



# 2023 Year End Review

We had a lot of fun during this busy year in the Colfax Main Street District! Our volunteers and staff worked with our local business partners and the City of Colfax on projects and activities designed to propel Downtown Colfax's economic and physical revitalization. We believe our job is to help Downtown Colfax be a great place to live, to visit, and become a place our community can be proud of!

The purpose of this year-end annual report is to highlight and celebrate our Downtown community's accomplishments, communicate our program's strategies for transformation, and act as a call to action for our community to volunteer!

Our local volunteers accomplished a lot in 2023! This year, our program hosted a handful of local events that had record attendances, such as the Downtown Colfax Halloween Walk and Colfax Country Christmas. Colfax was on the route for RAGBRAI in late July and 40,000-60,000 bike riders through town on a sweltering 90 degree morning in July. Our program also won another major award this year at Main Street Iowa's Development Awards. Downtown Colfax had new businesses open; such as a long-awaited coffee shop and a nutrition drink bar. Our local volunteers made the Downtown beautiful by creating a hanging flower basket project, taking care of flower planters, and decorating for the seasons. Currently and through out 2024, our program's staff and board have begun and will be working on the process of re-evaluating our program's mission, vision, and goals and how we assess 'success' for our program as Main Street America's accreditation standards will be changing for their programs in the next few years. We hope that process brings about positive change to our program and will create future successes for Downtown Colfax.

We'd like to end 2023 and begin 2024 on a note of gratitude to all of our local volunteers, The City of Colfax, Downtown Colfax business and property owners, and other local Colfax organizations; thank you for all your help and investment in making Downtown Colfax a great place! We appreciate your efforts in keeping our historic business district alive and vibrant!



## Who is Colfax Main Street?

**Colfax Main Street, INC** is a volunteer led non-profit organization committed to the revitalization of the historic Downtown Colfax business district. This revitalization is centered around promoting historic preservation and good design; engaging events and community promotion; small business support and development; and fundraising and local volunteer development. Colfax Main Street is in partnership with **Main Street Iowa (Iowa Economic Development Authority)**, **Main Street America**, and is supported by the **City of Colfax, Iowa**.

### Mission



***Colfax Main Street's Mission is to preserve our city's past and plan our future while maintaining our small town charm.***

### Our Vision

***We want Colfax, Iowa to be known for its old time charm in a modern day world. The heart of the city will be a vibrant area, restored in a manner that preserves its historic character and architecture. Storefronts will be filled with healthy, sustainable businesses. The economic growth will create jobs and stable businesses that help build the tax base.***

***Community pride in the downtown will be evident in its clean, attractive and well kept appearance. Filled with an upbeat, eclectic mix of shops and services, the town will be alive as a destination for residents of all ages, visitors, and heritage tourists.***

## The Four Point Approach

The Main Street Approach is centered around Transformation Strategies. A Transformation Strategy articulates a focused, deliberate path to revitalizing or strengthening a downtown or commercial district's economy. A program's work on Transformation Strategies should be organized around the Four Points: Economic

## Vitality, Design, Promotion, and Organization.

A revitalization program's work – and its Transformation Strategies – need to be informed by a solid understanding of local and regional market data, and sustained and inclusive community engagement.

# Promotion

**PROMOTION** positions the downtown or commercial district as the center of the community and hub of economic activity, while creating a positive image that showcases a community's unique characteristics.

- Colfax Country Christmas • Terrific Tuesdays • Farmers Market • Mineral Springs Day • Shopping Incentives
- Food Trucks • Social Media Promotion • Promotional Print Media

# Design

**DESIGN** supports a community's transformation by enhancing the physical and visual assets that set the commercial district apart.

- Design Standards • Spring City Commercial Historic District

# Economic

- City Branding • Downtown Planters • Barn Quilts • MSI Design Consults • Beautification Projects
- Holiday Decorations

**ECONOMIC VITALITY** focuses on capital, incentives, and other economic and financial tools to assist new and existing businesses, catalyze property development, and create a supportive environment for entrepreneurs and innovators that drive local economies.

- Revolving Loan Fund • Vacant Commercial Space List • Ribbon Cuttings • Shopping Incentives

# Organization

- Colfax Bucks Program
- Market Studies and Strategies

**ORGANIZATION** involves creating a strong foundation for a sustainable revitalization effort, including cultivating partnerships, community involvement, and resources for the district.

- Colfax Bingo • Fundraising Events • Volunteer Recruitment • Social Media Fundraisers

# Downtown Colfax Transformation Strategies

*Colfax Main Street's Transformation Strategies were established in 2021 through Main Street Iowa's Market Studies and Strategies workshops and were created from community and business survey feedback and input from community leaders.*

## 1) Create a Vibrant Downtown District

**Focus on improving the infrastructure and aesthetics of the Downtown Colfax district so that it is enjoyable to visit and it is a vibrant place to conduct business**

ness.

<b>Current Activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• MSI Design Services</li><li>• Benches</li><li>• Pedestrian Safety advocacy</li><li>• JEDCO Façade Grant promotion</li><li>• Wayfinding Signs</li></ul>	<b>Park Trash Cans</b> <b>Potential Activities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Murals and Public Art</li><li>• Bike Racks</li><li>• Utility Box Wraps</li><li>• Gazebo Restoration</li><li>• Sidewalk Improvements</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pocket Park Development</li><li>• Hanging flower baskets</li><li>• Small garden development</li><li>• Signage grant</li><li>• _____</li></ul>
Planters/Baskets			
Tree plantings			
• Barn Quilts			
• Challenge Grant Applications			

## 2) Improve Business Support Services for Colfax Businesses

Focus on providing technical support services, training, and financial resources to support business retention, expansion, and recruitment efforts in Colfax.

<b>Current Activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Keeping a list of available commercial spaces</li><li>• Connecting potential business owners with commercial space</li><li>• Open 4 Business Grant information</li><li>• Ribbon Cuttings</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Events to increase retail/restaurant sales</li></ul> <b>Potential Activities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Business recruitment posters</li><li>• 'After 5' Mixers</li><li>• Group training for small businesses</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Joint marketing projects</li><li>• Business recruitment drive</li><li>• Small business incubator spaces</li><li>• I-80 Advertising Opportunities</li><li>• _____</li></ul>
Social Media Tutorials			
• Business Spotlights on Social Media			
• Online Training information			
• Revolving Loan Fund Grant			

## 3) Improve Housing Options in Colfax

Focus on enhancing downtown upper-story housing to provide additional quality housing options in the City of Colfax.

<b>Current Activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Share information about development opportunities on Social Media</li><li>• Work with the City to sell Downtown vacant lots</li><li>• Revolving Loan Fund</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Upper Story Building Tours</li><li>• Research Upper Story Housing Grant</li><li>• Look for development opportunities close to Downtown District</li><li>• Encourage vacant</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>space property owners to consider development.</li><li>• Work with the City to potential housing development areas</li><li>• _____</li></ul>
MSI Design Services			
• Inventory of residential units and potential units			
• Main Street as property developer			



# Meet the Board and Staff



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**Our Promotion Committee is our most active committee and they hosted four major community events in Downtown Colfax in 2023.** They also hosted the weekly Farmers Market during the summer months and invited numerous food trucks to visit Downtown Colfax on the weekly basis throughout the year. Our large Downtown events are a massive undertaking and our Promotion Committee members, local partnering businesses, and event volunteers all deserve a round of applause for the amount of work they put in to make these vibrant events happen throughout the year!

In early April, we hosted the annual **Downtown Colfax Eggstravaganza Children's Egg Hunt** and the **Golden Egg Hunt Shopping Incentive** (for adults). We set out over 1,000 eggs at Woman's Club Park. Around 100 children were in attendance. The First Baptist Church served free hot dogs and treats. The Golden Egg Hunt was a shopping incentive where golden eggs were hidden in local businesses for shoppers to find and win a discount!

From May through September we hosted a weekly **Farmers Market at Mineral Springs Park**. At the beginning of the summer we had around 15 vendors each week and around 25-35 every 30 minutes. We invited a guest food truck each week to entice visitors!

**Mineral Springs Day** was the last Saturday in September. Colfax Main Street hosted a small vendor market, a free concert starring Emm Arndt and featuring Richard Arndt, and a free kids carnival. The City of Colfax used the event to announce that they were awarded a \$50k grant from T-Mobile for the development of a pocket park next to City Hall!

In October we hosted the annual **Downtown Colfax Halloween Walk** where 29 businesses and organizations hosted themed booths and handed out candy to local families. We had a record year of attendance with over 1,180 people in attendance! Wild Roots Boutique and Suites won the 'Best Booth' award from Facebook polls.

On December 2, Colfax Main Street hosted **Colfax Country Christmas** which featured a tree lighting ceremony, free sleigh rides, business open houses, chili and soup cook off, scavenger hunts, music from CMHS students, caroling, a meat raffle and pictures with Santa Claus! We also gave our local retail business Colfax Bucks as a shopping incentive to give out to customers who spent more than \$25. This event also had record attendance; over 300 people were counted in the line to visit Santa Claus! We had positive reports from local businesses that sales were great that evening. One local retail business also reported over \$1,400 in sales more than last year's Colfax Country Christmas!



**Volunteers from our community kept Downtown Colfax looking beautiful by working on seasonal gardening and holiday decorating projects!**

**Jayne Trier of Trier Family Chiropractic planted and decorated the 12 Walnut Street planters for every season.** Volunteers from Bank Iowa kept our planters watered throughout the season. Community members donated and planted extra planters throughout the Downtown in places that need brightening up during the summer months. **Megan Hunsberger of Sheepgate Coffee Co. spearheaded a hanging flower basket project for the 8 light poles at the intersection of Walnut and Howard Streets.** Colfax Main Street purchased 8 self-watering hanging baskets and petunias.

Volunteers from Sheepgate Ministries watered the hanging baskets throughout the summer. The hanging baskets got rave reviews from the community and we will be expanding this project in 2024!

**Colfax Main Street volunteers decorated the City Holiday Tree and the Mineral Springs Park Gazebo** for the Christmas season in late November.

**Colfax Main Street created 'Welcome to Colfax' sandwich board signs** that were set up in Downtown Colfax prior to the Jasper County Fair and RAGBRAI. These signs welcome visitors to Downtown Colfax.

**Colfax Main Street is working with the City of Colfax to help provide design guidance to the City's pocket park project.** The City of Colfax was awarded a \$50k grant from T-Mobile to develop a small park next to City Hall in a defunct alleyway.

**The City of Colfax approved Downtown Design Standard Ordinances for Downtown Colfax.** Colfax Main Street has worked with the City of Colfax over several years to create design standards for the Spring City Commercial Historic District to preserve the historic integrity of properties in Downtown Colfax. These ordinances are meant to help with the longevity of historic buildings by encouraging proper historic preservation methods of renovation, but also help create a visually attractive commercial district.

**The City of Colfax installed beautiful wayfinding signs around Colfax** to guide visitors to key locations. Colfax Main Street worked with the City to create a wayfinding sign project to help welcome visitors to our community. The wayfinding signs were designed by Canoe There, a media company from Des Moines, as part of the City of Colfax's branding project. The signs reflect the Spanish Mission Revival style design of the historic Hotel Colfax building (now Sheepgate Ministries) and are a vibrant blue as a nod to the City's connection to mineral water.

**Colfax Main Street worked with the City of Colfax on pedestrian safety projects on Walnut Street (Highway 117)** based on feedback from Main Street America and Main Street Iowa that Colfax needs to control its excessive speeding traffic problem. The City of Colfax purchased 6 'yield to pedestrian' sign bollards to place by crosswalks and repainted the crosswalks with highly visible 'zebra crossing' patterns. This caused drivers to slow down and drive more carefully in Downtown Colfax. Colfax Main Street and the City of Colfax worked with the Iowa DOT to install electronic speed signs on Walnut Street (Highway 117) to remind drivers to slow down in Downtown Colfax and near the elementary school. We will continue to brainstorm ways to make walking in Downtown Colfax a safer experience because it encourages people to spend more time in our business district.

**We would like to create a 'Vibrancy Team'** which would be responsible for a collection of projects to enhance the vibrancy of Downtown Colfax through physical projects! Projects could be gardening opportunities, bike racks, vacant lot activation, seasonal decorations, walkability projects, etc. Please contact us at [colfaxmainstreet@gmail.com](mailto:colfaxmainstreet@gmail.com) if you'd be interested in this committee!





**One of the main purposes for our community to has a Main Street Program is to encourage economic health and growth of small business in historic Downtown Colfax.** Most, if not all, of our projects are designed to help promote Downtown Colfax's business community. We've been working to make sure the majority of our projects have some benefit to the economic growth of Colfax!

**The Colfax Main Street program offers an Revolving Loan Fund program** where Downtown Colfax businesses or prospective businesses can apply to borrow from. This loan program exists to help support local businesses seeking funding to cover the gaps that a traditional small business bank loan may not cover. The Revolving Loan Fund was seeded with money from USDA Rural Development and borrowers repayment and interest go to replenish the fund so it can be loaned out again to Downtown Colfax businesses. This program has been used over the past few years to help establish much needed and requested businesses in Colfax. This resource was utilized by Sheepgate Coffee Co. to help acquire their building. A coffee shop in Colfax was a much requested business in past market study surveys conducted by our program. **Sheepgate Coffee Co. opened to much fanfare early in 2023** and is providing caffeine and sandwiches needed to keep Colfax running! Most recently the **program was used to help Absolutely Younique Boutique expand and establish Absolute Nutrition** (an energy drink bar) which opened this summer. This has been a popular spot to get a refreshing drink! **Our program also received the 'Best Business Support Award' from Main Street Iowa** for using the Revolving Loan Fund program in 2022 to help local businesses owners acquire and re-establish our historic local pharmacy: Spring City Pharmacy! To find out more information about the Revolving Loan Fund, visit our website [www.ColfaxMainStreet.com](http://www.ColfaxMainStreet.com).

**Colfax Main Street also hosted and promoted ribbon cutting ceremonies for new businesses to Downtown Colfax in 2023.** We hosted a ribbon cutting for Sheepgate Coffee Co.'s 'soft opening' in February 2022 where the community got to try out menu items and baked goods. We hosted a belated 'official' ribbon cutting for Shear Attraction Salon's one year anniversary in May; the salon opened in 2022, but was so busy they decided to celebrate their opening at a later date. In late August we celebrated the opening of Absolute Nutrition in Absolutely Younique Boutique with a small ribbon cutting and Absolute Nutrition has been hopping for the last half of 2023!

**We hosted a shopping incentive at Colfax Country Christmas!** During the event on December 3 we gave our retail businesses 10 \$5 Colfax Bucks to give out to customers who spent \$25 or more at their stores to help boost sales during the event and during the holiday shopping season! We had several businesses report to us that they had fantastic sales during Colfax Country Christmas and we believe the event and the shopping incentive helped to boost sales.





**Colfax Bingo is back after a 3 year hiatus!** Our monthly Colfax Bingo nights proved to be a lucrative fundraiser for our program in 2019, but because of the 2020 pandemic we had to suspend this monthly activity until it was safe to do have in person. Our volunteers decided to start this monthly fundraiser again in 2023. Each month we host Colfax Bingo at Absolutely Younique Boutique and Cocina Hernandez Mexican restaurant and have around 50-70 players. The winner of each round takes half the pot while the other half benefits Colfax Main Street. We also play fun rounds where players can win prizes from local Downtown Colfax businesses. Each month we've recruited a special local celebrity bingo caller volunteer (usually someone connected to a Downtown Colfax business or local organization). This year Colfax Bingo raised around \$5,000 for our program!

**RAGBRAI came through Downtown Colfax in July on one of the hottest days of the year!** Colfax Main Street partnered with Quarry Springs Park to offer a beer and beverage tent to the over 40,000-60,000 riders that came through Downtown Colfax early in the morning as a fundraiser for our programs. The tent was staffed by fantastic volunteers from Colfax Dental Services. Colfax received a lot of compliments on our community from riders who came from around America and the world to ride that day!

In December **we hosted The Colfax Holiday Tour of Homes** as a fundraiser for our local program. This was our first time hosting a tour of homes type activity after a many year hiatus. Four local families opened their decorated homes to the public for viewing. These homes were decorated by the homeowners and talent local volunteers. This project was a great way for our community to showcase new residential construction and historic houses that have been maintained well or recently completely renovated.

**Local high school students helped out our program at several events.** One of our board members, Korie Whiteman, is an educator at Colfax-Mingo High School and she is the sponsor for the High School's Generation On group. Generation On is a student-led community service organization which teaches students the value of serving their community, but also provides opportunities for students to gain volunteer hours towards their graduation requirements. Generation On students frequently volunteer to help with Colfax Main Street events and have provided a lot of muscle power for the Eggstravaganza, Mineral Springs Day, and Colfax Country Christmas.

**Our program is always looking for local residents to use their talents or resources to help Downtown Colfax achieve success!** We are always looking for volunteers to serve in different capacities. We are looking for volunteers to spearhead different projects, volunteer at events, water flowers, install public art, clean-up Downtown, lead a committee, stuff welcome bags and more! **Please follow our social media platforms as we put out calls for specific volunteer opportunities or contact us at [colfaxmainstreet@gmail.com](mailto:colfaxmainstreet@gmail.com)** if you have any specific ways you'd like to volunteer or support the Colfax Main Street program.

# 2023 Main Street Iowa

# Leadership Award

## Colfax-Mingo High School's 'Generation On' Students Receive Award for their Service to Colfax

This year Colfax Main Street honored the Colfax-Mingo High School Generation On group as our recipient of the Main Street Iowa Leadership Award for their service to Downtown Colfax at the Main Street Iowa Development Awards in Des Moines in April. Student representatives from Generation On and their sponsor, educator and CMS board member Korie Whiteman, were presented their award from Iowa Economic Development Director, Debi Durham, and the Director of Main Street Iowa, Michael Wagler, at a ceremony of over 500 attendees.

Generation On is a student-led community service organization which teaches students the value of serving their community, but also provides opportunities for students to gain volunteer hours towards their graduation requirements. Generation On students frequently volunteer to help with Colfax Main Street events and have provided a lot of muscle power for the Eggstravaganza, Mineral Springs Day, and Colfax Country Christmas events. In previous years, Generation On has also hosted their own Downtown clean up days where they complete various clean up tasks around Downtown Colfax. Their sponsor, Korie Whiteman, is also the co-chair of the Promotion Committee and is a previous recipient of the Main Street Iowa Leadership Award for Colfax in 2019.



## Colfax Main Street and Spring City Pharmacy Win the 'Best Business Support' Award!

Spring City Pharmacy and Colfax Main Street won an award at the Main Street Iowa Development Awards in April!

The award for 'Best Main Street Business Support Project' was given to the Pharmacy and Colfax Main Street for the combined efforts of local business owners, local property owners, and Colfax Main Street volunteers to help save Downtown Colfax's historic pharmacy.

Colfax has had a pharmacy on the corner of Walnut and Howard Streets since the 1880s that was long run by the Weirick and Patterson families until the mid 2010s. The pharmacy has been an anchor business in Downtown Colfax and was once the hub of local social activity. The most recent owner of the pharmacy was an out-of-state chain that announced it would close the pharmacy in March 2022, leaving Downtown Colfax without access to pharmaceutical resources and causing the loss of a local anchor business.

Local business and property owners Brenda and TJ Tjaden, Brad Magg, and local pharmacist Brittney Van Houweling and her husband Vance Van Houweling combined their resources and skills to start Spring City Pharmacy to fill the vacancy. Colfax Main Street granted a low interest rate loan from our Revolving Loan Fund Program to assist with the pharmacy start up cost. Spring City Pharmacy is now filled with a fantastic inventory of gifts, toys, and hard to find over the counter medications. The pharmacy's soda fountain (which had been closed since 2020) is now up and running with homemade ice cream flavors. The pharmacy is now becoming a downtown hub for activity like it once was. Congratulations to the owners and employees of Spring City Pharmacy for all their hard work in keeping Downtown Colfax a vibrant place!



# The Numbers

Colfax Main Street tracks and reports data quarterly to the State of Iowa about the strength of our program and the Downtown Colfax community. We report information about how much private money is invested in the renovation of our downtown, property acquisition totals, new business starts, job creation, community volunteer hours, public giving to the Colfax Main Street program, and more. We share this information in celebration of the progress our community of Downtown Colfax has made in the past year and since becoming a Main Street Iowa and Main Street America community in 2009.

	Down town	renovation projects	Net new jobs	Colfax Main Street
	Public Investment in	Number of build ings	Community volunteer	
	Downtown	sold	hours	
Private invest ment in	Number of build ing	New business starts	Direct public giving to	
	for 2023)		product costs)	
2023(As of the end of 3rd quarter 2023, exc. Direct Public Giving	\$1,100,000	\$0 (the memorial bench project is on hiatus due to rising	1326	1,409 \$23,103.02 (Jan-Dec 2023)
Since 2009	\$9,675,708 \$1,742,137	118 31 28 45 33,724	\$579,302.77	(to Dec 2023)

## Give Back!

*Do you feel passionate about the*

*health and development of Downtown*

*Colfax and want to give to Colfax Main*

*Street projects? Check out our website*

*[www.colfaxmainstreet.com](http://www.colfaxmainstreet.com) to find out*

*how to give electronically or contact us*

*about how to give to the organization or*

*to one of our projects! We'd love to hear from you!*



## Join Us!

*Do you care about the community of Colfax? Join us for the fun! We have several opportunities for you to participate!*



## ***Contact us today!***

The Colfax Main Street Office is located inside of Colfax City Hall 20 W Howard Street P.O. Box 62  
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