

# As America 250 Approaches, Matt Cottengim Urges Communities to Rethink Their Streetscape Identity

ROCHESTER, NY, UNITED STATES, July 1, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- As America's 250th anniversary draws near, communities across the country are taking a fresh look at how their Main Streets reflect civic identity. In a recent commentary, municipal branding strategist Matt Cottengim explores a pressing question: Are our streetscapes helping our towns stand out—or blending them into a landscape of visual sameness?

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*Matt Cottengim*

Cottengim points to the widespread use of veteran tribute banners as an example. While these banners are deeply meaningful and appropriate for commemorative times of year—particularly from Memorial Day through Veterans Day—many communities now use them as their default, long-term display. The result, he warns, is an unintended one: a uniform visual tone that may evoke solemnity, even stillness—when the goal should be to express vitality and

local distinction.

“When every town displays the same banner, Main Streets start to lose their sense of place,” Cottengim explains. “Instead of celebrating what makes a community unique, we see repetition that risks turning our most visible civic spaces into something closer to a memorial landscape than a message of momentum.”

Cottengim encourages communities to use their streetscape banners as a way to highlight what makes them unique—whether that's their historical legacy, emerging local industries, celebrated events, youth leadership, or cultural vitality. When banners reflect these themes, they help residents and visitors alike understand what the town values and aspires toward.

In towns where banners also include local business logos, Cottengim notes two powerful outcomes emerge:

1. They serve as a visual composition of the community—showing which businesses and organizations make the town what it is.
2. They signal public support for municipal leadership—something visitors, investors, and

potential residents see as a marker of local strength and civic alignment.

“When a town’s business community is publicly visible and aligned with its leadership, it says something about the health of that community,” says Cottengim. “People want to live, work, and invest in places where public and private sectors are pulling in the same direction.”

Looking ahead to America 250, the article frames this moment as a timely opportunity for reflection. Main Streets, Cottengim suggests, should not be treated as static backdrops, but as vibrant platforms for showcasing a community’s energy, ambition, and sense of identity—past, present, and future.

#### About Community Showcase Banners

Community Showcase Banners partners with municipalities and local businesses to bring vibrant, eye-catching banners to main streets across the country. We help cities build civic pride, beautify their downtown areas, and provide businesses with an exclusive opportunity to showcase their support for the community. Our marketing and branding approach transforms simple streetscapes into powerful visual statements.

Matt Cottengim

Community Showcase Banners

+1 585-737-7713

mattc@communityshowcasebanners.com

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