

Year in Review...

2009 is/was quite a year. A lot of changes took place in businesses, leadership, events and more. Last week I talked about the necessity of looking back long enough to determine what worked and what didn't. Below is a brief synopsis of 2009 month by month from a Main Street staff perspective. But, it's your perspective that I want to hear. So, at the end of our "months" we have a survey link with three questions: what was your favorite part of 2009, what was your least favorite part of 2009 and what do you hope Main Street accomplishes in 2010? This is YOUR organization. Tell us what YOU think.



January- Kayla Oney worked with the MUP Board and the city of Emporia to map potential locations for bike racks. Preliminary work on a potential historic district was done. Main Street staff members planned a series of spring events and attended the first quarterly training of the year in Topeka. Main Street staff and volunteers participated in the Kansas Downtown Development Association "Day on the Hill" in an effort to communicate with local legislators.

February- A public announcement was made that Kayla would leave her post as Emporia Main Street director to take a position closer to her family. In the interim, Jessica Hopkins duties as Events Coordinator expanded to compensate for Kayla's loss and continue continuity for upcoming events.

March- Casey Woods is hired as the Executive Director of Emporia Main Street at the end of March. Jessica Hopkins announced her decision to transition to a job with Big Brothers and Big Sisters. A proposed Historic District fails to gain support of the city commission. The Start Your Own Business Class offered through Flint Hills Technical College in conjunction with Emporia Main Street and the Small Business Development Center is held with a record class attendance. Several entrepreneurs are generated from the FHTC class.

April- Becky Smith is hired as the Emporia Main Street Events Coordinator. Two events, "The Taste" and "Artist Walk" are held. Both events are well attended, and "The Taste" showed a significant increase in ticket sales over previous years. Jock's Niche indicated their intention to leave Emporia, and recruitment efforts began to fill the building with an appropriate usage. Three downtown clean-up activities are held. ESU Greek community members coordinate with Main Street and ESU's Project to Improve Emporia to clean up downtown and continue aesthetic efforts as part of Earth Day activities.

May- Preservation month activities are executed, including tours of the Presbyterian Church and Granada Theatre. A quarterly training covering design elements is held in Garden City and attended by members of Emporia Main Street. Early Bird Membership drive commences. Emporia Main Street is contacted by community individuals seeking to bring back the Twin Rivers Festival. Flint Hills Laser Expressions indicates their intentions to move into a store front. The weekly e-news through Constant Contact begins. The "Adopt a Garden" project begins in earnest with help from Master Gardeners, K-State Extension Services and a massive group of volunteers.

June- The Flint Hills Music "Live in the Lot" concert series begins. Movies sponsored by local businesses are shown every other week. The Twin River's Festival group meets with various city officials in order to finalize the event. Dryers Shoe Store indicates they would like assistance in transitioning their business. An initial meeting with the Granada Theatre results in plans for a Granada Bridal and Prom Expo for January of 2010. Punkin Doodles receives assistance from Emporia Main Street, Kansas Main Street and Network Kansas to aid in the development of their children's boutique concept. General Membership Drive begins. Eclectic Catering Opens.

July- Jimmy John's and Bravo Salon announce their intentions to locate in the almost finished Granada Lofts Project. The Villas apartment complex nears completion. The Annual Meeting of Emporia Main Street is held, and High Gear receives Business of the Year, Tracey Graham of the Emporia Farmers Market receives Volunteer of the Year and Chris Walker of the Emporia Gazette receives Advocate of the Year. Special Department of Commerce awards are presented to Commerce Bank and Trust, High Gear and C & J Wood works. The Twin River's Festival is held on July 4. Live in the Lot is held. KTKA news films from the "lot" for their Mainstreet segment. The first new monthly Emporia Main Street mingle is held.

August- Quarterly Training covering community initiated development and community owned stores is held in Emporia. Emporia Main Street and Emporia State University hold the "Welcome Back Block Party" for students. Formal membership drive ends, resulting in approximately 170 members. An upper story tour is held, showcasing three properties. A news release indicating the top three gardens in the adopt a garden project generates additional interest in the program. Eventually, all primary gardens are adopted. Punkin doodles opens. Flint Hills Laser Expressions opens. Jimmy John's opens, Loft apartment in the Granada Lofts open.

September- The Great American Market was an absolutely huge event that brought thousands into the community. Tom Brokaw stopped by our town for a feature on communities along Highway 50 and community members came together to send several boxes worth of items to Emporian Steve Harmon and other troops located in Afghanistan. A September mingle held at Town Royal celebrated the Garden Adoption Project and associated volunteers. The month of September did have a pronounced downside as we lost Hastings, Papa Murphy's and Centinellas on the west side of town, while Madelynn's was seized for taxes owed downtown. The bike rack design contest by the Multi Use Planning Board was initiated through Racheal LeClear and Flint Hills Technical College, and Amy Harmon's loft apartment featured in August's Upper Story Tour was completed and shown in conjunction with a Main Street Mingle.

October- Emporia Main Street changed it's logo to the current version and showcased the change at the Emporia Main Street annual auction to benefit the Main Street public improvement fund. Emporia Main Street received five awards at the Kansas Main Street conference held in Leavenworth. The five awards tied Emporia for second, right behind the host city. Awards included recognition for Tracey Graham's volunteer efforts, Garden Adoption, Partnership with Flint Hills Technical College, The new Home Based Business level and a first- An award from the Secretary of Commerce for Cory Haag's Granada Lofts project and the Community Initiated Development planning done through Emporia Main Street. Due to weather, the Harvest Festival was cancelled. October also included an extremely generous donation by Prairieland Partners of a riding lawn mower to both the Emporia Farmers Market and Emporia Main Street. Donations were taken for the opportunity to win the mower and approximately \$2000 dollars were raised by the two organizations. A mingle was held at Flint Hills Laser Expressions.

November- \$800 was raised for the local veteran's memorial through Freedom Fest, a bike ride/run sponsored by local businesses and planned through Emporia Main Street. Close to 100 individuals participated in the event. The City of Emporia announced preliminary plans to move ahead with a water main replacement project that will begin in mid-2010 and a Commercial Street resurfacing project that will take place in 2011. Main Street members Blue Fox, Swartz Cart Shed and Total Technologies opened. Main Street assisted in the transition of Dryers Shoe Store to High Gear, which will allow High Gear to pursue a massive expansion in 2010. Independent consulting activities took place with different Main Street member businesses to "gear up" for fourth quarter activities. A fifth anniversary mingle was held at The Sweet Granada.

December- The home based subcommittee produced its first "Quarter Mania" event which took place the first night of the Main Street Carriage Rides. Three carriage rides took place this year, with one cancelation due to weather. Kris Kringle's Kids Shoppe was a hit with kids and adults alike. Cory Haag and the Granada lofts provided an ideal location with fantastic decorations that encouraged walk in

traffic. A test case for an artist cooperative was launched with the hope that a more permanent business can be formed with its participating members. Several web upgrades began during the continued retooling of the web site. Members were updated, enhanced property listings were added and an archive section with past e-news was created. After discussions with a local engineering firm, new development literature distribution methods were planned. Planning for the Granada Bridal and Prom Expo swung into high gear with help from media sponsor KVOE. Bridal and prom surveys were created, posters were distributed and the merchant spots sold out. A mingle celebrating CoreFirst Bank & Trust's 50th anniversary was held.

[Tell us what YOU think!](#)

[You can also take a look back by accessing the Emporia Main Street E-News Archive \(Click HERE\).](#)

Back to home page: www.emporiainstreet.com