

RETHOS™

PLACES REIMAGINED

Issue 4, 2019



IN DEPTH LOOK AT THE 2019
MPA AWARD WINNERS

ANNOUNCING THE 2020
ARTISTS ON MAIN STREET COMMUNITIES

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2020:
WHAT'S IN STORE AT THE CAPITOL

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Cover photo: Sergio Fuentes in his barbershop, Royal Cutz, in downtown Willmar. Photo credit: Jclan photography.

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Executive Director Doug Gasek working with members from Northern Historic Bedrock Corp. during Intro to Historic Masonry, June, 2019.

THE FIRST WORD



What a year it has been!

We finished this year with a brand new name and brand new identity. In August, we reintroduced the organization as Rethos: Places Reimagined. Since that time, it has been fantastic seeing how people embrace that identity and connect with our vision of reusing buildings, celebrating culture and arts, and supporting small businesses. Every single Rethos program has embraced that vision and the results are astounding.

- There were nine new investment partnerships this year, including our first partnership in Kansas.
- The number of greater Minnesota class participants increased by over 50%.
- Albert Lea and Olivia became the newest designated Main Street Communities.
- 70 art projects were funded in seven communities (Willmar, Wabasha, Olivia, Northfield, Faribault, Winona, and Mankato).
- Mahoman, Cloquet, Cook, and Two Harbors are the newest crop of Artists on Main Street communities.
- We are in more places than ever before with staff members in Granite Falls, Winona, Little Falls, and Superior/Duluth.

Our immediate focus in 2020 will be on the extension of the Minnesota Historic Tax Credit that is due to sunset in 2021. To keep rehabilitation projects happening in our backyard, this credit must be extended. At the same time, we believe it should be made as flexible as possible by allowing additional transfers and allowing for a one-time repayment to be received after the project is completed.

With more staff located outside the Twin Cities, we plan to deliver even more programming in 2020 in rural places. I hope to see you at one of our classes or, if you're lucky enough to be in Otter Tail County, I'm sure you'll see some of our engagement activities that we're supporting in partnership with the Otter Tail County Historical Society and Springboard for the Arts. Thanks for another tremendous year at Rethos.

Doug Gasek
Executive Director

GIVE TODAY



By making a contribution, your generous support allows Rethos to:

- Engage citizens to identify important places in their community
- Offer more tours and classes
- Enhance our support of rural Minnesota through programs like Rethos Main Streets and Artists on Main Street

These programs allow us to engage more personally with communities throughout the region.

By contributing today, you become a stakeholder in our mission to lead and inspire people to connect with historic places, promoting community vitality. We are grateful for your support.

Visit rethos.org to make your contribution today.

FEATURED CLASS



OHC DESIGNATION COURSE

January 22-23 | 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM
Coldwell Banker Burnet, Highland Park, Saint Paul

We've gathered a dream team of professionals in architecture, real estate, historic preservation and more to share targeted info in this groundbreaking course. Serve your clients better by gaining expert insights about the homes you work with daily. Get Old Home Certified, and you'll get 9 expert-taught classes and 12 CE credits along with invaluable info you simply won't find offered elsewhere. Achieve a marketing edge and point of distinction in a competitive market. Enrich and leverage your knowledge of old homes and dig deep to discover why they matter to your clients, your business and your community. This two-day course is team-taught and covers a range of topics, from area architectural styles to finding old home resources to the origins of Twin Cities' housing and neighborhoods. From social influences on development to marketing and more, you'll get a 360-degree understanding of our local built environment.

These fast-paced classes include:

- Who Built the Twin Cities and How?
- Why Old is Green: Sustainability in Older Homes
- Marketing & Researching Old Houses
- Understanding Historic Districts
- Old House Vocab: From Banisters to Balustrades, Porticos to Portieres
- ... And more!

Old Home Certified (OHC) is a regional Realtor® designation developed by Rethos: Places Reimagined. Minnesota Realtors will earn 12 CE credits approved by the Minnesota Department of Commerce for this course, but it is open to anyone. To maintain their designation, OHC agents must take 6 credits of Old Home Certified CE during the two years following completion of the Old Home Certified course.

Pre-registration is required to take this course.
Head to rethos.org/classes to register for your spot



Here's a sneak peek of our upcoming classes for 2020! Registration coming soon!

- 08
FEB

REPAIRING AND RESTORING OLD WINDOWS
9:00 AM - 1:00 PM | Hayes Window Restoration, Minneapolis
- 19
MAR

LEAD, RADON, & ASBESTOS, OH MY!
1:00 PM - 3:00 PM, Keller Williams Integrity Lakes, Minneapolis
- 24
MAR

DEMYSTIFYING DIY HOME REHAB
6:00 PM - 7:30 PM, Location TBD, Twin Cities

NEWS AND UPDATES

REMEMBERING REP. DIANE LOEFFLER



We are saddened by the unexpected news that Rep. Diane Loeffler died in mid-November.

Rep. Loeffler, who represented her Northeast Minneapolis district for 15 years in the Minnesota House of Representatives, was a true friend of preservation and adaptive reuse. She was one of the original co-authors of the MN Historic Tax Credit bill that ultimately passed in 2010, and had advocated for the preservation of the Ford Building, a long-vacant, state-owned structure near the Capitol that was nominated to the National Register of Historic Places just this past summer.

When we spoke to her last May, she'd been unwaveringly supportive of the MN Historic Tax Credit and encouraged us to emphasize the environmental benefits of building preservation and adaptive reuse. Rep. Loeffler was generous with her time, energy, and intellect and a valuable and devoted public servant. She will be dearly missed.

Apologies to AWH Architects for being left out of our article "More Than Just a Numbers Game." We highlighted the incredible work done on the Guardian Building in the article, which was only made possible by AWH Architects who championed the use of the Historic Tax Credit to ensure the project achieved completion. Thank you for all your hard work!



In our update on Artists on Main Street, we mistakenly placed a picture with the wrong project! Apologies to both Northfield and artist Jess Gorman in Olivia.



Play Day in the Park, Olivia



Rays of Unity, Northfield

Thank you to Nicollet Ace Hardware for sponsoring one of our classes this past month, Rot Repair and Reglazing! Not only did Ace Hardware provide all the materials, but gave each attendee a take home window repair kit!



35TH ANNUAL

MINNESOTA PRESERVATION AWARDS

The Minnesota Preservation Awards were presented at the 2019 Rethos Annual Benefit on October 3rd. Below are those who accepted the Honor and Impact Awards for their inspiring projects across Minnesota. Congratulations again to all the award recipients, as well as our ICON award winners, Tanner Ott and Marvel Anderson.



Pictured above are the recipients for the Honor and Impact Awards. From top left: Kristen Oliver and Jessie Hallstrom of Hempel, accepting the Honor Award for the Treasure Island Center. Steve Oakley of ESG Architects, accepting the Honor award for Lora. Marilyn Chiat, accepting the Impact Award for B'Nai Abraham Museum and Cultural Center. George Sherman and Chris Sherman, accepting the Honor Award for Canopy by Hilton Minneapolis Mill District. Scott Hoss, Ross Henderson, and Eric Deutsch accepting the Impact Award for Castle Community. Patrick Ostrom accepting the Impact Award for Press House Apartments. Crag Cohen accepting the Impact Award for Keg and Case West 7th Market. Emily and Scott Durand, accepting the Honor Award for the H.H. Jewell Building.

ICON AWARDS

PRESIDENT'S AWARD

Tanner Ott

The President's Award is in recognition of a person who recognizes the necessity and role of building reuse in terms of culture, legacy, and job creation. This year's awardee is someone who recognizes that repositioning buildings in communities is all about people and possibilities in towns all over Minnesota.

Tanner, at 27, currently serves as Vice President for Alley A Realty. In the last five years he has overseen reuse projects in downtown Ely, MN. Tanner's passion lies in

renovating properties and leasing them to entrepreneurs, restaurants, artists, and professionals, helping to create communities that flourish and neighborhoods that are filled with pride. Success to Tanner looks like "a building full of happy people". He continues to work on restoring and repurposing some of Ely's most unique downtown destinations and gems. Tanner Ott is full of the Rethos spirit, which is why we are pleased to honor him with this year's Presidents Award.



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S AWARD

Marvel Anderson



The Executive Director's Award is all about inspiration: inspiring people to connect with places and filling them with a sense of pride in both their communities and homes. This year's recipient embodies our mission in her work and daily life.

Marvel has been associated with Rethos in one form or another for the past 30 years and is one of its greatest supporters. Marvel served as a Rethos Board member in the 1990's, then became the organization's first office staff where she coordinated

countless volunteers throughout the years. She was a public-school teacher for over 30 years, and upon retirement, became an editorial researcher for *Country Home* and *Better Homes and Gardens*. Marvel's passion for community culture and building reuse is boundless, especially for rural Minnesota, and she remains one of our most generous and informed supporters. We are lucky to count Marvel among our treasured supporters and family.

HONOR AWARDS

The Honor Awards exemplify the first part of our mission, “to lead and inspire people to connect with historic places.” The Honor awardees activated spaces in entrepreneurial and creative ways.



Stakeholders: Atmosphere, DLR Group, First National Bank of Omaha, Frana Companies, Inc., Hess, Roise and Company, Rethos, Sherman Associates, The Sherwin-Williams Company, Western Bank

Canopy by Hilton Minneapolis Mill District

Minneapolis

Over the last decade, the eastern portion of downtown Minneapolis has transformed from a sea of parking lots to a thriving commercial and residential neighborhood. The light rail, a new park, office buildings, residential buildings, and the new US Bank Stadium have revived this formerly vacant, demolition-prone, and building-scarce area. Sherman Associates saw this change as an opportunity to rehabilitate Thresher Square into a Canopy by Hilton boutique hotel.

Built in 1900 and 1904, former Advance Thresher Company and Emerson Newton Implement Company made technology used

to remove seeds from stalks, operating until the 1980s when it was renovated into office space. The neighborhood’s new development left Thresher Square an underutilized building ripe for redevelopment. Sherman Associates capitalized on its historic character using federal and state historic tax credits.

The Minneapolis local landmark and national register listed building features 183-hotel rooms, 20 different room layouts, and 2 restaurants. This creative adaptive reuse exemplifies the importance of our architectural assets for creative reimagination, job creation, and space activation.



Stakeholders: Bank of America, City of Wabasha, Hygge Properties, JB Developments, Live Oak Bank, Primus Inc., PVN, New History, Select Structural, State Historic Preservation Office, West Plains Engineering

H.H. Jewell Building

Wabasha

“No historic building should sit vacant, particularly a prime corner building on a downtown Main Street.” Scott and Emily Durand recognized that a 130-year old building located on a prominent corner of Wabasha’s Main Street had great potential for revival. Built in 1880 for Henry Holmes Jewell’s hardware store, the H.H. Jewell building retains much of its historic façade after being host to numerous businesses and residents. After the pharmacy that mst recently occupied the space vacated the building, the Durand’s jumped at the opportunity to rescue and revitalize this tiny

historic gem.

The project addressed water infiltration issues on the roof, stabilized the building, and adaptively reused the first level as a dental office. This project provides an excellent example for a thoughtful, incremental, and successful adaptive reuse project. As a project under \$1,000,000 in total project costs, the difficulty of obtaining federal and state historic tax credits was high. However, the project’s success serves as encouragement to other small building owners to pursue historic tax credits.

Lora

Stillwater

The Lora transformed a former brewery into a bright, airy and modern hotel that pays tribute to the city’s industrial history. In 1886, brewer Joseph Wolf constructed a brewery that was carved into the stone cliffs to create storage for his company’s beer. Through unique and creative design, the Lora provides a 40-room boutique hotel with three distinct food and beverage destinations. The hotel combines existing structures and new construction that revived historically significant facades and redesigned streetscapes to integrate old

stone and new glass.

The hotel takes advantage of site-specific natural features by capturing spring water systems and passive heating and cooling from the stone bluffs that envelop the buildings. Local history of the St. Croix River is featured in the interior design through the romantic palette of Swedish blues, twilight hues, warm leathers and locally made wool throws. The creative reuse of the historic industrial site transformed the building for the future, where locals and visitors can celebrate and enjoy this unique architectural gem.



Stakeholders: Braun Intertec, Emanuelson-Podus, Erickson Civil, ESG Architecture & Design, Express Fire Protection Services, Innovative Structural Solutions, Laketown Electritc Corp, Northern Mechanical Contractors, Stillwater Heritage Preservation Commission, Zeman Construction

Treasure Island Center

Saint Paul

Mid-century urban renewal projects have a fraught reputation with the preservation community. Nevertheless, Hempel Companies saw the value in reusing a massive urban renewal era department store as a vital node in downtown Saint Paul. Built in 1962, the building opened as a Dayton’s department store, later becoming a Marshall Field’s and a Macy’s. After closing in 2013, the building sat vacant until it reopened in 2018 as the Treasure Island Center. The creative reuse of this existing building ensured its sustainable future within the downtown Saint Paul community by providing employment, services, and entertainment for an estimated 700,000 people each year.

The original building featured cream-colored brick façades, with no windows, making reuse challenging. The building

is not historically designated, which allowed the project designers to make more elaborate interventions, including a full glass curtain wall along its Wabasha Street façade.

It also allowed more creative use of the building, including a Walgreens, Minnesota Housing Finance Agency, a new brewery, and the TRIA ice rink, a rink used both publicly and by the Minnesota Wild and Hamline University hockey teams. Equitable access to the rink was an important aspect of the project, as Capital City Properties established a fund for nonprofits that promote ice-related activities for youth programming.



Stakeholders: Collaborative Design Group, Hempel, RJM Construction, SPPA

IMPACT AWARDS

The Impact Awards are all about community vitality. Each Impact Award made a distinct difference in the pride and prosperity of their community. These award winners are proactive and say ‘yes’ to challenging projects that have an extraordinary impact on our communities and state.



B’nai Abraham Museum and Cultural Center

Virginia

20 years ago, the B’nai Abraham Museum and Cultural Center was an abandoned property. The former synagogue is the only extant synagogue in the Iron Range and the

only synagogue in Minnesota listed on the National Register of Historic Places. When it opened in 1910, it was heralded as one of the most beautiful places of worship in the Iron Range. Symbolic of the Iron Range’s social and economic challenges, B’nai Abraham struggled to maintain its building, as the congregation’s children grew up and moved away, and founding members aged in place. In 2004, a group of families whose parents and grandparents help found the congregation and were interested in preserving their family’s former place of worship engaged

Virginians to see if people would be interested in reusing it as a museum, gaining a positive response from the community. Through incredible partnership and fundraising efforts, the Friends of B’nai Abraham was founded as a not-for-profit organization dedicated to preserving their families’ legacy.

With participation of the Virginia Area Historical Society, grants from the Minnesota Historical Society, and donations from foundations and individuals, the Friends of B’nai Abraham realized their dream of restoring and reusing the building as both a monument to the Jewish community’s contribution to the Iron Range as well as a community center for exhibits, concerts, lectures, and meetings. Nationally recognized as a model for thoughtful preservation and reuse of houses of worship, the building will continue to serve as visual and practical evidence of our nation’s diversity.

Stakeholders: Friends of B’nai Abraham board members: Marjorie Ostrov, Dianne Siegel, Charles Ostrov, Marilyn Chiat, Alan Milavetz, Leighton Siegel, Michael Bleher, Ann Phillips, Elayne Chiat, Larry Chiat, Judy Karon, Audra Keller, Jo Doig, James Rubenstein. Will Winger/Contractor, Harry Lamppa/Local Volunteer Site Manager, Bob Roscoe/ Preservation Expert, Karen Gjerstad/Architect.



Press House Apartmets

Saint Paul

Blending affordability and historic preservation, the Press House Apartments exemplify how modern architecture can be repurposed

for housing. Originally built in 1955 for the Minnesota Mutual Life Insurance Company, it was the first major construction project to take place downtown Saint Paul following World War II, launching the urban renewal process for the area. Most recently occupied by the Pioneer Press, the building became vacant in 2015. Its location along the light rail in the center of downtown Saint Paul beckoned for it to be creatively rehabilitated for residential use.

When the building was listed on the national register in 2016, it was their first example of a modern office design, breaking into new territory when redesigning the space for sectioned apartments. The circulation patterns of the building were preserved, using the main corridor to serve the dwelling units, while the publicly accessible skyway with 2,300 square feet of commercial space offers a glimpse into the past with expansive acoustic ceiling tile and repetitive lighting reminiscent of the 1950s. The building features 144 affordable studio, one, two, and three bedroom units while maintaining its international style, Yellow Kasota façade, and ribbon windows. The lessons learned from this project will be carried through by the SHPO and NPS to future mid-century office buildings and their adaptive reuse.

Stakeholders: BKV Group, MacRostie Historic Advisers, Real Estate Equities, Rethos, Weis Builders

Keg and Case West 7th Market

Saint Paul

After brewing beer for 147 years, and then sitting vacant for 12 years, the Keg & Case West 7th Market brings new life to its historic home. Originally the site of a brewery for the Stahlmann family in 1855, the current building was erected in 1901 after Jacob Schmidt purchased the site and hired Bernard Barthel to design a Gothic-influenced brewing complex. Until 2002 it was an operating brewery, but sat vacant until Craig Cohen decided to take on its transformation in 2014. The building used to be the part of the Schmidt complex where beer was stored before distribution by train.

Craig’s vision included a new option for food-focused entrepreneurs to set up shop.

Working with the City of St. Paul, architects, and historic preservation experts, Craig was able to keep key elements of the structure. In addition, he worked with Phil Gagne, the last brewmaster for the Schmidt Brewing company. His encyclopedic knowledge of the brewery’s history lent invaluable access to historic documents and facts. Craig’s dedication to repurposing this building has paid off with the 23 businesses that call the Keg & Case market home, with an outdoor space flexibly designed for all season events, pop-up markets, and concerts, rejuvenating the formerly vacant building into a community asset.



Stakeholders: Anderson Property Management, Bathenthin Funk and Johnson, City of Saint Paul - Planning and Economic Department, Cohn Reznick, Field Guide Inc, Herzog, Loucks Inc., Madigan, Dahl, and Harlan, Midwest One, Prime, Rethos, Studio M, Timberland Outdoors, Traceres, West 7th Fort Road Federation, Winthrop and Weinstine

Castle Community

Rochester

The 103 year old Rochester Armory, or The Castle as it’s known today, was re-dedicated to the community this year on the very same day of its first dedication in 1916. The Castle Community revived the armory into a thriving community space open to the people of Rochester more than 80 hours a week. The building has transformed only once in its history, when it was converted into a senior center in the 1970s by the city. In 2016, the senior center’s relocation prompted an RFP from the city for the building’s reuse. The Castle Community won the RFP, taking on a remodeling project to include a full-service restaurant (Cameo), art store, large community space, yoga studio, coffee and juice shop, used book and record store, artist studios, art gallery, and community studio. On top of these amenities the building features an event and performance space.

Careful consideration was made to

ensure the rehabilitation met high standards of conservation, efficiency, and utility, all while working within the context of an historic building. The Castle Community received a CERTS grant to perform energy modeling, which identified the greatest targets for energy savings through upgraded lighting and controls. During construction, crews uncovered historic material, including a small portion of tin ceiling, beams, trusses, a former exterior window previously covered for 40 years, and a secret turret stairway with invaluable character. The building boasts opportunities for artists, creative professionals, entrepreneurs and community members to take part in arts programming and events, all contributing to its a positive impact in downtown Rochester.



Stakeholders: AWH Architects, Benike Construction, Cameo at the Castle, Castle Community, Collective Books & Records, CRW Architecture + Design, Dunham, Electrical Solutions & Service, Harris, Merchants Bank, Queen City Coffee & Juice, Rochester Plumbing & Heating, Slifka & Sons Design Co., Threshold Arts, Wideth Smith Nolting, Yoga Tribe

STEP BY STEP

Rethos offers classes all year long that range from homewoner workshops to Old Home Certified courses for realtors. While teaching communities across the region how to care for their homes is our priority, our favorite takeaway only happens once the classes are over - when homeowners take what they learned and apply it to their own projects.

By Jessie Strasser

For 10 years I lounged on my front porch, dreaming of how to make it cozier and more put together. This summer, I accomplished my decade-long dream. In 2009 I purchased a 1916 four-square home with original wood work and some original windows. I knew very little about house maintenance but gathered knowledge through the years, with the ambition to learn more. The house was move-in ready and as I filled it with furniture that fit in with the space, the front porch became a space of leftover furniture. It had original windows and during the winter there would be frost on the inside, so annually I would put up the plastic window wrap, and after winter take it, and some paint, off the trim every spring, leaving behind splotchy paint and

tape residue.

Last summer I discovered Rethos (formerly the Preservation Alliance of Minnesota) and took a class about repairing old windows. It seemed like a good class to take to learn more about a part of my house that I knew needed to be dealt with at some point in the future. The hands-on class was great and I got a good foundation on how to remove windows, re-glaze them, and why it's better than buying new windows. That fall, I found my first piece of furniture that set me on my path to the porch renovation. It was a dark purple love seat at the Habitat for Humanity ReStore. It was the perfect color and size for my porch to replace the faded hand-me-down couch from college.

FROM HOUSE TO HOME



Jamila Williams attended our Rehab Lab Grab Bag in the fall of 2018 and learned how to re-rope double hung windows. A few months later, she hosted her own Rehab Lab Grab Bag to help others learn about window repair. The class also smoothed and painted a living room wall, which had lots of plaster irregularities. Jamila's house had been a rental property, and the prior owner ignored many basic maintenance issues. She is chipping away at these issues and turning the house into a home along the way.

Over the winter I dreamed more of my porch. I researched products and techniques. I bought more furniture from ReStore, and shades for the windows when there was a good sale online. In April I took two more classes from Rethos. One was another window class taught by a different instructor. I got to hear different perspectives, learn a few more techniques, and ask the additional questions that I had thought of during the winter. I also took a Lead Safety in the Home class. I learned how to renovate with minimal disruption to the lead paint I knew was on my porch, and even tips on general cleaning of the house to reduce lead contamination. I bought the HEPA vac and scraping tools from Amazon that the instructor had recommended in the class. Now I just had to wait for the weather to warm up!

Finally, in late April, I broke ground, figuratively. I cleared out all the furniture, vacuumed, and took some before pictures. I tend

From top: Beginning, middle, and finished project of Jessie's front porch rehab.





Porch Transformation

After taking a few of our classes, Jessie Strasser completely transformed her front porch. On the left is where it started, and on the right is the finished rehab!

to be very detail oriented and thorough, some say obsessive, so first I removed all the non-functional hooks and latches from old decorations and old windows treatments that had been painted over for decades. I got a few bloody knuckles from a sudden give in the screw, sending my hand crashing into the stucco. I was using a lead rated dust mask and Tyvek suit to prevent inhalation of lead dust and tracking it into the house during this step.

Many people had suggested sanding the bad spots of paint and then just painting over the lead paint to encapsulate it. They underestimated my drive to complete tedious work for the end result I wanted: total lead removal! Through Youtube I discovered chemical paint strippers that would enable me to remove lead paint without generating dust. The product I tested and decided to use was Peel Away 1, which I bought at my local Sherwin-Williams store. Then, every Saturday, plus an hour here or there on weeknights, starting in May and ending in late July, I chemically stripped the lead paint from 10 windows (7 storms and 3 original wood) and 2 door frames. I discovered the product worked great on wood that had lead paint as a base layer, but wood that never had lead paint was much more difficult to strip. I also discovered the original paint colors on

the windows were a dark brown and black combination!

In August I moved onto the next phase of the project. I got the new shades hung and they cooled my west facing porch by 10 degrees! I patched all the nail holes and dings from 100 years of wear and tear and life in the wood. My parents helped me sand and prime. For primer I used Lead Defender PRO from Home

I got the glazing tools both from my local store, Guse Hardware, as well as Nicollet Ace Hardware (I wore a few out). The glazing was rock hard and not even touching glass anymore in some places, so it was definitely time to be replaced. I removed all the old glazing from the 12 panes of glass before removing any glass, both for security and air-conditioning purposes.

Then one weekend, I removed all the glass (breaking some of course), then chipped out the rest of the old putty. I applied

Penetrol, from Guse Hardware, to the rabbet, as suggested by the Rethos instructors. Next, a layer of Nu-Puttie from Frattallone's Ace Hardware, followed by the glass and glazing points. Being the detail-oriented person that I am, I wanted to replace my broken wavy glass with similar wavy glass, which is not really made anymore. I asked around Facebook and Nextdoor and found that a local glass art shop, Glass Endeavors, may have the glass I desired.

I brought my broken pieces in. They had wavy glass, measured and cut it, and off I went. This process repeated every time I broke glass. Sadly, in the end, I replaced 6 out of the 12 panes of glass, mostly due to breaks occurring while pushing in the glazing points.

Next, I added my glazing of choice,

(Nu-Puttie) to the glass, sealing the rest of the joints, with occasional breaks to attend the state fair, throw two birthday parties, and get ready for the new school year! As a perfectionist, I found glazing to be a frustrating process. I couldn't get it perfect enough. When I was done, I painted over the glazing with an oil-based primer, and then painted with the same latex paint I had used on all the trim. The windows were done! I also caulked or used stucco patch compound on cracks and holes in the stucco on the porch walls.

I spent September and October working on the porch floor. It had many layers of lead floor paint. My wise mom suggested I put laminate over it and then the lead wouldn't be disturbed. But oh no, I had to eliminate the lead. So, I spent my September Saturdays using Peel Away 1 on the floor. Once all the paint was gone I was left with a decision: paint, or sand and finish as a wood floor. I really liked the grain of the wood and thought it would be really cool to have a finished

wood floor to go with my wood ceiling. I went to Pete's Hardwood Floors to rent the equipment and be taught how to sand and finish the floor. I came home, nervous and confident. I sanded an hour and the floors looked splotchy. I messaged Kadee from Pete's and she concluded that the paint stripper didn't get all the way down to bare wood. There was some layer of stain or varnish that I had to sand through. I sanded another hour or so before quitting, dejected.

The next day, Dad came to the rescue and sanded for many more hours. We checked out the results. It was still splotchy in many areas and he had sanded down nearly a quarter of an inch. I concluded that even if we could eventually sand through the splotches that we would never end up with that smooth finish for a natural wood look. Now what? Paint? It's now October and floor paint takes a long time to fully cure, especially at low temperatures. Mom suggested laminate again. "It could be done this

weekend," she emphasized.

So, we went to Lowes, looked at options, and talked to an employee. He said for wanting waterproof and the temperature range my porch would see we should look at vinyl planks. We chose the SMARTCORE Pro interlocking vinyl planks that were waterproof and warrantied for temperatures between -20 to 144 °F. It required no acclimation period and had a pad on the back of it, so we were able to install it all the next day. Dad also installed baseboards to cover the expansion gaps on the edges for a finished look.

Lastly, we installed storm windows over the three original windows so I wouldn't need to use the plastic wrap method ever again. We added furniture and celebrated with a pizza party. The project was finished before the first snowfall! Now I can just sit on my cozy porch and enjoy the fruits of my labor....next year.

PUT YOUR REHAB ON THE MAP

We want to hear from you.



After taking our class The Hearth: Maintaining a Chimney and Restoring a Painted Brick Fireplace, Heidi and John headed straight to the store for paint. Here is their finished, repainted fireplace! You can discover their process, materials, and tips by exploring our new project, On the Map.

Have you taken a class with us or completed a project that you want to share with others? Join homewoners like Jessie, Jamila, and Heidi and John by putting your rehab On the Map. Explore other rehab successes, learn tips and tricks from fellow DIYers, and discover where to source local materials!

Head to rethos.org/onthemap to submit your story and learn more about the project.



Patrons enjoy the atmosphere at the Bluenose Gopher, a cooperative pub that has become a community gathering point. UMD graduate Sarina Otaibi led the effort to open the Bluenose. (Photo courtesy of the Bluenose Gopher)

ALUM TAPS INTO HOMETOWN HISTORY

By Maggie Haslam

“If there were ever a town that should have a pub, it’s this one.”

Tonight, residents of Granite Falls, Minn., population 3,000, will hoist pints of Deer Brand Lager and Hop Dish IPA at the new Bluenose Gopher Public House to honor the 159th birthday of the establishment’s namesake: Congressman Andrew Volstead, former mayor, resident lawyer and notably, congressional sponsor of Prohibition, enacted 100 years ago this week.

Among the revelers chuckling at the irony will be UMD graduate Sarina Otaibi, who led the effort to open the

Bluenose. The brightly lit gathering spot with restored pressed tin walls takes its name from Volstead’s Capitol Hill moniker, a nod to his Minnesota heritage and upright morality. Its success since opening in April shows how history and place can inspire economic resurgence and community resilience at a time when rural small towns are seeing declines in population and income.

Otaibi, who earned her Master of Historic Preservation degree from Maryland in 2011, rallied more than 275

investors—family, friends and strangers—to restore a long-empty 19th-century former tap room on her hometown’s main street, originally a pre-Prohibition tap room. The stone building’s history, coupled with the town’s strong connection to Volstead, were irresistible; a pub made perfect sense. “If there were ever a town that should have a pub, it’s his one,” said Otaibi. “It’s really powerful for a public house, or any business, when you have that story behind it, and we had this really great story to tell.”

Otaibi has worked independently and as the rural programs manager for Rethos, the Preservation Alliance of Minnesota, to help small towns like Granite Falls reimagine, restore and reuse historic buildings and spaces. She personally restored seven of them, including the 19th-century church where her grandmother was married. At Rethos, she helps coordinate efforts to

revitalize small-town main streets and promote economic growth. Otaibi believes that these projects preserve not just brick and mortar, but the centuries of stories that define a community’s identity and strengthen its social fabric.

The Bluenose is one of only a few cooperative public houses in the country, where the members own and operate it together. It’s reminiscent of Volstead’s other claim to fame, the Capper-Volstead Act, which allows small farms to form cooperatives for producing and marketing their agricultural products. The model is sometimes seen in food markets, but rarely in other retail or service industries. Otaibi sees it as a viable option for small communities.

“We’re hoping that this creates a model that other small communities can replicate, maybe for the café that they lost or another business they

want to keep going,” she said. “Because it is community supported, it can be sustained for the long term.”

Melissa Peterson and her husband, who live 20 miles away in Clara City, got involved in the Bluenose two years ago after seeing a flyer seeking co-op investors and volunteers willing to donate sweat equity. The hands-on restoration process and groundswell of community support resonated so deeply, they bought a house and are moving to Granite Falls in two weeks. “The Bluenose project was a really neat thing to be a part of and gave us a sense of ownership,” Peterson said. “We’ve felt more wanted and welcome in Granite Falls than any other community we’ve ever been.”

Interim Dean of Architecture, Planning and Preservation Don Linebaugh said Otaibi’s “determined

“IT’S REALLY POWERFUL FOR A PUBLIC HOUSE, OR ANY BUSINESS, WHEN YOU HAVE THAT STORY BEHIND IT, AND WE HAD THIS REALLY GREAT STORY TO TELL.”

energy to create wonderful places” at the Bluenose and elsewhere is something for the school to take pride in.

“Sarina took her degree from Maryland back to her community in Minnesota to do good, and her amazing work on the preservation and activation of small-town main streets demonstrates her commitment to creating great communities to live, work and play,” he said.

Part of Otaibi’s inspiration to create a cooperative public house in Granite Falls, according to Linebaugh, was her experience studying pubs in England during an experience studying abroad with the preservation program in Yorkshire, England. Just as pubs have taken the role of communal “third places” in that country, the Bluenose is also community-focused, complete with regular live music, Minnesota-grown beer and wine, a wall of board



Sarina Otaibi, Rethos Rural Programs Manager and owner of Bluenose Gopher Public House.

games and a kids’ menu; beyond being a nice place for people to meet, it has quickly become an economic asset to a once-sleepy downtown.

“Thirty years ago, Granite Falls was a really vibrant and bustling community, but then people

started leaving to go to bigger cities,” said Peterson. “Places like the Bluenose are a reason to stay and even come to these small towns, instead of a place to grow up and leave. People are coming in from the bigger cities and neighboring towns to eat and listen to music. I’ve heard people say that it’s the first time they’ve seen cars parked downtown after 3 p.m. in years.” She suspects that if Volstead were around today, he’d approve of the new co-op in town.

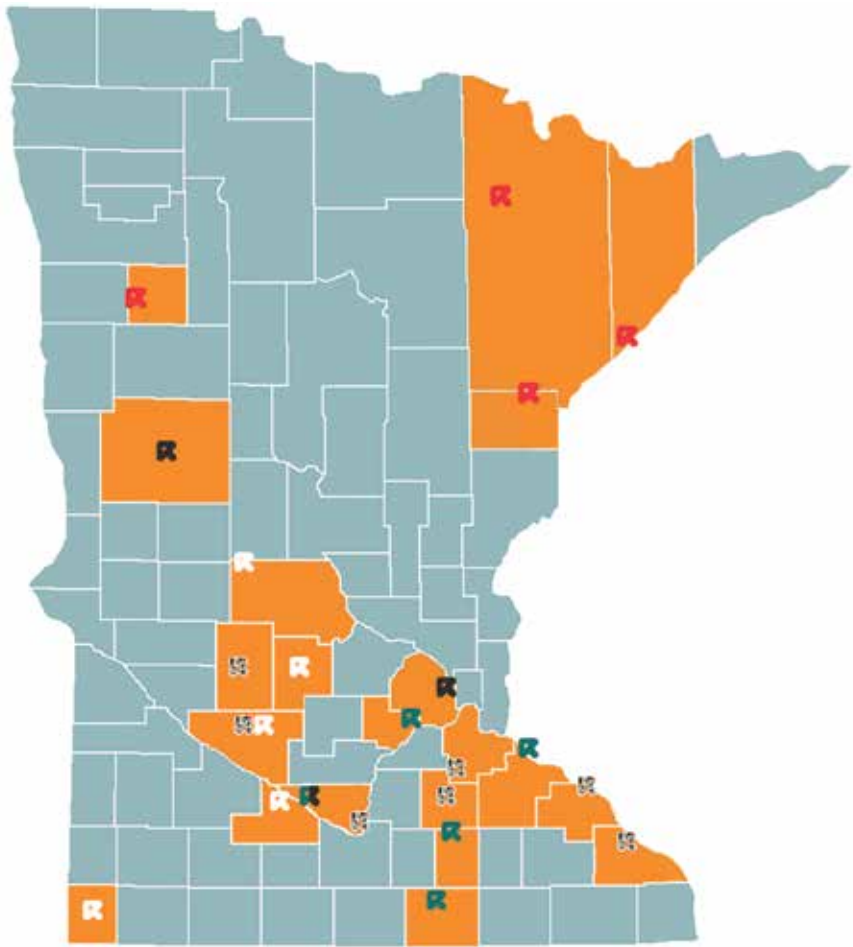
“From the beginning, the community piece has been our mission,” said Otaibi. “I think [Volstead] would have been very proud of it. He would probably be one of our most loyal customers.”

This article was originally published in Maryland Today. It is reprinted here with permission from the original publication.



RURAL PROGRAMS

Rethos Main Streets  Artists on Main Street  Community Engagement








As a Main Street America™ Coordinating Program, Rethos Main Streets helps to lead a powerful, grassroots network consisting of over 40 Coordinating Programs and over 1,200 neighborhoods and communities across the country committed to creating high-quality places and to building stronger communities through preservation-based economic development.

ARTISTS ON MAIN STREET

Artists on Main Street, a program of Rethos Main Streets, explores how the arts help address the challenges affecting Main Street communities today.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Our Downtown Assesment service helps you develop a plan to change the way people think and talk about your downtown by tapping into local wisodm and uncovering your community's distinct assets.

-  Network Community
-  Downtown Assesment Community
-  Artists on Main Street Community
-  Designated Community
-  Designated Community and Artists on Main Street Community

DESIGNATED COMMUNITIES			NETWORK COMMUNITIES	
Albert Lea	Northfield	Shakopee	Bird Island	Sauk Centre
Faribault	Owatonna	Wabasha	Litchfield	Sleepy Eye
Mankato	Olivia	Willmar	Luverne	
New Ulm	Red Wing	Winona		
ARTISTS ON MAIN STREET COMMUNITIES			DOWNTOWN ASSESMENTS	
			New Ulm	
Faribault	Olivia	Cook	Otter Tail County	
Mankato	Wabasha	Mahnomen	Cedar Riverside, Minneapolis	
Winona	Willmar	Two Harbors	Elliot Park, Minneapolis	
Northfield	Cloquet		Logan Park, Minneapolis	
			Whittier, Minneapolis	



RETHOS MAIN STREETS: 2020 WORKSHOPS & EDUCATION

Our Rethos Main Streets: Minnesota communities are constantly working on their own downtown districts and can run into challenges that make them feel isolated. That's why we make an effort to hold regular virtual and in-person gatherings and trainings for our Main Street Directors and volunteers all over the state, so they can come together and grow from their shared experiences. In 2019 we've had 250+ attend Rethos Main Streets: Minnesota workshops and trainings.

What kind of trainings do we host?

- Regular in-person meetings for Main Street Directors to network and learn
- Considering Main Street Workshops for communities new to the Main Street Approach, and are contemplating bringing it to their historic downtown
- Main Street Directors and Rethos Staff attend the national Main Street Now conference annually each spring
- Main Street Basic Trainings teach the Main Street approach to communities new to the Main Street Network, as well as new volunteers in existing Main Street programs
- We work with our local Main Streets to bring speakers and topics that are relevant and timely for them.

In 2019 our workshops highlighted second story and effective mixed use development, business succession planning, ADA Compliance, façade workshops, and legislative action.

What do you YOU want to learn in 2020? We're currently creating our Main Street education calendar and would love to hear from you. Email emily@rethos.org with questions or suggestions.



Welcome, Albert Lea!

“I like things that are old, lived-in, and comfy,” laughed Tami Staker. “That’s why I love downtown Albert Lea.”

Staker, self-described Chief Finder of Fun Stuff and owner of Whimzy, is one of the key volunteers who led efforts to get Albert Lea designated as the latest Rethos Main Streets: Minnesota Community.

Albert Lea is no stranger to the benefits of Main Street. For years, volunteers, city and chamber staff have been attending Main Street workshops and conferences. However, with renewed interest in development in their

historic downtown, the timing was right for these separate entities in Albert Lea to come together. “I’m excited for the opportunity to have multiple organizations that work on economic development to have one framework to unite under,” stated Jerry Gabrielto, City Manager for Albert Lea. “It’s fortuitous that we received our Main Street designation the same week that the Albert Lea Economic Development Agency and the Albert Lea-Freeborn County Chamber

of Commerce moved under one roof downtown. It’s my hope that we can now double the momentum that’s already in downtown, and help the individuals and business owners who have been leading the charge for years.”

Albert Lea, the county seat of Freeborn County, is located in south central Minnesota, just off the intersections of I-90 and I-35. With a population of approximately 18,000, Albert Lea is a regional hub, boasts beautiful lakes, and has been noted as one of the “Top 10 affordable small towns where you’d actually want to live” by Realtor.com. With a Mayo Clinic health system as one of the top employers in the community, residents have great access to local healthcare, a strong school district, and vibrant outdoor recreation. Combine that with a beautiful downtown historic district, and you’ve got a community primed for new revitalization efforts.

“Downtown has swung back around after the malling of America. It’s so nice to see the emphasis is changing to look at what we have again,” noted Teresa Kaufmann, Public Information Coordinator for the City of Albert Lea. “Retail is coming back, especially after the streetscape work we did, and we already have less empty buildings than we did prior to that project.” The streetscape project was thorough—bump outs, flower pots,

wider sidewalks, and more pedestrian friendly areas—and has primed downtown Albert Lea for new energy.

A great example of the new energy in downtown Albert Lea is Mortarr, an online inspiration gallery and networking platform for commercial construction and design, purchased and renovated the Freeborn Bank Building which had been vacant for nearly 20 years. Interchange Wine & Coffee Bistro, next door to Mortarr, has been actively planning themed evening events. Albert Lea opened up their food truck ordinance, and downtown has seen a surge of people attend their summer music series. An apartment building was recently purchased in the downtown and is being remodeled, which will bring new residents to downtown.

“It’s exciting for us to be able to reframe the conversation about downtown. With the Main Street approach, we’re going to be able to have new conversations about how we’re using our old spaces, and how we can revitalize them for future generations,” said Liz Johnson, Interim Director at the Chamber for Main Street. Liz attended high school in Albert Lea, but left for years and returned only a few months ago. “I’m excited to work with other Main Street Communities. Their ideas can spark ideas for us, and building those relationships to find out how Main

Street is going to work best for Albert Lea is something I’m looking forward to.”

Rethos Main Streets provides communities with a framework to define and execute their downtown economic development strategy. When asked why the time was right for the Main Street program in Albert Lea, Tami Staker said, “We’re seeing people start to believe in downtown again. With all the great work happening, it’s time to add value with the Main Street program to the collaboration between the city and the business community. Becoming a Main Street community isn’t an easy or quick decision, but it’s an important one. It requires multiple entities from within a city to come together, form a plan, define the district, and prove that their efforts toward downtown are united. It takes months of planning and review, and is then approved by a committee with annual reviews taking place through self-evaluations and partnership visits each year.

These efforts show a community’s dedication to downtown revitalization and reimagining, and we at Rethos are thrilled that we can now count Albert Lea among the ranks of the Rethos Main Streets: Minnesota communities.

Far Left: Fountain Music Series, every Thursday in downtown Albert Lea. Left: Festival in downtown Albert Lea. Right: New Freeborn Bank Building in downtown Albert Lea.





A CUT ABOVE

Barbers and hairstylists are a necessity. People need haircuts, regularly, and it's no secret that stylists act as unofficial life coaches, counselors and sounding boards. It takes more than skill with scissors to run a barber shop, and Sergio Fuentes is just fine with that.

Sergio is originally from Tezoyuca Morelos, Mexico, and always loved being around barber shops and salons. His mother ran a salon, and he loved spending time there. However, his dad told him he needed to go to college. "He wanted me to become a lawyer, something that would be helpful to our family," Sergio recalled. But after a year, Sergio

wasn't happy. He knew what he wanted to do, and that was hair. Sergio enrolled in cosmetology school, and got his license, which was good in Mexico as well as the United States. With violence around him, Sergio decided it was time to come to the US. He went first to Chicago, because he knew someone there. He'd work odd jobs, cut hair in his apartment, anything to make it work. After some time, he

returned to Mexico, but at the suggestion of a friend decided to try Minnesota. "I chose Willmar because it's a quiet town. It made me feel at home." Sergio put down roots, which went even deeper when he got married, had his sons, and became a legal U.S. Citizen.

Sergio's path to opening a downtown business wasn't a straight line. After arriving in Willmar, he continued to do hair out of his home, and soon became involved in teaching at a barber school in St. Cloud. "I liked teaching, I liked working with students, sharing my knowledge and giving them encouragement." His skills were so valued that soon Sergio had taken over the barber school. While he loved students and teaching, he learned after a few years that he didn't love the added duties that came with running a school, and he wanted to do what he loved the most—cut hair. He knew he wanted to open up his own shop, a place where people could feel comfortable, especially because finding a hair salon that could cater to the different needs of people moving to Willmar from other countries was difficult.

"My favorite part of owning a business is that I'm my own boss, but I also like that I get to work with people." It's clear that Sergio's love for hair is more about people than what's on their head. "If people can't pay the full price, it's ok. If someone I know needs some help this month, I try to help them. I want to give advice and support to people who are just starting out, too." When referencing a former student at the barber school, Sergio noted that he wanted to help him open his own barber shop close by. "I don't think of it as competition," he commented. "There's enough

business to go around, and I want to help people as much as I can." Sergio's expertise is clear on the heads of his customers. In fact, he has people drive from the Twin Cities and further just for him to cut their hair. "It's hard for people to find barbers and stylist to cut your hair when you're not white. I want to help people feel at home here, and having a place to get your hair cut is important. I'm honored that people come to me." A man of devout faith, Sergio credits his success

"IF PEOPLE CAN'T PAY THE FULL PRICE, IT'S OK. IF SOMEONE I KNOW NEEDS SOME HELP THIS MONTH, I TRY TO HELP THEM. I WANT TO GIVE ADVICE AND SUPPORT TO PEOPLE WHO ARE JUST STARTING OUT, TOO."

and accomplishments on his devout faith in God. It's clear when he shares his story that faith is central to his journey, and he would not be where he is today without it.

Sergio opened Royal Cutz Barbershop on Litchfield Avenue in Willmar on March 1, 2019. When asked, "Why downtown?", Sergio says, "It's a good place to start a business, because there is diversity in the people. I wanted to be part of the diversity of the different downtown businesses, and help grow the economy of downtown." While he's a new business owner in Willmar, growing up with a mom who ran a salon helped to make his work easier. "I grew up watching her take care of people, and that's what I wanted to do. I knew I could open a business if I ran it like she did. She's so proud and excited that I chose to do this work. She's always sharing my photos and commenting on my social media posts."

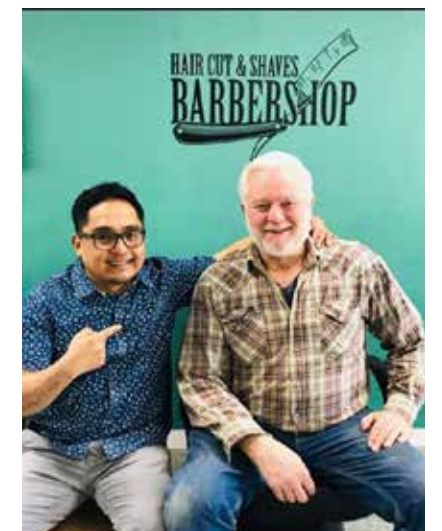
Although it's a brand new business, Royal Cutz is already making a name for itself, not just for the fantastic hair, but for the work and partnership in creating in a historic building.

Sergio connected quickly with Sarah Swedburg, Willmar Main Street Director and Assistant City Planner. "Royal Cutz Barbershop has not only filled a need for a professional barbershop serving a diverse clientele in downtown Willmar, but they have created a wonderful third space located on one of our busiest downtown streets. Sergio is using his space to not only give great haircuts, but also share his story, space, & relationships with local community members to encourage their dreams of starting or growing their businesses and making our community a better place to

be," says Swedburg. On the topic of Main Street, Sergio adds, "Main Street has been so helpful to me. It's brought resources and a flow of people to my business."

Main Street districts in Minnesota are changing, and with new business owners like Sergio in the mix, we can be sure the growth is positive, exciting, and, most of all, focused on the people.

Below: Sergio with a customer at his barbershop in downtown Willmar, MN. Left, Cover Photo: Exterior of Royal Cutz Barbershop.



Left: Jason Gamoke, owner of Morgan's Jewelers. Right: Storefront of Morgan's in downtown Winona.



A GENERATIONAL GEM



How can you tell that Jason Gamoke of Morgan's Jewelers loves his business in downtown Winona? "If someone told me tomorrow that they would pay to pick me up and move me anywhere else, I wouldn't do it. There's no other place that we'd be more successful." That's a big statement for a small business, and one with an incredibly long history in downtown.

Morgan's Jewelers opened in 1862, and while it's had three homes (namely, on the old Morgan Block) it's always been in downtown Winona, and has only ever been run by two families: the Morgans, who owned and operated it for three generations, and now Jason's family: his step-father, Jim Anderson, who purchased the business when approached by the Morgan family in 1978, Jason, who started working in the store in 1995 and purchased the business from Jim in June 2017, and his son Hunter, who has recently started working in the store. If you're counting,

"IF SOMEONE TOLD ME TOMORROW THAT THEY WOULD PAY TO PICK ME UP AND MOVE ME ANYWHERE ELSE, I WOULDN'T DO IT."

that's two families with three generations each—a pretty impressive accomplishment in a historic downtown! Jason didn't plan to take over the family business. Although he grew up in the Winona area he planned on moving somewhere bigger, to be off and gone, maybe as a pilot. After attending college and working jobs in landscaping and construction, Jason's son was born, and his moving plans changed. However, Morgan's was still not

part of his plan. Then one day, Jim called him up. "I've got a question for you," Jason laughed recalling the conversation where Jim asked him to consider joining the team at the store. "He told me he'd give me time to think it over. He asked me on a Saturday and said he'd check back in on Monday for an answer, so my time to think it over was only one day." And that was that. Jason was hooked. Jason and Jim still work on jewelry themselves in their store. In fact, decades ago Jim trained as a watchmaker in Switzerland and plans to

Far Right: Morgan's Jewelers staff outside of their storefront in downtown Winona. Right: Original Morgan Block in downtown Winona, 1862. Photo Credit: Winona County Historical Society



attend his watchmaking class reunion next year. "Not a day goes by where I don't learn something new. The industry is fun. Being downtown is great." But the best part for Jason? "Selling engagement rings to generations of a family is incredible. To have someone walk in and say 'my parents got their rings here, and we knew we had to come to you,' well, that makes you feel like you're doing something right."

Being in the heart of downtown Winona for generations means that the folks at Morgan's Jewelers have seen first-hand the changes that have come to downtowns over the years. Despite urban renewal, they've kept their place, and their historic building in downtown with no intentions of leaving. An active partner with the Winona Main Street Program and a direct view onto the Third Street business district, Jason can see the uptick in traffic in recent years. "The consistency that Main Street and events and festivals have brought to downtown is so important. Sweet Stroll, Holiday shopping events (both Winona Main Street events), Shut Down Third Street (an Artists on Main Street project), plus things like the Steamboat Days car show have all been great additions. And it's not just the special events, it's the stores, the Levee Park renovations, all of it coming together has made for a consistent increase in traffic."

While it might seem that a jewelry store has a narrow audience, Jason's mindset about downtown events is "more is more." "I don't care if someone comes in to buy something. We try to participate on Third Thursdays [Winona's monthly downtown open late night], and we want everyone to stop by, even if they're not jewelry shopping. We encourage them to check out everything that is happening." That being said, Morgan's has added great options for lower-budget shoppers on Third Thursdays and beyond. With their vintage and estate jewelry trunk shows, free ring cleaning during outdoor events, sip and shop and more, they're constantly finding new ways to stay involved in downtown. Jason supports many, many non-profits, can regularly be seen at events in and out of downtown Winona, and has even been spotted doing extra snow removal from neighbor

businesses and cross-walks in the winter, Not only does he talk about how important it is to be a team player in your downtown, he walks the walk, and is excited about it.

Morgan's Jewelers is located in a historic building, and that gives them much of their identity. "I'm not into following trends," Jason noted. "Sure, I'll update floors or walls, but I keep my old fixtures and cases. That's part of who we are. Our identity isn't going to change." The approach to their building is the same as their approach to their business, and is a testament to the value they have brought and continue to bring to downtown Winona.

When asked how he feels about working and owning a business in a historic downtown, Jason said, "I feel lucky. It's not to work here. It's where I grew up, and learned how to treat customers and talk to people. That's the fun part."



Gamoke, owner of Morgan's Jewelers, working with customers behind the counter. Gamoke says one of his favorite parts of the jewelry business is selling engagement rings to generations of a family.

ARTISTS ON MAIN STREET



Artists on Main Street is a program by Rethos in partnership with Springboard for the Arts, with support from the Bush Foundation.

ANNOUNCING THE

2020 ARTISTS ON MAIN STREET COMMUNITIES

CLOQUET
COOK

MAHNOMEN
TWO HARBORS



Rethos' Rural Programs is thrilled to announce the third cohort of communities in the Artists on Main Street Program. This is the first year that opened the application process to include communities beyond just the Rethos Main Streets: Minnesota network. We were surprised and impressed to receive 39 applications from communities all over the state. It's abundantly clear that creative placemaking works, and communities want to bring the Artists on Main Street program to their downtowns. The 2020 Artists on Main Street selection panel was made up of representatives from Rethos, Springboard for the Arts, PlaceBase Productions, the Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board, and the Rethos Main Streets network.

These four new communities will receive funding, training, and program support to activate ideas from their local artists and creative people to address challenges in their downtowns in 2020 and 2021. They join the 2018 community cohort of Faribault, Mankato, and Winona, and the 2019 community cohort of Northfield, Olivia, Wabasha, and Willmar.

Artists on Main Street is a multi-year program which provides funding to artists to directly address challenges in historic downtowns. Staff from Rethos and Springboard for the Arts spend time in each community, providing training in Creative Placemaking for local leaders, artists, and residents with creative ideas to make positive physical, economic and social impacts.

In the coming months, local cohort communities will announce dates and more information on training, project funding, and deadlines. Congratulations to the 2020 Artists on Main Street Cohort!

From top: Cloquet, Cook, Mahanomen, Two Harbors. These four communities will join the Artists on Main Street program in 2020. Photo credit to local city government sources.

WILLMAR



City Center

ACTIVATION

Artists on Main Street programs can be housed in or supported by a number of different entities. Some are with non-profits or volunteer run organizations and some are placed in city government, as is the case in Willmar, MN. Situating the programs within different organizational structures can offer a host of unique challenges, expectations, difficulties, and levels of support. Willmar has used their placement in city government to utilize Artists on Main as a way to activate space throughout downtown in order to

draw people in and change their perception of what it means to interact with the downtown area.

Having your Artists on Main program situated within the city means that the city becomes the overseeing entity for all projects. According to Willmar Main Street Director Sarah Swedburg this process involves assembling a task force of community members, key stakeholders, artists, and business owners to help decide on how to properly execute the projects. While this system may seem arduous,

Swedburg says that being rooted in the city government provides easier access to departments that are usually involved in setting up or putting on the projects, such as public works. Though she does acknowledge that there is a preexisting bias to being in the government she believes that the work has spoken for itself and people have been wildly pleased.

Willmar has multiple downtown events every year, but after the events finish people tend to go home without much interest in staying downtown. In order to combat the flight out of downtown Swedburg and her team set out to create more everyday gathering spaces in downtown Willmar, with the hope that people will not only stick around but find places to sit and gather daily.

One of the most successful projects for activating space is the Welcome Bubble Station. The station is situated in a private parking lot beside the sidewalk and is adorned with plants, mosaic columns, fun chairs, and colorful elements that draw passerbys into the space. This accessible space works to provide lounging for those on lunch, walking around with a friend, having coffee, or for teenagers looking for a place to go. Swedburg stresses the diversity of these projects, in that she wants to make the spaces inclusive to people of all ages, country of origin, or race. With the hope being that such inclusion will allow people to reach beyond the imaginary lines that divide us to create a better connected community.

Willmar's Front Porch Sing Along event is another instance of utilizing downtown space to bring a diversity of people together under a shared love for the town. The event was born out of the InCommon composer in residence Kashimana Ahua creating a Willmar songbook. Through a series of workshops with diverse participants Kashimana created a songbook of 26 songs written by the people of Willmar. Once the songbook was completed, a concert was held on the front porch of the Unitarian Universalist Church, complete with a community meal. The event drew around 100 people.

Swedburg sees it as a huge success. Part of her goal in the project is to show how easy it is to activate space, share in an experience, and that no matter how many people show up, as long as they have fun, momentum will build.

Other projects used traditional routes in more well defined space to draw people out. A photography

exhibit was hung in a coffee shop downtown that deals with the idea of diversity. This includes a notebook for community reflections as well as an online component. At the local Presbyterian church a sewing group, Sewing Together, was formed. Sewing Together were staunch in their declaration that they did not want to deter anyone from a different religion to join the group. The result was a diverse cohort of people learning to sew together. The group spawned new and previously unlikely friendships who can be seen having ice cream and dinner together downtown. Another project was a community mural that consisted of multiple mobile mural pieces that will eventually be placed on buildings downtown. These paint-by-number murals were painted by community members during a series of sessions during the Rockin' Robins music festival in Willmar.

These are only a few of the many examples of how Willmar is activating space in expected and unexpected ways to bring people downtown. Utilizing space in this way creates a spontaneity that Swedburg says makes people look at downtown differently. Citizens are excited about fun things to stumble upon and businesses are looking for ways to engage local artists within their own spaces. A main hope of Swedburg's was to show the community what is possible when you don't have a ton of resources and unlimited money. In the end she thinks they did just that by getting back to the core of their original mission - to very simply create and uplift spaces for community members to gather.

Cover photo, far left: Performance at Welcome Bubble Station. Below: Creation of Welcome Bubble Station. The Artists on Main Street project gives the community a space to enjoy, whether at lunch or simply exploring the city.



WABASHA

*Randi Campbell
in her studio. Her
Artists on Main
Street project
interpreted
Wabasha's theme
of perspective
as a single word:
moments.*



“SHARE A MOMENT WITH ME”

If someone were to ask you to choose one word when thinking about your hometown what would it be? For Wabasha artist Randi Campbell that word was moments.

At an Artists on Main Street cohort convening in Wabasha, the theme to work with was perspective. As Randi Campbell thought on how to convey a variety of perspectives with only one word, inspiration struck. “Moments,” said Campbell. “Share a moment with me.”

Over the next few months she

would begin collecting stories of impactful moments from residents in Wabasha, a town of just over 2,000 people. At first her expectation was that she would get short answers from people, maybe just a few words on a place or specific memory. That quickly turned out not to be the case

as people began sharing full paragraphs of vulnerabilities, triumphs, defeats, and thoughtful reflections. As Campbell wandered about Wabasha approaching people at random during festivals, during the town’s music under the bridge series, and just walking down the street, momentum began to grow.

from the youth of Wabasha to community elders, a sense of shared experiences around the natural and built environments, as well as intangible features like the safety and familiarity of home.

Each story was then coated with beeswax and assembled into a quilted

“AROUND TOWN SHE WOULD HEAR PEOPLE TALKING ABOUT THE PROJECT, ASKING WHAT STORIES THEIR FIRENDS TOLD...”

Around town she would hear people talking about the project, asking what stories their friends told or ruminating on the project as a whole. Wabasha Main Street Director Mary Flicek reflects that eventually people would approach Campbell, exclaiming that she didn’t have their story yet and it was time to share!

Initially a little over 280 stories were collected, with multiple generations and stories represented by people as young as 2 and as old as 80. While the content of the moments varied, Campbell thinks that the project has opened dialogue among the participants and the community at large. She sees a sense of shared history throughout the stories. There is a collective memory running through the moments that establishes a continuity

book form that would be placed into a decorated suitcase, allowing the project to travel around town. The process of assembly and the materials used are drawn from multiple sources throughout the artist’s life. Her decision to use a story quilt as the form was inspired by the story quilts her mother used to make, a process that Campbell took up during graduate school. Using this form allowed her to practice a theme that is central to the project and her work as a whole; staying rooted in the present while looking to your past to learn and better inform yourself moving forward.

Randi then took the quilted book pages and combined them into a suitcase. This way the stories of Wabasha could travel around town.

Randi took each story that she collected and transformed them into a quilted book.





2020

Rethos is preparing for the 2020 Legislative session by considering a number of policy positions and taking input from some of our key stakeholders. The summary of our Legislative agenda will be finalized by the end of 2019, well in advance of the first day of the Legislative session on February 11, 2020. Following are some of the issues we plan to address:

Historic Tax Credit

As it was during the past two sessions, our top priority will be advocating for the Minnesota Historic Tax Credit. This credit, which is an essential tool for financing the rehabilitation of vacant and underutilized buildings across Minnesota, is due to sunset on June 30, 2021. If the Minnesota Legislature fails to extend the HTC well in advance of the sunset date, it will have a dampening effect

on the kinds of rehabilitation projects that been shown to have a significant economic impact in communities both large and small.

Rethos Main Streets

We will continue to build awareness and recognition of the Rethos Main Streets program at the State Capitol. We have heard from an increasing number of communities that want to bring this program to their downtowns with the support

of Rethos. Interest in the program has far surpassed the available funding, part of which comes through the Heritage Preservation Partnerships Legacy grant program. We will hold our third-annual Main Streets at the Capitol day on Tuesday, March 10, 2020. Plan to come to Saint Paul to advocate for downtown revitalization and to celebrate the 10 year anniversary of our Main Street program.

Capital Investment Funding

You will probably hear a lot about the "bonding bill" during the coming Legislative session. Even-numbered years have traditionally been designated as the time when the Legislature decides how much to borrow to fund capital improvement projects for state and locally owned buildings and infrastructure, including roads, bridges, and wastewater treatment facilities. State agencies and local municipalities have submitted their preliminary requests, and members of the House and Senate Capital Investment committees, as well as the Governor and members of his staff, have been taking bonding tours throughout the Fall to visit the proposed project sites. Several historic buildings have requested state bonding dollars, and we will monitor the discussion around those assets carefully in the months ahead.

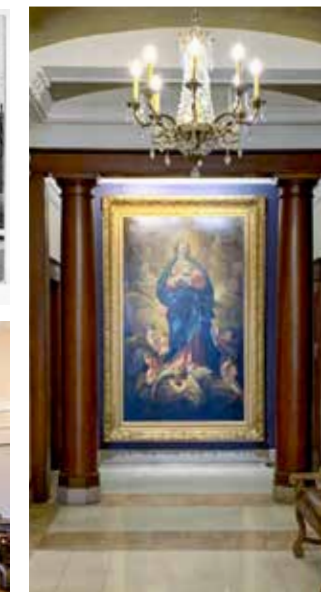


Housing and Sustainability

Rethos also keeps tabs on a number of other issues related to building reuse and community revitalization, both to promote sound policies and to be aware of potential negative impacts. Housing affordability will continue to be a major topic of conversation around the Capitol. Rethos is an endorsing member of the Homes for All coalition, and we believe building reuse and rehabilitation are important strategies in meeting the housing needs in communities of all sizes. Building reuse, renovation, and weatherization are also important in helping communities become more resilient to the impacts of climate change. Rethos is part of Minnesota GreenStep Cities, a statewide program that is a partnership between a number of state agencies and non-profit organizations, including the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency and Department of Commerce, the League of Minnesota Cities, and the Great Plains Institute, among others. In this role, we pay attention to bills and hearings at the Capitol that address demolition waste, energy usage, climate change response, and other issues of sustainability and community planning.

You can keep informed about our policy initiatives by signing up to receive our update emails during the Legislative session. Subscribe by following the link on our website and clicking the Policy Updates box next to Newsletter Subscription Preference.

The newly reopened Celeste Saint Paul is one of the many projects made possible by affirmative legislation on the issues outlined above. Left: Exterior. Middle Top: Original building, 1909. Middle Bottom: Chapel. Right: Hotel hallway.



BY THE NUMBERS:

INVESTMENT PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

The ins and outs of Rethos' Investment Partnership program aren't always the easiest to understand...but understanding the impact that these projects have across the region is as simple as 1-2-3.



Over the 8 years since Rethos launched its investment partnership program, we have partnered with 40 projects as a state historic tax credit investor. Originally developed and implemented in Minnesota, we've expanded our program into other states with historic tax credits in order to further our mission of reimagining historic assets in the region.

The program's regional presence has impacted communities in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, Kansas, and Texas. As one of many financing options for our partners, we are proud of our ability to maximize the value of the state's investment by lessening federal tax burden and encouraging rehabilitation and adaptive reuse.

Top Left: Hotel President, Waterloo, IA. Bottom Left: Canopy by Hilton Minneapolis Mill District, Interior Restaurant, Minneapolis, MN, 2019 MPA Honor Award Winner. Bottom Right: Press House Apartments, Apartment Living Room, Saint Paul, MN 2019 MPA Impact Award Winner.

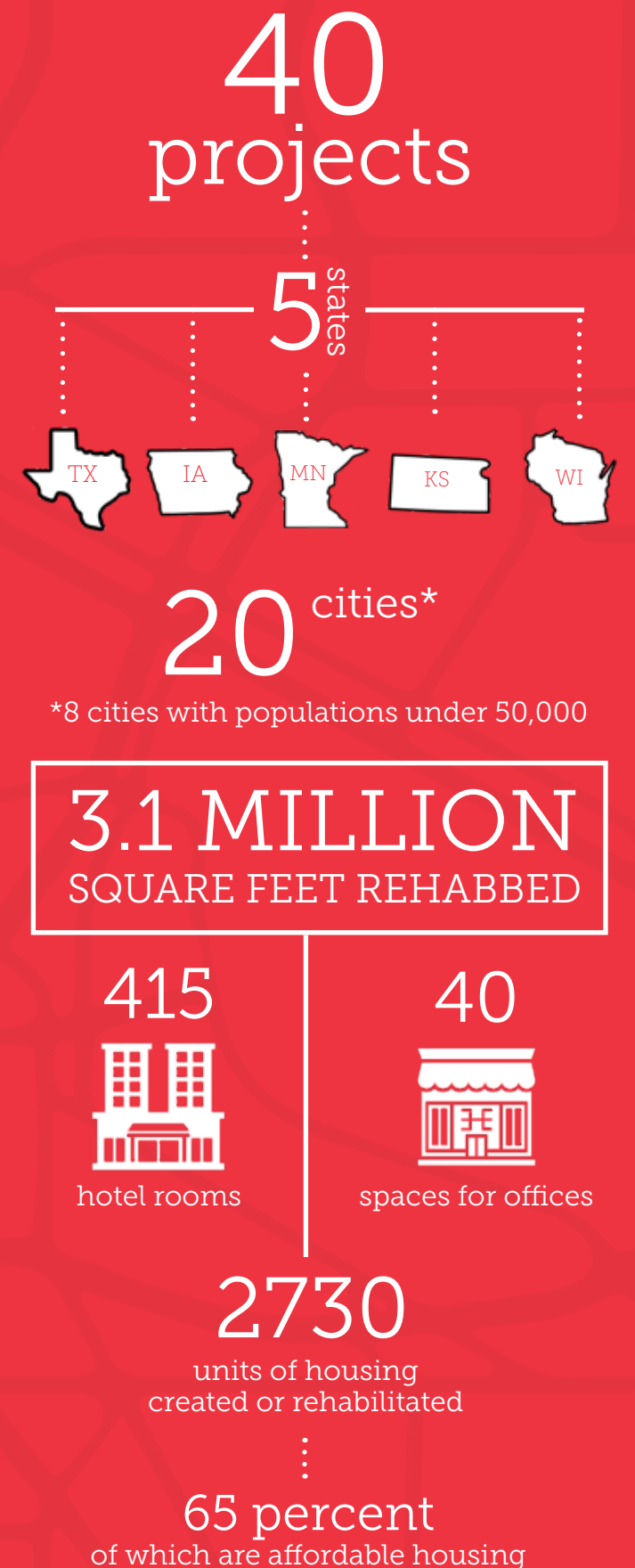


Keg and Case Market West 7th Street is a 2019 MPA Impact Award Winner. Craig Cohen accepted the award at the Rethos Annual Benefit on October 3rd. Top Left: Sweet Science. Top Right: Hobby Farmer. Bottom: Keg and Case Interior First Floor.

Rethos' 40 projects have revived over 3.1 million square feet of historic buildings in 20 different cities in 5 states. 8 of these cities have populations under 50,000 people. 2,730 units of housing were either preserved or created through these projects, with 65% of those having an affordable component. In addition, 415 new hotel units, 200,000 square feet of office space, and space for 40 businesses were renewed or created. While our partners have made tremendous impacts in their respective communities, Rethos has been able to expand the reach of our education program across state lines into Wisconsin as a direct result of these partnerships.

Our unique investment partnership program supports our mission to reimagine places. The local and regional developers we partner with are working to identify and reuse old buildings for their communities. All of us at Rethos are excited about the projects our partners have undertaken. We pride ourselves in being an affordable piece of the funding pie, while ensuring old buildings are renewed, jobs are created, and communities are supported through housing, businesses, and active places.

Head to rethos.org/investment-partnerships to learn more about all of our Investment Partnership Projects.



PLACES REIMAGINED

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PUT YOUR REHAB ON THE MAP

We want to hear
from you.



After taking a Wood Floors Basics Workshop in 2017, Gibson and CJ Stanton took to their own floors for a little rehab magic. Looking to refresh your own wood floors? Submit your story and connect with homeowners working on similar projects in your area.

Have you taken a class with us or completed a project that you want to share with others? Join homeowners like the Stantons by putting your rehab On the Map. Explore other rehab successes, learn tips and tricks from fellow DIYers, and discover where to source local materials!

Head to rethos.org/onthemap to submit your story and learn more about the project.