Honoring Communities that Show Excellence in Main Street Principles

North Dakota’s Main Street Initiative is a shared vision of healthy, vibrant communities that, through fiscally-responsible planning, attract the talent needed to support our state’s growing economy. The Main Street Awards honor communities that show excellence in these principles by actively working to enhance the quality of life for their residents, past and future.

The Main Street Awards are a collaborative effort of the Office of Governor Doug Burgum and the North Dakota Department of Commerce. The 2021 Main Street awards will be presented during the annual Main Street Summit on Oct. 12 at the West Fargo Rustad Recreation Center.

These awards are an opportunity for communities to showcase their unique efforts and call attention to the tangible benefits an engaged community can create. Projects submitted for consideration should take place in the time frame of July 2019–Aug. 2021.

Nomination Process

The Main Street Awards are competitive and we are seeking nominations! Nominations should be submitted electronically at https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2021MSIAwards and will be accepted until 5 p.m. Aug. 13, 2021. A selection committee made up of collaborating agencies and partner organizations will evaluate entries on the below criteria to select award recipients. If you have questions please call 701-595-4584.

General Guidance for Nominations

1. **Nominations should be brief.** Include information that is relevant to the nomination for that specific award category. Emphasize details that are focused on outcomes.

2. **Nominations should be easily understood.** The best nominations are easy to read and include descriptions that allow people without working knowledge of the project to understand what was accomplished. Focus on the accomplishments, important points and outcomes, and why those were valuable for the community.

3. **Accomplishments should be recent.** Community projects can take a long time; however, outcomes and/or completion of projects submitted for consideration should take place or have taken place during the time frame of July 2019–Aug. 2021.

4. **Nominations should only be entered in one category.** The selection committee reserves the rights to transfer nominations if a submission better fits in another category, to withhold an award in any category, or designate more than one winner, if deemed appropriate.
Healthy, Vibrant Community Award

This award recognizes communities or groups that have contributed to their vibrancy by activating shared public space, promoting/celebrating the arts and culture, and/or hosting community events that engage residents and visitors. Local art and culture, events, and our shared spaces make our communities unique, and are essential parts of attracting and retaining a talented workforce.

Criteria: a community must have completed a project that includes public art, beautification, an art/cultural event the promotion of the arts in education, or a local vibrancy project that revolves around public space. Nominees must also meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Demonstrate successful public-private partnerships
- Reflect community-centered efforts and benefits
- Engage youth and/or people from diverse backgrounds in the project
- Enrich visitor and/or resident experiences

Examples: host an outdoor music event; complete a public art project; host a multi-cultural festival; or add wayfinding elements to get people out and about and interacting within their community.

21st Century Workforce Award

This award recognizes excellence in one of two areas:
1. Efforts to attract or retain workforce OR
2. Working with local youth to promote workforce development opportunities in your community

Excellence in workforce attraction and retention can be demonstrated through the implementation of a strategy that encourages people to move to and stay in your community. Excellence in workforce development can be demonstrated through efforts to engage students in leadership development or workforce exploration.

Criteria: a community must have implemented a project that either seeks to enhance local workforce development opportunities or attract and retain workforce. Nominees must also meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Implement a creative strategy to attract and retain workforce
- Build the professional skills of youth and seek to connect them with local employment opportunities
- Work with employers or economic/community development groups (public-private partnership)

Examples: incentive like childcare or housing to attract workforce; program to connect students with local businesses; local campaign to attract high school alumni to return home.

Main Street Excellence Award

This award recognizes communities whose efforts embody all three pillars of the Main Street Initiative: Smart, Efficient Infrastructure; 21st Century Workforce; and Healthy, Vibrant Communities.

Criteria: the nominee must demonstrate activities that cross all three pillars and showcase innovative efforts to enhance the livability, health and attractiveness of their community while demonstrating fiscally-sound planning and sustainability. Nominated projects must meet at least one of the following criteria:

- Demonstrate successful public-private partnerships
- Reflect community-centered efforts and benefit
- Engage youth to remain or return to North Dakota through career exploration or leadership
- Demonstrate efforts that show fiscally-sound planning and infrastructure development
- Demonstrate efforts that increase community livability to attract and retain people of all ages

Example: a community with projects or initiatives that touch on all pillars of Main Street such as building vibrancy through beautification, engaging youth in local decision-making and refurbishing an existing community center rather than building new.
Smart, Efficient Infrastructure Award

This award recognizes a community that has made sound planning decisions by investing in spaces with existing infrastructure, such as a vacant lot (infill) or dilapidated building. Nominated projects should infuse existing infrastructure with new and innovative ideas to ensure the most efficient use of public resources.

Criteria: a community must have completed a project that revitalizes an existing building or structure OR is an infill project, making use of existing infrastructure. Nominees must meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Demonstrate successful public-private partnership
- Reflect community-centered efforts and benefit
- Demonstrate effective use of existing infrastructure
- Showcase revitalized structure and highlight preserved historic elements
- Demonstrate innovation in use of spaces or buildings

Examples: turn a vacant lot into a community attraction like a park or market space; update a vacant building into a retail/residential space downtown or renovate an old hospital building rather than building new.

Legendary Heritage Award

This award recognizes communities focused on preserving and protecting the historical assets of their towns. By honoring historical buildings and structures, spaces and other assets North Dakota’s communities connect generations of residents and inspire community pride.

Criteria: nomination must feature a completed project that involves restoration, celebration or adaptive use of historic and/or culturally significant buildings, structures, sites or landscapes. Nominees must also meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Demonstrate successful public-private partnerships
- Reflect community-centered efforts and benefits
- Engage youth and/or people from diverse backgrounds in the project
- Enrich visitor and/or resident experiences

Examples: restore a historic opera house; renovate a city hall into an entertainment venue or add signage at a