

Strengthening Barnesville’s Sense Of Community



The annual Showcase event is a great way for business owners to meet and greet old customers as well as to solicit new business contacts. Showcase 2020 is set for Saturday, March 21.

By: Michael Stein
All the many components that go into making a community click and spark new ideas need a place for sorting and prioritizing.

That’s where the Main Street program comes into play. In Barnesville, the Main Street Program, under the direction of Bailey Thompson, works closely with the EDA to light any number of fires that will help spark continued community growth and progress.

In looking back at 2019, Thompson said there are a number of Main Street accomplishments to be proud of.

“For one, we had the storefront grants, which improved the look of our downtown,” Thompson said. “We’ve been able to get the CoLoft idea off the ground. This is a collaborative project with the EDA, and offers valuable space for entrepreneurs and others.”

A new year—and a new decade for that matter—unofficially kicks off with Showcase. This year’s event will be Saturday, March 21, at the Barnesville High School from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Call 354.2479 or email mainstreet@bvillemn.net for more information!

“Our presence at Showcase helps spark connections among Barnesville businesses,” Thompson said.

“Something we started last year was bringing local business people together to talk about issues affecting Barnesville business,” Thompson said. “We heard from some that they’d like to hear more about marketing as it’s an area they’re not as comfortable with as they’d like to be. People would also like to see more educational and idea sharing sessions.”

For business owners, the logistics for attending these sessions can be an issue. One solution being considered is do some sessions over the noon hour and some in the evening after normal business hours.

Main Street also provides 10 hours of free marketing training for new members. The training covers the ever-growing need for social media marketing.

“For example, some people don’t know how to create a social media post,” Thompson said. “We’ll help with things like that. Some business people have used the training to help create logos and other marketing materials.”

Main Street also helps create

a welcoming atmosphere for new residents.

“The City of Barnesville and Main Street work together on things like welcome bags for new residents,” said EDA Director Karen Lauer. “It’s important to roll out the welcome mat. After they establish residence and go to City Hall to set up utilities, they get the welcome bags, which are filled with coupons and information about the city. It’s a win for businesses; it’s a win for the Main Street program; and it’s a win for the new residents.”

A lot of work goes into the welcoming initiative.

“It’s worth the effort,” Thompson said. “It makes the point that we go above and beyond to make people feel welcome here and that they’re part of the community. It’s a face-to-face welcome to Barnesville.”

Efforts by the Main Street Program and the EDA to trumpet what Barnesville has to offer isn’t always contained within the city’s borders.

Again this year, Main Street and the EDA—along with other Barnesville representatives—were at the Red River Valley Home & Garden Show at the Fargodome the last weekend of February.

In efforts to keep dollars in Barnesville, Thompson cites an adage that goes, “Put your money where your heart is.”

“The Main Street program is also about getting the word out about shopping locally,” Thompson said.

Main Street’s 2019 activities included the following:

- A successful membership drive resulting in 79 members, 20 friends of Main Street and \$9,575 in dues
- The 26th annual Showcase event with 39 booths and three “kids in business” booths
- The annual Golf Tournament, which had 19 teams participate, and revenue of \$2,409
- The Community Picnic, which served more than 650 people and included the Miss Barnesville pageant
- Planting and maintenance of downtown flower planters/baskets and volunteer watering
- Area-wide rummage sales, Miracle on Front Street events, Yard of the Week, Holiday Home Decorating Lights contest, four

Show ‘n Shine events, T-shirt fundraiser, Breakfast with Santa, retail promotions, Home Show booth.

Main Street Director Bailey Thompson made special note of three Storefront Revitalization

grants totaling \$2,873 awarded in 2020.

For more information about Barnesville’s Main Street program, contact Bailey at 218 354-2479, and check out their Facebook page.



The semi-annual neighborhood rummage sales are planned for May and September. These are popular events that draw shoppers to town from a long way out of Barnesville’s normal trade area.

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2020 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

APRIL

2 Barnesville Lions Sportsman Stag

3-4 Suz Dance Studio Spring Recital

15-17 Spring Clean-up Week

28 Thursday Nite Lions Ladies Fun Nite

MAY

1-2 Spring Area-Wide Rummage Sales

1-3 "Divine Stella Divine" Spring Play

3 Thursday Nite Lions May Day Hunt

14 Show 'n Shine Car Show

14 VFW Auxiliary Syttende Mai Dinner

15 Legion Auxiliary Poppy Day Luncheon

23 BHS Graduation

29-30 Summer Recreation Play

JUNE

9 Main Street Annual Golf Tournament

11 Show 'n Shine Car Show

JULY

9 Show 'n Shine Car Show

9-12 Clay County Fair

23 Barnesville Community Picnic

23 82nd Miss Barnesville Crowning

AUGUST

13 Show 'n Shine Car Show

28-29 Potato Days Festival

SEPTEMBER

10 Show 'n Shine Car Show

19 Fall Rummage Sales/Farmer's Market

23 VFW Annual Membership Supper

OCTOBER

19 VFW Auxiliary Octoberfest Supper

25 St. James UCC Soup & Bread Feed

30 Baker/Downer Church Fish Dinner

NOVEMBER

11 Valley Care & Rehab Veteran's Day

19 Our Savior's Lutefisk Supper

DECEMBER

2 Our Savior's Church Advent Program

2 City Tree Lighting Ceremony

12 Breakfast with Santa



compiled by
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Main Street Program
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