

Lets talk ENHANCEMENT...

Business Enhancement strengthens a community's existing economic assets while expanding and diversifying its economic base. The Main Street program helps sharpen the competitiveness of existing business owners and recruits compatible new businesses and new economic uses to build a commercial district that responds to today's consumers' needs. Converting unused or underused commercial space into economically productive property also helps boost the profitability of the district.



Business Enhancement (sometimes called economic restructuring in other Main Street communities) is easily the most abstract Main Street standing committee from a conceptual standpoint. In Promotions, you have a set event, activity or campaign. In Design, you speak about the tangible sensory surroundings of a given area. Business Enhancement is more of a long term project that allows a community to find unique ways to build its business capacity and climate. I know that I just used about 20 buzz words in the above paragraph, but let me cite some specific examples of exactly what the Business Enhancement committee has done in the past, what we are working on right now, and what we plan to do in the future to support our community.

One of the most successful partnerships and programs to grow out of the Business Enhancement Committee is the "Start Your Own Business" class with Flint Hills Technical College. We understand that no business lasts forever, and it is critically important to develop new entrepreneurs to support community needs, improve our tax base and fight sales leakage. Several existing businesses have participated in sections of the Start Your Own Business course to brush up on different skills, and new businesses have started in Emporia with the help of the course. Some of the businesses that grew out of the Start Your Own Business course include: The Help Desk, Green Door Recycling, Flint Hills Laser Expressions and Punkin Doodles. Not only does this program help support new businesses, it connects businesses with our existing members. Accountants, insurance agents, real estate agents, financial institutions, sign firms, advertisers and other companies have benefited by networking through Main Street with these new businesses. Because the majority of these businesses are smaller and more entrepreneurial based, they have a tendency to compliment rather than dominate existing businesses. Expanding and diversifying our economic base is a goal of Business Enhancement, and the aforementioned class is one way we continue to achieve that goal.

Community Initiated Development is another focus that has direct ties to Business Enhancement. Formulating a plan for downtown's future, creating areas of interest, addressing infrastructure concerns and supporting redevelopment and adaptive reuse creates a better business environment. By producing a plan, Emporia Main Street has created an attainable vision for one are of our community that can be used to encourage development through a variety of entities.

Business Enhancement is also currently working on Transition Planning for existing businesses, "welcome" bags for new businesses (to promote service member businesses), expanded use of coupon fliers and dining guides (to support retailers and restaurants), improving our Main Street Mingle program, matching businesses with the newly defined districts within the CID to promote business clusters and a host of other activities to create a healthier more profitable community for our new and more established Emporia businesses.

Does this committee sound like something you would be interested in? We are always looking for new committee members with energy, enthusiasm and fresh ideas. The Business Enhancement Committee of Emporia Main Street meets every forth Wednesday of the Month at 8:00 a.m. in the Emporia Main Street office at 12 E. 5th Street. Consider yourself invited

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