nationally Accredited [Main Street America](#) program for meeting rigorous national performance standards. Main Street America's national standards provide a strong foundational framework for local programs to review progress, recognize strengths, understand trends, and identify strategies to move their downtowns forward.

Each year, Main Street America and the respective state Main Street organization announce the list of Nationally Accredited programs to recognize their exceptional commitment to preservation-based economic development and community revitalization through the Main Street Approach™. "Receiving National Main Street Accreditation is a prestigious designation," said Marlo Dorsey, [Mississippi Main Street Association](#) (MMSA) Board President. "Main Street programs play a strategic role in making Mississippi more competitive by being a catalyst for economic development."

"Main Street leaders are visionaries that see things that no one else can see and create the future world we all want to live in," said Main Street America President and CEO Erin Barnes. "Great things happen when visions are realized through strategic, grassroots collaboration."

Jo Ann Brumfield, president of the DNA Board of Directors, explained the Main Street Approach™



A stoplight at Main and Commerce Streets in Downtown Natchez. Patrons can be seen at the outside dining area with yellow & white umbrellas at the restaurant, Frankie's On Main.

as grassroots, volunteer-driven, preservation-based downtown revitalization. "We wake up every day with the goal of moving Downtown Natchez forward in sync with the city's Natchez Renewal and the downtown community. We utilize the tried-and-true Main Street model, and we take our cues from the city's Downtown Master Plan, the visions of our elected leaders, the ongoing input of the downtown community and stakeholders, and the guidance of Mississippi Main Street staff," said Brumfield. She also noted that DNA's greatest need is also downtown's greatest opportunity, and "that is the time and talent of volunteers. Planning is critical, but it's people who revitalize places and make things happen."

To qualify for National Accreditation status—Main Street America's top designation tier—communities must demonstrate a proven track record of achieving outcomes in alignment with the Main Street Approach™, as represented in their local strategic work plans, and exceptional performance in six areas: broad-based community commitment to revitalization; inclusive leadership and organizational capacity; diversified funding and sustainable program operations; strategy-driven programming; preservation-based economic development; and demonstrated impact and results.

DNA's performance was evaluated through assessments conducted by the organization's board of directors, and staff of the Mississippi Main Street Association (MMSA). "MMSA evaluates our local Main Street programs' performance annually, and we work in partnership with Main Street America to identify the local programs that are committed to comprehensive revitalization and achieving meaningful community outcomes," said Jim Miller MMSA Executive Director.



A view of Main Street in Natchez, Mississippi



DNA is now an Accredited Main Street America Program.

“DNA truly represents a collaboration between the city, the downtown community, and the Mississippi Main Street Association, which provides valuable resources, both educational and financial, to Downtown Natchez,” said Brumfield.

Examples include DNA’s recent Christmas in July Sidewalk Sale event, which helped to boost businesses for the merchants and eateries in downtown. Earlier this year, DNA participated in Destination Downtown Real Estate Game Plan with Joe Borgstrom of Place + Main Advisors LLC. That event was a state-wide cooperative project organized by Mississippi Main Street who obtained a USDA grant and provided matching funding. Another Mississippi Main Street initiative, which utilizes ARPA funding, has enabled DNA’s Balcony, Awning, and Façade Incentive Grant program, which kicked off this summer. In addition, DNA, the city, and Mississippi Main Street are awaiting the final award of the state legislature’s Mississippi Main Street Revitalization Grant (MMSRG), which includes \$362,000 to create the parkscape surrounding the Depot on the Natchez Bluff.

Studies have shown that a city’s downtown represents its smartest economic growth. On average, every dollar a Main Street program spent in 2023 to support their operations generated \$18.03 of new investment back into their communities. In 2023, the Main Street America programs

DNA
DOWNTOWN
NATCHEZ
ALLIANCE



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DESIGNATED COMMUNITY

The Downtown Natchez Alliance (DNA) is a member of the Mississippi Main Street Association.



The official seal of the Historic City of Natchez, which is partnered with DNA.

generated \$5.68 billion in local reinvestment, helped open 6,630 net new businesses, facilitated the creation of 35,162 net new jobs, catalyzed the rehabilitation of 10,556 historic buildings, and leveraged 1,664,763 volunteer hours. In 2023, Mississippi Main Street's Designated communities generated 372 new businesses, 71 business expansions to existing businesses, 868 new jobs, 170 building rehabilitations, and 704 downtown living spaces. In addition, 139 public improvement projects were completed as well as 70 new construction projects in historic downtown business districts. More than \$326 million was invested by the public and private sectors in 2023, and more than 46,919 volunteer hours were recorded. □

More information about the Downtown Natchez Alliance and volunteer opportunities is available on their website at www.NatchezDNA.org.

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