



Main Street Minute

a quarterly publication of Marengo Main Street, Inc.

It's official!

On Thursday, March 26, 2009, in front of several hundred people at a rally in the Capitol rotunda in Springfield, Marengo Main Street officially joined the ranks of Illinois Main Street communities.

This is a major achievement for us, because not everyone who is admitted into the program as an "Associate" member graduates to the Designated level. It involves a lot of work for a lot of people, but we submitted our 1½" thick application on time and won state approval.

This means we join over 60 other Illinois towns in a state program that has accomplished quite a bit since joining the National Main Street Trust in 1992:

Under Governor Quinn's leadership, Illinois Main Street has grown to become the fourth largest Main Street program in the nation.

Illinois Main Street represents one of the state's most effective public-private partnerships for economic development and community renewal. Since its inception, designated communities have reported net gains of more than 1,600 new downtown businesses and created more than 6,000 new full and part-time jobs. The Main Street program has spurred the reinvestment of more than \$575 million in Main Street downtowns.

(from a press release issued by Governor Quinn's office in March 2009)



Marengo Main Street Executive Director Pam Gitta addresses the crowd gathered in the Capitol rotunda on March 26, 2009



Illinois Governor Pat Quinn with Marengo Main Street's Executive Director Pam Gitta, and Board President Bob Levin

The most visible proof of our achievement will appear soon at the gateways to Marengo: the sepia-colored "Illinois Main Street Community" signs that can currently be seen at the city limits of our fellow Main Street towns Crystal Lake, Genoa, Rockford and Elgin, as well as in the photo above.

"Behind the scenes" advantages include low-cost training on downtown revitalization and promotion; architectural assistance from the IL Historic Preservation Agency; and access to additional grants and other financial assistance as they come available.

And, of course, there's the intangible boost that an accomplishment like this would bring to any organization. We've achieved something important. Something that took time and effort and sacrifice. We've shown that we can stand alongside some of the most vibrant downtowns in the state.

You can view our plaque and plenty of pictures of past achievements and activities, at the Marengo-Union Public Library. They will be on display in the glass case near the front desk for the month of April. Thanks to the library for allowing us to toot our horn!

Pam Gitta

Executive Director

PS This would have never happened without the support of our business and private partners. Thank you so much for your assistance and belief in us.

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Get the latest Marengo Main Street news at:
www.marengomainstreet.org

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Marengo Coin shop to hold raffle on Putt-Putt Day

Marengo Coins will be raffling off a \$1000 bill (\$1500 value) at 12:30pm on Saturday, June 13, as part of our Putt-Putt Day celebration.

To be entered in the drawing, you just need to sell \$100 worth of coins or jewelry to them by June 12. You don't have to be present at the raffle to win. For more info, call Marengo Coins at 815-572-2490.

Open mike night at Flatlander

There's always something new & different going on at Flatlander Market, and April 2009 brings yet another innovation: Open Mike Night.

On the 1st and 3rd Fridays of each month, beginning at 7pm, join your fellow townspeople for an evening of live music, poetry, jokes, storytelling, and who knows what? Sign up for performance times begins at 6:30pm. For more information, visit:

www.flatlandermarket.com/events.html



A letter from the President

Bob Levin

“There's no need to re-invent the wheel.

The problems we see here have been experienced by scores of other small towns throughout the state and nation.”

What does that mean -- that Marengo is now a "Designated Main Street Community"? Why does it matter that we are now officially sanctioned by the governor of Illinois and recognized by the National Main Street Program? I've said before in these pages what we, who live in town, already know -- the Main Business district is important for a variety of reasons:

- Protection of property values
- Increased opportunity for social interaction
- Community pride and preservation of community identity
- Preservation of community for future generations

All this and more. Now that we are officially a part of the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Main Street Program and one of over 70 Illinois Main Street communities, we will have access to a national and statewide body of resources that can help expand and renew our local downtown community like never before.

One of the more exciting opportunities is the ability to offer, in cooperation with the

Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, complimentary design services. This will help, at minimal cost, our city and landlords to preserve our historic heritage while offering professional and artistic venues for helping our town become more pedestrian-friendly and a source of pride for its residents.

There's no need to re-invent the wheel. The problems we see here have been experienced by scores of other small towns throughout the state and nation. Parking and traffic, empty storefronts and declining services, have all had their talons in other communities and been overcome. We can too. Now we can network with other Main Street Communities and get help and inspiration from them.

However (you knew there'd be a "however"), they won't do it for us. Marengo Main Street needs volunteers to do the research, to walk the miles and, yes, to contribute the money, that it will now take to push us to the next level-- to help make us a premier Main Street Community and serve as an example to other towns

The Marengo resident who doesn't want to see the Downtown re-vitalized is rare; the Main Street volunteer who puts in the time and effort to see it happen is rarer.

Want to start your own business?

Dave Ross, E/R Committee

Come to a free informational session being offered this summer on starting your own business:

Tuesday, June 16 at 7:00pm

Saturday, June 20 at 9:30am

Saturday, August 22 at 9:30am

Thursday, August 27 at 7:00pm

Today's volatile job market makes it increasingly attractive to turn a hobby or part-time job into a full-time, self-employment business. Is this a possibility for you?

To assist potential business start-ups and existing small businesses, Marengo Main Street's Economic Restructuring Committee is planning to offer a 10-week, 25-hour course, that will consider the pro's and con's of self-employment and teach the basic principles needed to be successful.

By the end of the 10-week session, you will have completed substantial work on a business plan.

According to the Small Busi-

ness Administration (SBA), only 2/3 of small business start-ups survive the first two years, and less than half make it through the first four years.

There are a number of things you can do to increase the potential for success, including solid business planning; fully understanding and preparing for the risks involved; having a "can do" attitude; and being willing to make the sacrifices needed for success.

Self-employment is not for everyone. Find out if you have what it takes and plan on participating in the upcoming 10-week class scheduled for Tuesday evenings September 15 through November 17, 2009. Classes will run from 7:00 to 9:30 pm in

downtown Marengo.

Free informational and Q&A sessions are planned for Tuesday, June 16 and Saturday, June 20. Additional sessions will be held on Saturday, August 22 and Thursday, August 27. Saturday sessions will be from 9:30 to 11:30 am. Tuesday and Thursday sessions will be from 7:00 to 9:00 pm, also downtown.

For further information, call Marengo Main Street at (815) 568-8440 or e-mail at dir@marengomainstreet.org.

Marengo Main Street's website will post additional details, course outline, and costs as they become available at: www.marengomainstreet.org

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Website: www.marengomainstreet.org

OFFICE USE:

Volunteer Application

As a non-profit organization, nothing is more important to Marengo Main Street than our volunteers. We strive to treat you right, enrich your life, and have some fun. The last thing we want to do is waste your time, or give you a task you don't want. So, if you'll take a few minutes to answer some questions, we'll find the perfect fit for you.

Thank you for thinking of us!

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Cell phone _____

Email _____ Email is our standard method of contact. If you prefer a phone call, please check here

Occupation _____

Skills or areas of interest: _____

I would like to join Marengo Main Street as a:

Committee Member

All committees meet once each month, for about an hour. We appreciate a one-year commitment.

- Organization**— fundraising, partner & volunteer recruitment, marketing & advertising
- Design**— public & façade improvements, history & architecture
- Promotions**— event planning, volunteer coordination, advertising
- Economic Restructuring**— grow new businesses & strengthen existing ones
- Saturday Night on Main Street**— work with Settlers Days, Inc. to prepare for and staff one of Marengo's most popular annual events (*meets April through October only*)

Single Event

volunteer

Join us for a few hours or the whole day

- Putt-Putt Day**— Saturday, June 13, 2009, 9am-5pm (event runs 11am-4pm)
- Community Garage Sale**— Saturday, July 18, 2009, 6am-4pm (event runs 7am-3pm)
- Saturday Night on Main Street**— Saturday, Oct 10, 2009, 4-11pm (event runs 5-10pm)
- Trick-or-Treat on State Street**— Halloween night, 4-8pm

"Virtual Volunteer"

- provide off-site support as needed (*requires internet connection, email address, some knowledge of online-based research & tools*)

"On-call" volunteer

- If we need an extra hand at any event, or behind the scenes, we'll ask you first

Specific position

- I am interested in an opening posted on the website: _____

Where did you hear about our volunteer program? a friend

a current volunteer

PROMISE

MCHS

newspaper

other _____

