

Downtown Natchez Alliance Names Chesney Doyle as Executive Director

NATCHEZ, MS, UNITED STATES, June 6, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Board of Directors of the [Downtown Natchez Alliance](#) (DNA) has named Natchez native Chesney Doyle as Executive Director of the downtown revitalization organization, effective June 1, 2026. Doyle will lead the organization's administrative, programmatic, and strategic revitalization efforts in collaboration with the City of Natchez, downtown stakeholders, community partners, and [Mississippi Main Street Association](#).

"Chesney has already demonstrated extraordinary commitment to the future of downtown Natchez through her service, leadership, and willingness to step forward during an important season for our organization," said DNA Board President Elizabeth Greer, proprietor of the Beaumont House Bed & Breakfast. "She brings experience, energy, vision, and a deep understanding of both our community and the Main Street Approach™. The Board is excited about the path ahead under her leadership."

As founder of Natchez Friends of the Riverfront (F.O.R. Natchez), Doyle helped lead a community-driven process with the City that resulted in the City's award-winning [Downtown Master Plan](#), adopted in 2018. Doyle later became one of the founding board members of the Downtown Natchez Alliance and has continued working as a volunteer alongside the City and local stakeholders on strategic planning initiatives and successful grant applications designed to strengthen downtown investment, historic preservation, and economic vitality.

"Chesney is a proven community leader who has played an integral role in many of the transformative projects shaping downtown Natchez," said Dan Gibson, Mayor of the City of Natchez. "In fact, it was Chesney who led the collaborative effort years ago to develop the City's master plan for downtown Natchez - the very plan we have been implementing ever since the



beginning of our Natchez Renewal," said Gibson. "Since then, her volunteer work has continued to focus on bringing people together around a shared vision for our community and positioning downtown Natchez as a vibrant place to live, work, invest, and visit." Gibson shares Doyle's longstanding belief that a thriving downtown serves a much broader purpose than tourism alone. "Downtown is the economic and cultural heart of our community," Gibson said. "Its success is critical to the future of Natchez and Adams County, including our ability to attract new industries, support workforce growth, and create the kind of place where people want to build their lives and businesses."

"I have never known anyone as passionately devoted to a place as Chesney is to her hometown of Natchez," said DNA Vice President T.J. Baggett, Chief Operating Officer of Loss Prevention Services. "Her availability and willingness to step into this role comes at exactly the right time for the organization. Chesney brings both heart and determination to the work, and I believe that will inspire others to rally behind the future of downtown."

Norma West, Immediate Past President of DNA, is also a founding board member of DNA, which held its initial organizing meeting in 2021. Over the past five years, West and Doyle have spent many hours working together "in the trenches" -- from sitting in pumpkin patches to planting caladiums and celebrating the blooms. Most significantly, they worked tirelessly with the City and Zion Chapel AME Church, where West serves as Trustee Pro Tempore, to realize the City's master plan vision for Hiram Revel's Plaza in the heart of the MLK Triangle. The construction of Revels Plaza is one of the items that will be funded by the City's recent \$24.57M federal grant.

West said Doyle's longstanding commitment to Natchez made her a natural choice for the position. "Chesney understands that successful downtown revitalization is built on relationships, collaboration, and a shared vision for the future," said West. "She has consistently shown a willingness to do the hard work necessary to move projects and people forward, and I am excited to see where her leadership takes DNA and downtown Natchez."

As Executive Director, Doyle will oversee implementation of DNA's strategic priorities, organizational development, and community engagement efforts, and will serve as the organization's liaison to Mississippi Main Street Association (MMSA). Jeannie Waller Zieren, MMSA Executive Director, said they are pleased with Doyle's selection as DNA's executive director. "Chesney has been instrumental in the development of the organization, and I believe she, along with the DNA board, will lead the organization to new heights. The positive impact will be evident through the increased vitality of Natchez's beautiful, historic downtown district," said Zieren.

"In the years that I was gone from Natchez, I always felt that I was just visiting these other places, maybe even biding time, collecting intel on good ideas for Natchez, until I could find my way back home," said Doyle. "No matter where I lived, I always had my 'Natchez projects,'" which included volunteer work with the Natchez Children's Home, the Museum of the Streets panels that accompany the Natchez Walking Trails, and conservation efforts for the Natchez Bluff.

Doyle did find her way home – twenty years ago – in 2008. Prior to that, Doyle practiced law and worked in higher education in Atlanta, where she met her husband, Marc. Together, they formed the award-winning television production companies Echo Pictures and Great Museums TV, producing nearly 50 documentary programs for public television, HGTV, DIY, and other information-based networks.

On Thanksgiving morning in 2008, the Doyles arrived in Natchez with a minivan packed to the hilt, and their 6-month-old twins, Alston and Archer, “so that our children could know their grandparents, Kathie and Rawdon Blankenstein, and experience being part of a loving community that will forever be their home,” said Doyle. They also renovated Chesney’s grandmother’s house, and they relocated their production studios to downtown Natchez, beginning what would become a longstanding investment in the life and future of the community.

“I grew up downtown. I’ve always believed that it is the heart of our community, and it belongs to everyone,” Doyle said. “I also believe strongly in community engagement, city planning, and the Main Street model of volunteer-led, preservation-based revitalization to strengthen our economy, celebrate our history, and create the kind of place our children and grandchildren want to return to and invest in.”

Doyle says many hands have helped build the Downtown Natchez Alliance, and many more hands will be required to achieve sustainable success. “Even though this effort started in earnest in 2015 with the City’s decision to pursue a downtown master plan, DNA is still a young organization – a work in progress - as is downtown, ” says Doyle. “There will never be a time when we can sit back and say, ‘it is done,’ and we at DNA are very much on the lookout for the next generation of leaders. In the meantime, I am honored by the confidence the City of Natchez and the DNA Board have placed in me and eager to continue building partnerships that move our community forward.”

Doyle can be reached at director@NatchezDNA.org.

ABOUT DNA:

The Downtown Natchez Alliance (DNA) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing Downtown Natchez as a vibrant commercial and cultural district through preservation-based economic development and the nationally recognized Main Street Approach™. DNA works in partnership with local stakeholders to support economic vitality, historic preservation, organizational capacity, and placemaking initiatives consistent with the City of Natchez Downtown Master Plan. For more information, visit NatchezDNA.org.

Mississippi Main Street Association is the catalyst for the preservation and economic revitalization of Mississippi’s historic downtowns and traditional commercial districts. As a Main Street America™ Coordinating Program, MMSA is one of more than 40 Coordinating Programs

and leads member communities in Mississippi that are committed to creating high-quality places and to building stronger communities through preservation-based economic development. Since 1993, MMSA has provided more than \$6 billion in public and private re-investment back into Main Street communities. For more information, visit msmainstreet.com.

As a Main Street America™ Accredited program, the Downtown Natchez Alliance is a recognized leading program among the national network of more than 1,200 neighborhoods and communities who share both a commitment to creating high-quality places and to building stronger communities through preservation-based economic development. All Main Street America™ Accredited programs meet a set of National Accreditation Standards of Performance as outlined by Main Street America. The Downtown Natchez Alliance is a Designated program of the Mississippi Main Street Association.

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