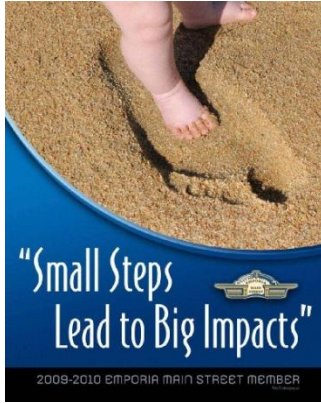


Design Committee Yearly Review

By Steve Hanschu- Committee Chair



The Emporia Main Street Design Committee continues its efforts to improve and maintain the appearance of the Emporia downtown through appropriate design principles as outlined by the National Main Street.

This past year the streetscape gardens began to take a more colorful appearance through the newly organized Adopt-A Garden program. This program encouraged people from the community to adopt a garden and plant annuals or perennials to add more color to the garden. Assistance was provided by the County Extension Office in selected appropriate plants for the Kansas climate. The watering system was also repaired in many of the gardens. Ground signs were placed in the gardens identifying and recognizing the new caretakers. A contest was also held to identify the most beautiful gardens of the summer. The program was very successful and plans are under way on how to improve the soil and watering conditions for 2010 growing season. The program also received a Kansas Main Street award. Plans are being finalized to provide flower pots to businesses at minimum cost to be placed near their storefront.

Preservation activities in May 2009 included the annual 5th grade tour of historic buildings in the downtown area. The Granada Theatre, Emporia Presbyterian Church and the Lyon County Historical Museum were stops on the tour this past year. The Emporia Presbyterian Church received the J. Warren Brinkman Preservation Award for maintaining and preserving the church as a downtown landmark. This tour provides the youth of Emporia to experience and gain knowledge of historic buildings and the reason to preserve our historic structures. Emporia Main Street and the Lyon County Historical Museum partner in this activity to promote historic preservation in our community. Plans are being made to expand activities throughout the month of May by articles in the media and possible public building tours.

To help increase awareness of preserving the historic fabric and character of our downtown buildings, an exhibit will be placed in the Emporia Public Library during the month of April. The exhibit will use artifacts, photographs and other graphics focusing around the National Historic Preservation Month theme of "Old is the New Green." In cooperation with the Emporia Gazette, photographs of historic downtown buildings and interiors will be featured in the paper as space allows to raise the awareness of our rich downtown heritage. The photographs will run as a "Can You Identify" feature with the answer and a short historical summary of the photograph in the next issue.

Our popular Christmas ornament for 2009 showcased the Emporia Gazette building. The building is of great historic significance to the downtown and the community with its association to the William Allen White family. Still owned by the family it was renovated by architect Stan Hagan at the request of William Lindsey White. The family continues to preserve its interior and exterior. The ornament is a major fundraiser for the Design Committee.

The downtown continues to have a festive Christmas atmosphere with its garland wreaths and candelabra decorations on the light poles. The lights in the trees at the major intersections gives the downtown a glowing appearance.

IWW grants continue to be reviewed for appropriate design of the project. This year the majority of the money in reserves was loaned for projects.

The demonstration project involving Punkindooles was extended into the new work year. Although the canopy colors are not the best for design appearance, the store front seems to blend with its neighbor. The demonstration project is an item which needs to be reviewed as work plans are developed for the coming year.

The Outstanding Design Award was not presented too often this past year. It is a special award only to be given to those businesses which have shown excellent in interior or exterior design.

This year the Design Committee was also involved in helping to select a new Main Street logo reflecting the work of the Main Street program.

We are pleased to add to the Design Committee Tracy from IM Design. Her knowledge and skills will be a real asset to the committee.

This coming year will see at least one change in the appearance of the downtown with the completion of the Emporia Art Center next to the Granada Theatre. The downtown was enhanced this year with the addition of the Granada Lofts and stores. Emporia Main Street worked closely with the owners in the design of the building and the result is evident in its construction.

We were pleased with the leadership and ideas Casey Woods, the new Main Street Manager, has brought to the Design Committee. We look forward to another year of helping business owners and others in the community use good design principles as we further the work of the Emporia Main Street program.

Respectfully submitted,

Steve Hanschu, Chair

Design Committee

Would you like to add your thoughts on the Design Committee? Simply e-mail Emporia Main Street at main.street@emporia-kansas.gov , or join us for a Design Committee meeting on the 2nd Wednesday of every month at noon in the Emporia Main Street office!

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