

RETHOS

PLACES REIMAGINED

Issue 4, 2020



RETHOS[®]

PLACES REIMAGINED

Printed by Rethos
651.293.9047
rethos.org

416 Landmark Center
75 W. Fifth Street
Saint Paul, MN 55102-9775

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Officers

President	Steve Knight MINNEAPOLIS
President Elect	Ryan Sailer MINNEAPOLIS
Vice President	Kristen Anderson MINNEAPOLIS
Vice President	Chris Sherman MINNEAPOLIS
Treasurer	Aaron Martin, CPA ST. PAUL
Secretary	Jane Bisel ROCHESTER

Board Members

Wendy Ethen MINNEAPOLIS
Erik Hansen MINNEAPOLIS
Collin Kaas MINNEAPOLIS
Nicholas L. Place ST. LOUIS PARK
Tony Simmons MINNEAPOLIS

STAFF

Heidi Swank EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Ethan Boote REAL ESTATE MANAGER
Erin Hanafin Berg DIRECTOR OF POLICY
Emily Kurash Casey COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COORDINATOR
Riley Gage ADMINISTRATIVE COORDINATOR
Brandon Hartung EDUCATION PROGRAM ASSOCIATE
Natalie Heneghan EDUCATION PROGRAM MANAGER
Ann Marie Johnson CENTRAL MINNESOTA EDUCATION COORDINATOR
Tyler McDaniel OTTER TAIL COUNTY DOWNTOWN ASSESSMENT COORDINATOR
Sarina Otaibi RURAL PROGRAM MANAGER
Shelley Rohlf FINANCIAL MANAGER
Hayden Troy DEVELOPMENT OFFICER: INSTITUTIONAL GIVING
Todd Wright DIRECTOR OF ADVANCEMENT/ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

MAGAZINE PRODUCTION

Todd Wright EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Maggie Panetta DESIGNER

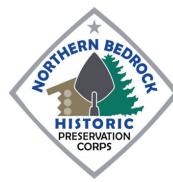
Preservation Alliance of Minnesota d.b.a. Rethos is a private, nonprofit, 501(c)3 organization dedicated to preserving, protecting, and promoting Minnesota's historic resources.

WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR THE

OUR PROGRAM PARTNERS



MINNESOTA MAIN STREET



GRANT and FOUNDATION SUPPORT



Production of this issue of Places Reimagined was made possible through a generous grant from



CARL AND VERA SCHMIDT FOUNDATION
Rochester, Minnesota

COVER IMAGE | Photo by Pam Dusbabek in Red Wing, MN.

* Images taken before the COVID-19 pandemic are noted.

GENEROUS SUPPORT FROM THE FOLLOWING

INFLUENCER SPONSOR



DOMINIUM

SKYLINE SPONSOR



BRIDGEWATER BANK



DOUGHERTY
MORTGAGE LLC



SEASON SPONSORS



BKV GROUP

Architecture
Interior Design
Landscape Architecture
Engineering

BOLANDER



HEMPEL
REAL ESTATE



JEDUNN
CONSTRUCTION



NCM
NORTHLAND CONCRETE
& MASONRY COMPANY, LLC

TIMBERLAND
PARTNERS



W. L. HALL CO. *Builders Specialties*

CORPORATE SPONSORS

Advanced Masonry Restoration
Braun Intertec
Guaranty Commercial Title
Hess, Roise and Company
Loucks, Inc.
National Window Associates
Skyline Fire Protection, Inc.
Terracon

PATRON SPONSORS

Allegion
Gary L. Stenson/MetroPlains
Winthrop & Weinstine
Egan Company
Tushie Montgomery Architects

Help us save the Tax Credit by making
your 2021 commitment now.

Reach out to todd@rethos.org today.

NEWS and UPDATES



Rethos Board Announces New Executive Director

The Rethos Board of Directors is very proud to announce the appointment of its new executive director, Heidi Swank. More to come about Heidi in the next issue!

To read the full announcement visit
www.rethos.org/post/rethos-announces-new-executive-director

Archer House Relief Fund

Help the Northfield Downtown Development Corporation provide economic relief for the Archer House and its tenant businesses after the devastating fire. The Archer House has been the anchor business of Downtown Northfield for over 140 years and small businesses like the ones in the Archer House complex are the heart and soul of downtown Northfield. Every dollar raised from this campaign will go directly to the Archer House Relief Fund.

[Support the Archer House at GiveMN.org](#)



Archer House Commemorative Print

16x20" Print | \$75.00 | davidallenart.com

Pre-Purchase the print of the Commemorative Archer House painting by artist David Allen. Proceeds from the sale of the prints will go to the Northfield Downtown Development Corporation (NDDC) to help support our downtown during this difficult time.

The Last Word



Former Executive Director **DOUG GASEK**

Last year, Rethos' Executive Director, Doug Gasek stepped down from his position after eight years, the final step of a two-year plan to relocate his family to his hometown of Medford, WI.

Doug's tenure lead Rethos to a tremendous period of transformation and growth, fostering a new mission and organization name while also increasing the annual budget from \$300,000 to \$1,500,000, allowing Rethos to further its mission and impact our vast and diverse communities. If navigating the 40 year heritage of this organization through a change to both our name and mission weren't enough, Doug has had numerous successes during his time with us. His vision and leadership will be missed, and we thank him for all the time he gave to making Rethos the thriving and impactful organization it is today.



“Under Doug’s leadership, the organization’s impact was felt throughout much of our state and has begun to touch others, as well. I have been proud to work with Doug for the past six years and hope our paths will cross again soon.”

JANE BISEL
Rethos Board Officer



Doug left Rethos to return to his hometown of Medford, WI with his husband, John, and their six kids. While spending time kayaking and hiking with his family, Doug plans to stay very busy. In this short time, they have already acquired a couple wonderful buildings that include the old hospital and hardware store. He's working on the board of the children's museum, housed on Main Street. He also serves on the county's revolving loan fund committee and is an active member of the downtown association. If that isn't enough, he's developing a performance-based nonprofit with information space on Main Street. This winter you'll find he and his family skiing at Granite Peaks. Doug says:

"My goal is to take what I've learned at Rethos and see what fits my town."

"Thank you for being so gracious to me personally and fostering such a vibrant, driven, and creative work environment. Your forward-thinking passion is displayed clearly throughout Rethos and your embrace of outside the box ideas has created something truly amazing."

TYLER MCDANIEL
Rural Projects Coordinator

Thanks Doug!

Increased the Annual Budget
from \$300,000 to \$1,500,000

Increased Institutional Giving
from \$145,000 to \$500,000

Renamed & Rebranded
the organization

Created the **Rural Programs Team**

Led to the expansion of the Rethos Main Street MN program and new programmatic efforts including Artist on Main and Asset Mapping

Initiated New
Mission Statement

2013 EXTENSION
Historic Tax Credit

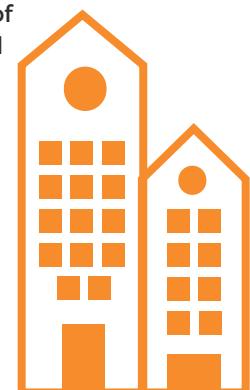
Created the **Investment Partnership Program**

Resulting in activity in over 5 states

Created Our
Education Program

Grew Staff from **3 to 10+**

Some staff positions were based outside of the twin cities for the first time (we've had locations in Rochester, Granite Falls, Winona, Little Falls, and Superior).



Executed the Organization's **First Building Purchase**

in Willmar which now houses 2 thriving small businesses and is a community and city meeting place.

"The strategic planning work that Doug led started the organization on a path to program development and expansion. By reaching out and really listening to people both within and outside of traditional preservation practice, Doug helped solidify a new mission statement and pursue growth opportunities for Rethos. It was truly transformative work."

ERIN HANAFIN BERG
Policy Director

As we say goodbye to Doug, our staff asked him a few reflections about his time with Rethos:

What is your fondest memory during your tenure at Rethos?

In general, my fondest memories are seeing the excitement that people have in their rural communities. There is a passion around place, both natural and built. A trip I took to International Falls for a visit with Ward Merrill with Todd Wright cemented this feeling for me. Seeing Ward's tremendous work at the Backus Community Center, the innovation at Mallard Island, witnessing the passion at the boat repair shop, and being surrounded by stories and natural beauty, gave me inspiration. That memory is one of those defining moments that catapulted me to take this next step in life and devote my energy to a specific place that matters to me, my rural hometown of Medford. So, I must give a big thank you to Ward.

What was your guiding philosophy/principle when leading Rethos?

Meeting people where they are. In that space of traditional preservation, people are often told what they should do to their buildings and more often, they are told what they did was wrong. Traditional preservation can miss the big picture. Keep buildings standing. That is truly one of the big reasons that the name change from PAM to Rethos came about. Rethos can operate in a space that is not only about preservation, but also places reimagined, retained, and rejoiced.



What was the most important lesson you learned from this experience?

Preservation uses national standards, national register criteria, national incentives as models for everything. From this top-down approach, places that matter to smaller communities and underrepresented communities are overlooked.

More tools need to be developed for all places. Just imagine what our rural communities would look like if they received a fraction of the resources dedicated to larger urban projects.

What do you most look forward to for Rethos?

There is a great staff in place bursting at the seams with ideas and innovation. Given the right resources and freedom, I know Rethos will be leading in the field for years to come.

"Doug had a bold vision for Rethos that pushed us to be creative and experimental...I discovered new passions of my own, and I'm so grateful for that. Our organization is better because of his down-to-earth leadership style and willingness to shake up the status quo."

NATALIE HENEGHAN
Education Manager

"Working with Doug was a joy. His leadership helped to make important growth...Doug led us into an exciting new era of reimagining what our work can accomplish."

EMILY KURASH CASEY
Rural Programs Coordinator

"Doug really brought Rethos from adolescence into adulthood during his tenure. Under Doug we saw the 2013 extension of the Minnesota State Historic Credit, a major legislative policy initiative. He also grew our programs into a sustaining business model that, combined with our state historic credit purchase program and significant growth in donations and institutional giving, saw Rethos generate \$1.5 million of revenue for the first time. Doug guided the Preservation Alliance of Minnesota through a major rebranding to what is now Rethos, a much more inclusive organization both in terms of outlook, and scope. But perhaps Doug's most lasting impact will be the talented staff he cultivated to carry on the Rethos mission. I think one metric of success for any leader is whether he or she leaves the organization in a better place than where they found it. In Doug's case, there is no question that Rethos is a better organization for having had Doug at the helm. We thank him and wish him nothing but success in his future endeavors."

RYAN SAILER
Rethos Board President
(Incoming 2021)



Erin Hanafin Berg, Senator John R. Jasinski (R),
Doug Gasek, Nate Reed of Shakopee

"Working with Doug was a great learning experience! His management style and vision for Rethos is what brought us to the place we are today, and for that we owe him a big thank you!"

ETHAN BOOTE
Real Estate Manager

Tips + Tricks

FROM OUR INSTRUCTORS



Lazy Windows

Paul Schmidt

RESTORATION WINDOW SYSTEMS

Here's a tip for a cheap way to get old windows to stay "up" or open with out using a stick, flower pot, toy truck, etc. You can buy a "window control" at the hardware store and slide them down in between the sash and jamb. It adds a little tension when moving the sash up and keeps it open.

Cost - \$5! Simple!

Fixing Moldy Shower Caulk

Rueben Saltzman
STRUCTURE TECH

Protect Against Lead Paint

Joe Hayes

HAYES WINDOW RESTORATION

Be sure to take precautions to protect yourself and your family when undertaking projects that disturb old paint. Most paint in homes built prior to 1978 contains lead. Lead is a neurotoxin that is easily absorbed into the body, and this is especially pronounced in children under age 6. Simple precautions, such as creating a work room within your home using plastic sheeting and zip wall poles or using a HEPA filter shop vacuum, goes a long way in containing and removing lead dust from your workspace. If available, PPE such as P100 respirators, eye protection, and gloves also decrease the risk of lead exposure.

Don't Forget Your Yard!

Jill Baum

NORTHERN BEDROCK HISTORIC PRESERVATION CORPS

Don't forget your yard! If you're new to your house, wait and see what comes up, where, and when. Consider landscape restoration that keeps a sense of place and may itself be historic. Play a little detective and you might surprise yourself with what you find hidden in your lawn; maybe the rooting of heirloom apple trees or an old buried rock edging from a past garden.

1 Gather Supplies.

Grab a small mixing bowl, a jug of bleach, a box of baking soda, a disposable paint brush, a roll of plastic wrap, a spray bottle, and a respirator. Also, wear old clothes that you wouldn't mind spilling bleach on.

2 Mix up your cleaning solution.

Mix the bleach and baking soda in a bowl until it's about the consistency of pancake batter. Don't skimp on the cleaning solution here – go ahead and make way more than you think you'll need.

REHAB RESOURCES

Home Energy Resources

Center for Energy and Environment (Twin Cities)
<https://www.mncee.org/merger/>

Ecolibrium3 (Duluth)
<https://www.ecolibrium3.org/>

Heritage Industry Continuing Education

Stonebridge Learning
<https://stonebridgelearning.com/about.php>

Rehab Your Historic Building

A guide from the Minnesota Historical Society
<https://www.mnhs.org/preservation/buildings/rehab>

A guide for first time homeowners from
 Brick and Beam Detroit
<https://www.brickandbeamdetroit.com/resources>

Contractors, Tradespeople, Experts in Home Preservation

Window Preservation Alliance
<https://windowpreservationalliance.org/>

List of Preservation Specialists from MNHS
<https://www.mnhs.org/preservation/directory>

Ready to tackle rehab projects at home? Looking for a pro with old home experience? We've gathered resources* from partner organizations and Rethos supporters that will help guide your project.

Home Improvement Blogs

The Craftsman Blog
<https://thecraftsmanblog.com/>

The Spruce
<https://www.thespruce.com/>

Retro Renovation
<https://retrorenovation.com/>

This Old House
<https://www.thisoldhouse.com/>

Salvage Shops

Architectural Salvage Shops
<http://historichomesofminnesota.com/resources/architectural-salvage/>

Shop Junket
<https://shopjunket.com/resources/for-donors/>

Better Futures MN Reuse Warehouse
<http://betterfuturesminnesota.com/reuse-warehouse/>

Natural Built Home Store Salvage Room
<http://naturalbuilthome.com/consignment-salvage-room/>

Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity ReStore
<http://naturalbuilthome.com/consignment-salvage-room/>

3 Apply the cleaning solution to the moldy caulk.

Use your disposable paint brush to apply the bleach paste on to the moldy caulk. Again, don't skimp here; it's cheap, so cake it on. I suggest you try to work somewhat quickly though. The bleach might disintegrate the bristles on your disposable paint brush, so you might not have all day.

4 Cover solution with plastic.

Covering the cleaning solution with plastic will help to keep the bleach from drying out. Now you wait.

5 Check on it and clean up!

After the bleach has been sitting for several hours, if the caulking looks as good as new, great! You're done. If you still have moldy caulk, put some bleach in a spray bottle and wet the walls down right above the plastic wrap. The bleach will run down underneath the plastic and re-saturate the paste. Rinse off your fresh new caulk with water.

RENTERS RIGHTS

BY LUCA DE GRAAF

Macalester College

In 2021, Rethos will be undertaking an expansion of its programming and resources encompassing not just homeowner historic building repair and maintenance, but renters' needs as well. My name is Luca and I am a Macalester College student working with Rethos: Places Reimagined on a project pursuing environmental justice for renters living in old buildings. Since 2015, especially in Minneapolis, the majority of households have been occupied by renters (over 77% in Midtown), thus any mission to target architectural waste and increase residences' autonomy over their own space must include resources applicable to renters.

The primary difference between homeowner repair and maintenance and tenants' care of old rental properties is that the legal responsibility of repair falls on the landlord and limits what renters can do with their rental spaces. One of the key issues raised in my initial tenant interviews were COVID safety concerns renters had with repair contractors and inspectors coming into our spaces (sometimes without masks). As anyone who has rented can attest to, the required game of telephone that happens between tenants, landlords, and repair contractors often leads to band aid fixes or a complete misunderstanding of what repairs are needed.

The renters I talked to also want a better understanding of renters' rights and were excited about renter-applicable versions of the resources Rethos offers. By organizing some resources informing renters of their "right to live in a home that is in reasonable repair, fit for use as a proper home, meets local housing codes, and is reasonably energy-efficient," tenants will have the tools to advocate for their right to a basic standard of living more effectively.



Photo by Phalen Reality

The document we have created includes resources for renters doing simple repairs and buying the material themselves. We suggest environmental and health-concerned local contractors who renters can hire directly and schedule for repairs after negotiating with their landlord.

One of the primary needs I heard from renters was an increased understanding of the particularly noxious materials that may cause safety concerns in their living space: asbestos, lead, carbon monoxide, radon, and pests. For this information, Rethos Education Manager Natalie Heneghan pointed me towards local architect, Rethos instructor, and "scary stuff" expert, Alissa Pier.

The conversation I had with Alissa taught me more than any of the research I have done so far - I began to see the economic system of property management more completely rather than just seeing renters' concerns as individual disconnected issues. While the checklist I created from this conversation, along with my individual legal rights and responsibilities research can be a materially beneficial tool for renters, systematic change is necessary. Our communities need to support policies that increase regulations on property management corporations with non-local investors (who are a major mover of gentrification) while also opposing policy that creates lower housing quality standards for rental and affordable housing.

CLASSES

Rethos remains committed to providing lessons in home repair, maintenance, and preservation. Thank you for sticking with us as we expand and adapt our program using new virtual tools. Be sure to check out the Rehab Resources page of our website. You'll find demonstration videos, how-to guides, and links to online resources.

REGISTER FOR CLASSES

Registration for all our workshops and classes can be found at rethos.org/classes. In-person classes will only be hosted if we can do so safely; refunds and credits will be issued for any class that cannot be held at all.

3-4

OLD HOME CERTIFIED DESIGNATION COURSE

FEB

8:00 AM CST | 12 CE Credits | **ZOOM WEBINAR**

Old Home Certified (OHC) is a regional Realtor® designation. Most housing stock in the Twin Cities is over 50 years old. As an agent, how well do you know your product? 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. Minnesota Realtors will earn 12 CE credits approved by the Minnesota Department of Commerce for this course, but it is open to anyone.

For more information about the CE Credits for this course visit our website at Rethos.org/Classes

16

Keeping the Weather Out: Homeowner How-Tos

FEB

10:00 AM – 12:00 PM CST | **ZOOM WEBINAR**

Get ready for winter with this informative, interactive homeowner class. Learn how to seal up cracks and drafts, do basic window and door repairs, and other simple homeowner winterization tips and tricks. Renovation specialist, Eric Cheever, will show attendees a variety of home maintenance techniques from simple, easy-to-do repairs to ideas on how to fix those nagging problem areas. A must for any homeowner, no matter the age, style or location of your house!

17

Racism in Real Estate

FEB

1:00 PM – 3:00 PM CST | 2 CE Credits | **ZOOM WEBINAR**

Racism in Real Estate explores structural racism and the racial wealth gap as it applies to housing. We'll consider the role of the real estate industry in the history of racial housing discrimination and the consequences of this history on housing equity today. Recognizing that we cannot fix the issues and inequities of the present without understanding the past, this course intends to expose the racist policies and practices that shaped our cities.

This class was created with materials from the Mapping Prejudice project and other research by instructor Denise Pike | Co-sponsored by Minneapolis Area REALTORS (MAR). MAR members receive a \$10 discount using the coupon code WhoWeR-MAR.



Reimagining Classes at the COX HOUSE



NATALIE HENECHAN | EDUCATION MANAGER

The Rethos Education team expected 2020 to be full of hands-on workshops, classes in cool new locations, and lots of travel. Instead, we found ourselves exploring the whole new world of webinars.

Until the COVID-19 pandemic forced us to try virtual learning, we hadn't considered it. After learning the ins and outs of Zoom, the results have been astounding. We have reached more people in more places than ever before. We were also able to get creative with our programming, including a live-streamed plaster repair workshop, demonstration videos, and a slew of new classes presented as webinars.

A notable success was the transformation of our Live From the Cox House workshop series. In

late 2019, Rethos & the Nicollet County Historical Society (NCHS) received a grant from the Historic Preservation Education Foundation to conduct a series of workshops at the E. St. Julien Cox House in St. Peter, Minnesota. NCHS manages the Cox House as a historic site, and they are planning for a significant restoration of the beautiful Carpenter Gothic home. We envisioned hosting hands-on community workshops that would teach rehab skills, bring new people into the space, and kickstart the restoration project.

When the pandemic hit, we rescheduled the initial workshops - a couple times. When we realized in-person classes were still a far away dream, we reimagined the original workshops as webinars.

Led by instructor Laura Leppink, the workshops were "broadcast" via Zoom from the Cox House. Education Manager Natalie, Instructor Laura, and NCHS Executive Director Jess were the only ones in the house, being sure to stay masked and distanced. Attendees joined in from their homes, some near & some very far away.

Homeowners Lindsay & Greg live just down the street from the Cox House, and they showed up to the entire series. We met students from Indiana and New Hampshire and from communities all over Minnesota. Among the participants was a Duluth-based architect with a 1909 home, a carpentry student who lives in St. Paul, and owners of a midcentury home in Rochester.



ABOUT THE IMAGE

Cox House in St. Peter
Images courtesy of Explore Minnesota.

Over the course of three webinars, 64 students learned about assessing the condition of an older home, tackling window and rot repairs, and drafting a maintenance plan. Videos and resource packets accompanied the classes.

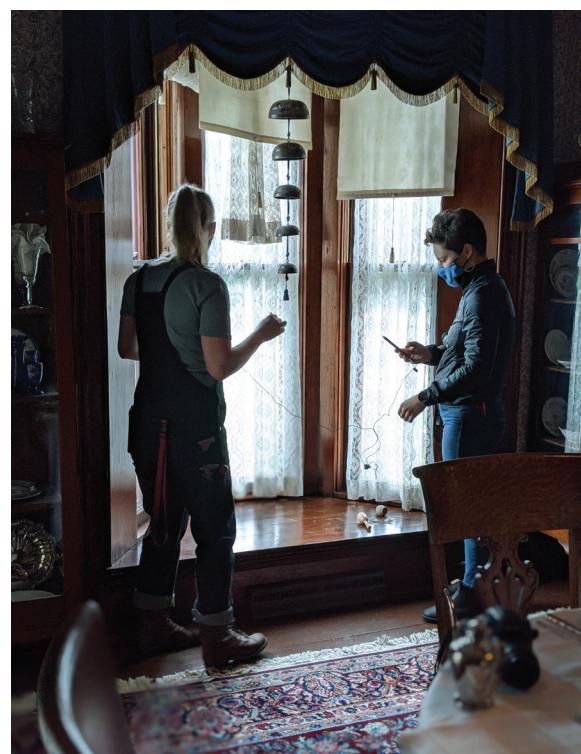
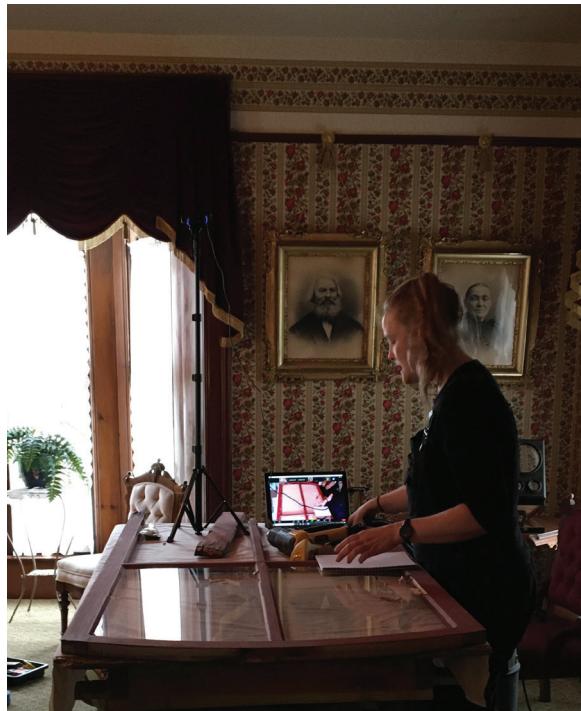
Natalie and Laura received overwhelmingly positive feedback on the workshop series:

"I really liked the fact that this class was held at the Cox house, which I now want to visit, and I thought the webinar format was great. I would not have been able to attend an in-person class."

"Laura did an awesome job!!"

"This session was so so so helpful!"

We are so eager for the return to hands-on, in-person classes, but our webinar experiments this year have proven that we have the potential to reach so many more people interested in home rehab and maintenance. Whether you live far away and are curious about our programs, or you simply can't travel to a class location, we are so happy to offer a more accessible option. Thank you for your support and grace this year as we navigated new methods. We look forward to more growth and experimentation next year!



FROM TOP Instructor Laura & Education Manager Laura at the Cox House hosting webinars & filming demo videos.

Images by Jessica Becker, Nicollet Co. Historical Society



2021

Extending the Minnesota Historic Structure Rehabilitation Tax Credit

Historic Tax Credit

Minnesota's Historic Tax Credit is set to sunset in June 2021. As we have done over the past several years, we will prioritize advocating to extend the tax credit. This credit is an essential tool for financing the rehabilitation of vacant and underutilized buildings across Minnesota. Without decisive legislative action, the tax credit will expire, leaving Minnesota at risk of losing millions of dollars annually and severely limiting possible rehabilitation projects across the state.

This year is a critical year to preserve the tax credit. With momentum in both the House and the Senate, Rethos is heading up a coalition to bring public attention to our efforts to preserve the tax credit. This year, we launched RevitalizeMN, a coalition of nonprofits, businesses, advocates, developers, and community members who believe in the importance of the economic development and building reuse possibilities that stem from the historic tax credit. RevitalizeMN will structure our efforts and our partners' efforts during legislative session and make the historic tax credit a pressing public issue.

Rethos Main Streets

As we have in the past, we will continue to build awareness of the Rethos Main Streets program at the State Capitol. As communities across the state continue to rely on the networking support that our Main Streets program provides, we will advocate for additional state and federal funding for local programs and businesses to address pandemic recovery and to sustain commercial revitalization in Minnesota's small cities and commercial districts.

Sustainability

Building reuse, renovation, and weatherization are critical elements in helping communities become more resilient to the impacts of climate change. As a partner of the GreenStep Cities program, Rethos will continue to provide technical assistance, learning opportunities, and best practices to help communities achieve their sustainability and quality-of-life goals. We work alongside the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Department of Commerce, Great Plains Institute, and others in this role

to support efforts at the Capitol and beyond to encourage sustainable building and development. We pay attention to bills and hearings at the Capitol that address construction and demolition practices, energy usage, climate change response, and other related issues.

Legacy Funding

Rethos is a member of the Minnesota History Coalition, and we will join with others in 2021 to advocate for sustained funding for the Arts & Cultural Heritage Fund. The grants provided through this program provide funding to identify, preserve, and enhance Minnesota's history and cultural resources. The Heritage Preservation Partnerships program, which contributes funding to Rethos' Main Streets and Education programs, is particularly important in meeting the needs of local communities.

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.



creating jobs & rebuilding communities



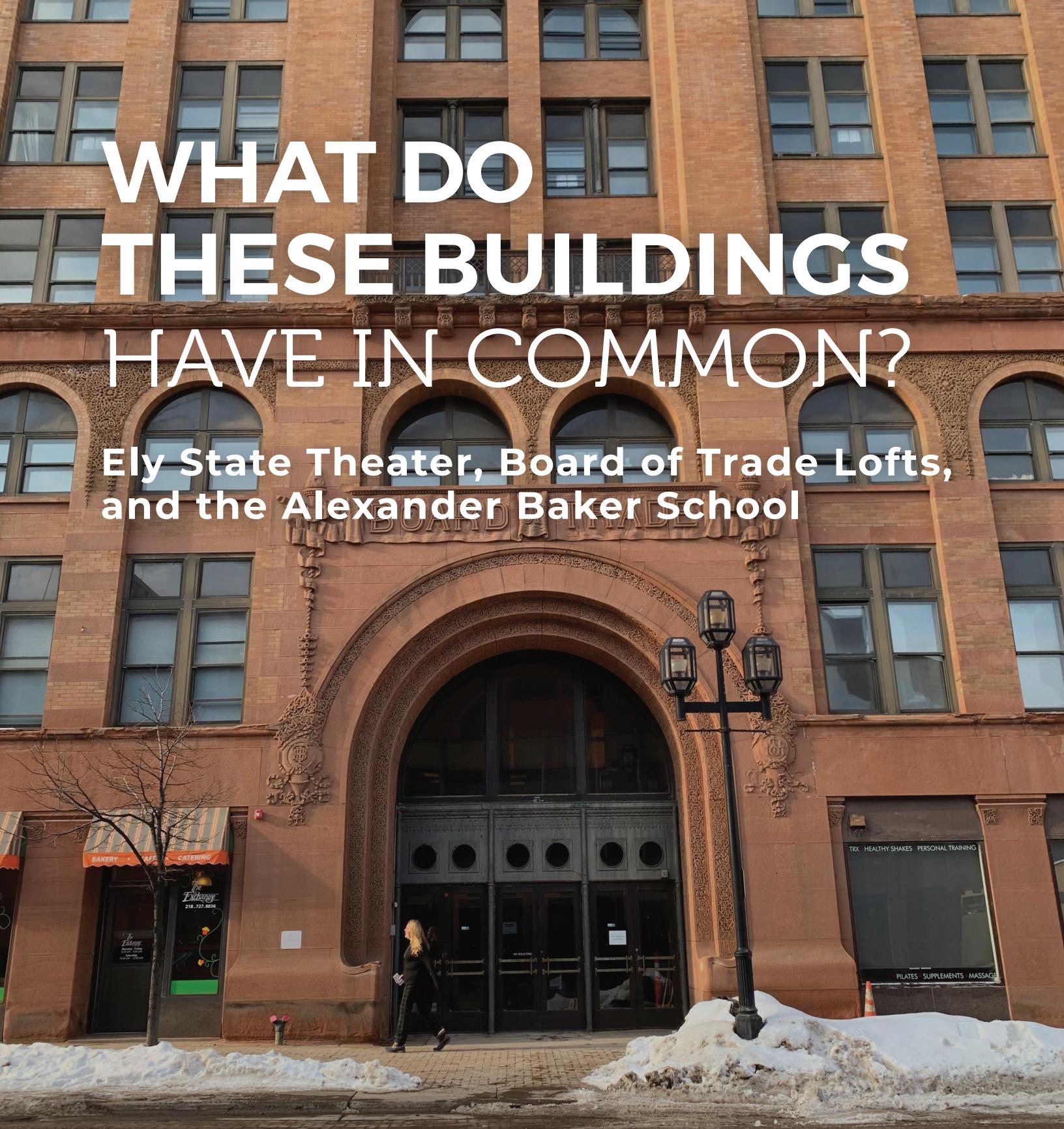
TOP A Stillwater, MN brewery built in 1886 was transformed into the 40-room boutique hotel named Lora.

BOTTOM An 1887 pump house for the municipal water system gets a new life as a popular Northfield, MN gathering place, the Tanzenwald Brewing Company.



WHAT DO THESE BUILDINGS HAVE IN COMMON?

Ely State Theater, Board of Trade Lofts, and the Alexander Baker School



BY ETHAN BOOTE | REAL ESTATE MANAGER

You might not think a former school, a theater, and a grain and commodity trading center would all share a common denominator, but up north these historic buildings all benefit from

Minnesota's Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit and are in various stages of being reimaged to be beacons of creativity in their communities - which allows them to be creatively reimaged to better fit the needs of their communities

BOARD OF TRADE LOFTS

Duluth, MN

Chicago-based developers David Dubin and Naganat Guru of the Dubin Guru Group search the country for historic rehabilitation projects. What attracted them to Duluth's Board of Trade building was the opportunity to undergo a financially-sound project in a historic building while using both state and federal historic tax credits. The building's exciting historic features and good structural integrity provided further incentive to reimagine the building with both residential and commercial spaces. The 1895 Romanesque building was built by the Duluth Board of Trade, serving as their new headquarters during a large expansion of commercial activity in Duluth. The building has remained extant on West 1st St for over a century, however, after a 2016 chimney collapse, the remaining tenants of the building left it vacant. After purchasing the building in 2017, the Dubin Guru Group worked with the city to develop

84 apartments, 1st floor retail space, 2nd floor office space, and 8th floor commercial space with a roof top deck.

The state's historic tax credit played a large part in enabling this project. Guru recognizes this as he states, "Minnesota's credit is easy to use, and keeps projects financially safe." The risk that is reduced through state tax credits helps make projects like this a possibility, benefiting whole communities.



ABOVE Grand Staircase on the main level.

LEFT View of various apartments.

Courtesy of ThreeDI LLC

Ely State Theater

Ely, MN

Perched atop a hill and overlooking Ely's Main Street, the Ely State Theatre is an iconic piece of this northern Minnesota town. Designed by Minnesota's own Liebenberg and Kaplan in 1936, the theatre operated for generations, until it finally closed in 2008. The building's poor condition at the time became a large barrier to its reuse. However, after listing it on the National Register of Historic Places in 2015, the building became eligible to receive both federal and state historic tax credits. Thanks to the drive of Tanner Ott and his company Alley A Realty, with the support from many Ely community members, the theater reopened late last year to show classic movies, feature local artists, and provide a central gathering space for community events. Ott says, "In small towns in Minnesota, preserving historic buildings not only means dealing with neglected structures and higher renovation budgets, [you also deal with] less population [meaning] less potential for earning



Contributed Images of the Ely State Theater

revenue. You need all the help you can get in these situations and the state credit is one of those necessary tools." While the first year it opened the theater experienced difficulties due to the ongoing pandemic, the excitement and passion the buildings reopening has caused can be felt throughout Ely. Currently, the theater is run by a nonprofit, which is working to complete a second theater in an adjacent building. Ultimately, the project will dovetail other building reuse projects in downtown Ely, continuing its long tradition as an entertainment and community hub for locals and visitors alike.

The state's historic tax credit is set to expire on June 30, 2021 unless action is taken next legislative session.

Please join Rethos and our partners in the RevitalizeMN coalition to advocate for its extension. Minnesota cannot afford to lose a key tool for economic development and a pathway to renewed community vitality.



Alexander Baker School

International Falls, MN

Back in 1999, The Alexander Baker School in International Falls was listed as one of Rethos' 10 most endangered buildings in Minnesota. Hope for its reuse was ignited by the local nonprofit group, Citizens for Backus/AB Inc. They purchased the school (along with E.W. Backus Jr. High) from the school district in 2002, paying \$850 and having goals to rehabilitate the property. However, these plans were postponed after failure to secure funding. In 2017, new energy in creating multi-family housing came when Citizens for Backus/AB partnered with KOOTASCA Community Action. While there are many factors that play a role in this development, the state historic tax credit was critical to securing financing for rehabbing the building. The structure, originally constructed in 1912, is incredibly important to the community. Ward Merrill, Executive Director of Backus/AB, "the significance of the Alexander Baker Project is further heightened by the fact that no multi-family housing project has been built in our community in almost four decades. The community is overwhelmingly supportive of this project. For almost twenty years we've heard the question from citizens, 'when will the apartments be ready?' Merrill hopes that answer is not far off and KOOTASCA's Isaac Meyer echo these sentiments when he says, "rural communities



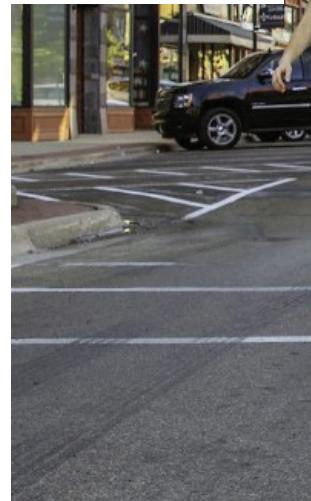
TOP Courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society.
COVER & BOTTOM Photos by Issac Meyer.

aren't going away any time soon, and as long as we have tools like the state rehabilitation tax credit, they'll be put to work to make life in our communities better." With the Alexander Baker School project yet to be completed, it is even more important that the tax credit remain a powerful economic tool for Merrill and Meyer, and for future projects throughout the state.



10 YEARS

**RETHOS
MAIN STREETS**



In the previous edition of *Places Reimagined* we highlighted several of our designated Main Street Communities. We continue that feature in this edition, celebrating 10 years of Rethos Main Streets: Minnesota

Local Main Street leaders provide support and resources that help businesses not only in times of normalcy, but during times of crisis as well. Local businesses are essential to a town's ethos, a bedrock of community spirit. With Rethos Main Streets Minnesota celebrating its 10-year anniversary, 2020 was set to be

a time of celebration across the state. With the pandemic continuing to alter the plans and actions of Main Street communities, in-person celebrations have halted as local communities seek out innovative solutions. While COVID-19 has shaken the foundation of our communities, Main Streets have provided a solid ground for folks to





Simpson family crossing in Faribault. Courtesy of Dustin Simpson.

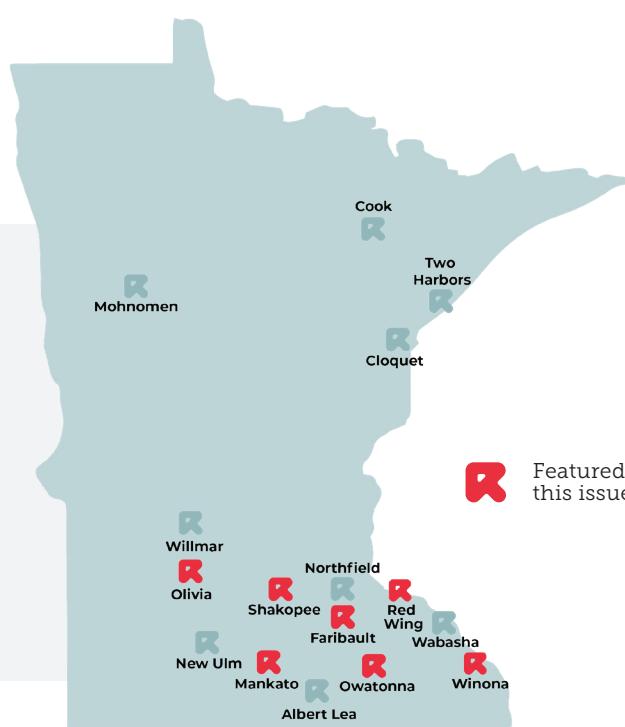
OUR MAIN STREET COMMUNITIES

DESIGNATED COMMUNITIES

Albert Lea Olivia
Faribault Red Wing
Mankato Shakopee
New Ulm Wabasha
Northfield Willmar
Owatonna Winona

ARTIST ON MAIN STREET COMMUNITIES

Faribault Willmar
Mankato Cloquet
Winona Cook
Northfield Mahnomen
Olivia Two
Wabasha Harbors



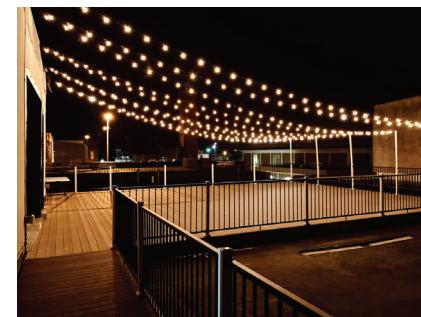
FARIBAULT

The 3 Ten Rooftop Loft Expansion

The 3 Ten Event Venue recently expanded with a new rooftop! The space includes a rooftop patio allowing guests to start outside, and then proceed into a beautifully decorated ballroom.

PHOTOS Ryan and Jenny Ernster, owners of the 310 Loft.

3teneventvenue.com



MANKATO

Crystal Olson

When reflecting on why Main Street has been important for Mankato, Crystal Olson (Programs & Events Manager at Greater Mankato Growth, Inc. which houses the Main Street Program) is quick to bring up the Main Street Network. "Main Street is a great resource, especially in this past year, when we've been connecting often with other Main Street directors. It's so helpful to bounce ideas off other people who are in a situation similar to you." Mankato City Center Partnership is one of the larger communities in the Main Street Network, and is part of Greater Mankato Growth, which exists to support and promote the economic growth and vitality of our members and the regional marketplace. As part of an organization focused

“People still talk about the success of the first year of Artists on Main Street”

on growth and development, Olson notes how important Main Street data tracking has been. "The data we track and can pull from Main Street is so helpful, and adds to the resources we already have in our own community. It's been so good for us."

Part of the very first Artists on Main Street Cohort, Mankato Main Street sees that program as a catalyst for significant growth. "People still talk about the success of the first year of Artists on Main Street," Olson shared. It kickstarted a lot of other activity, especially murals, in areas of our community that really needed it. We've found huge value from that."

OLIVIA

Susie Lang

Olivia, population 2,300, became a Designated Main Street Program in 2018. Since then, Main Street Director Susie Lang has led Olivia's downtown in efforts to remind locals and visitors alike that their downtown is still an important part of their community. Focusing energy around Artists on Main Street and special events like Touch A Truck, Olivia Main Street has done great work in getting Main Street to reconsider how it can function.

Leveraging Project Assistance Funds allowed Olivia to install new holiday lighted decorations in

their downtown. Olivia, being much smaller than many of our Main Street communities, has taken to heart the Main Street Approach of working with your assets. Olivia is home to seed companies, and Main Street has embraced programming around the town festival of Corn Capital Days. They're sharing programming in public park and pond spaces that welcomes residents of all ages to take part in enjoying what Olivia can offer.

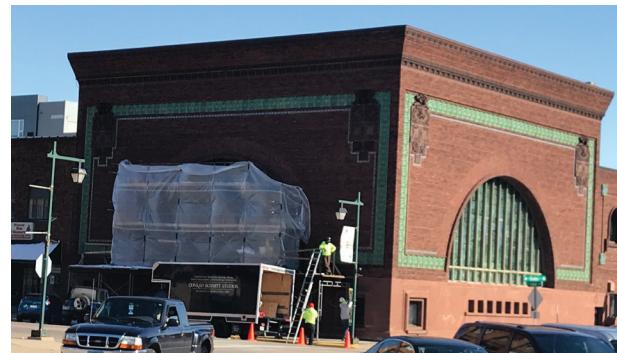
Olivia has been a Main Street Community for just over 2 years, and are still finding the ground under their feet. "Things are going well, and we're gaining momentum," noted Susie Lang, Olivia Main Street Director. "It takes time to change people's perception of downtown. People are starting to notice the change. They may not always know it's Main Street, but they are noticing."

OWATONNA

Shirley Schultz

Owatonna Main Street has been making great strides in supporting their small businesses and the people who run them. When asked what she sees as big successes of the Main Street Program, Owatonna Main Street Director Shirley Schultz points to being an early adopter of Transformation Strategies. "It was so helpful," Shultz stated. "Gathering information and data so we could then create a clear plan to share with people—business owners, residents—that was huge." Truly, Owatonna's work with Matt Schultz from the National Main Street Center helped showcase to other Minnesota Main Street Communities how helpful Transformation Strategies are.

That very connection between Main Street Communities is something that Schultz is so thankful for, especially in the midst of the Covid-19 Pandemic. "Helping everyone adjust and just talk with another person in the same place you are is so helpful. You don't have to explain a lot, but to know you're sharing information and ideas with people who get it is wonderful. You can recreate ideas that work for your community from ideas others have had." Despite the pandemic, Schultz is optimistic about the momentum in downtown



Owatonna. "Historic downtown designation really changed the tone of how Owatonna could grow. It's helped us to get into façade work and future planning. Covid-19 has been really hard, but the shop local energy we've found this year has had people look closely at downtown to see 'how can I fit in.'"

RED WING

Megan Tsui

Megan Tsui, Executive Director of Red Wing Downtown Main Street, admits that 2020 has been hard, but that there are ways to make good things come from difficulty. "We are focusing on what comes next. We're not sure of the next steps, but Main Street has taught us to build on our assets." Red Wing Main Street tackled major challenges early on during the pandemic, creating the "Covid Aware Because We Care" campaign, supporting downtown businesses with masks, information, and marketing help, and ideas that were shared with other Main Street Directors. "Having each other—calling up someone in another town who is not a competitor—to vent, to share ideas—that network creates a soft place to land which allows us to band together. It's an amazing investment to have a team—we're working on the same things just in different towns."

While Red Wing is certainly still navigating the day to day changes the pandemic is bringing, Tsui notes that she's been able to see a silver

Main Street focuses on what assets we've got. We've got makers here—we want more makers here. Having the label that you're 'Made in Red Wing' matters to people globally.

lining. Since the Main Street Approach focuses on noting what you have that works in order to find strategies for growth, Red Wing Downtown Main Street has been able to have discussions about what they want the future to look like. "Main Street focuses on what assets we've got. We've got makers here—we want more makers here. Having the label that you're 'Made in Red Wing' matters to people globally. Our name is important—having the services, assets and community to go along with that creates a really enticing package for businesses looking for a new place to land." Red Wing Downtown Main Street is continually focusing on what's special, what's important to the people who live and work there, and are making comprehensive plans for their downtown's future.

SHAKOPEE

Ashley Grotewold

Shakopee Main Street knows how to draw in crowds. Their annual events like "Rhythm on the Rails" and Holiday Fest drew in thousands of attendees for dining, shopping, music and entertainment. Events like that take months of planning, but when the first round of closures came in early 2020, plans came to a halt. While Rhythm on the Rails was called off for the season, Shakopee Main Street Director Ashley Grotewold and her colleagues at the Shakopee Chamber of Commerce got on the horn to share business hours, opportunities for support, and to reinvent what they could. The Holiday Fest became a socially distanced outdoor market, giving people an opportunity to still spend dollars locally and visit the beloved Christmas tree, although it was lit without the traditional ceremony.

Despite a really tough year, several Shakopee business saw record sales during Small Business Weekend. Restaurants have banded together to share ideas and support each other in ways that simply would never have happened in our "normal" world. Grotewold noted, "It's hard to remember sometimes that there are still things opening, despite the pandemic, to direct people downtown. The future IS bright." Coming together has kept Shakopee going. During a recent conversation with Shakopee Board Members, the conversation about what hard times mean for downtowns came up. They shared that when things are going well it's easy to act as a unit. When things are hard everyone is working on their own survival and not thinking about collaboration, making it hard to stay unified as a district. Main Street Shakopee kept that unity going when the going got tough, and will keep seeking ways to draw in crowds once it's safe, and celebrate the unity they've found in downtown.



LEFT Winona Main Street Coordinator, Ben Strand, prepares for Crazy Days in Downtown Winona. **RIGHT** Nosh Scratch Kitchen taking part in the Dine Out Downtown initiative. Photos courtesy of Ben Strand

WINONA

Ben Strand

The Winona Main Street Program, has already seen a shift in the way people think about downtown. In the past few years Winona has seen major development in the downtown district that hasn't happened in many decades. Main Square, a mixed use development that includes businesses and storefronts, a walkin clinic for Winona Health, a Montessori Preschool, and apartments, is centrally located off Main Street in downtown Winona. Under construction on 2nd Street is a new office building for Fastenal, headquartered in Winona. While the new construction is exciting, it's also important to note that this new development has helped to spur redevelopment of historic downtown buildings. The 102 Walnut Building saw incredible restoration and is now home to Nosh Scratch Kitchen, formerly located in Lake City, as well as numerous offices. A fire at 151 E. Third Street led to major reconstruction, but now includes a business storefront and a number of apartments. "The perspective of downtown has

changed to business owners; there is an increase in foot traffic both weekends and weekdays, shared Winona Main Street Director Ben Strand. "Growth is happening despite Covid-19." People are coming to work and live in downtown Winona, but they're also eager to come downtown for fun. In the spring Winona Main Street worked with the City Council to come up with a plan for how to get folks outdoors downtown while keeping them safe. Through their collaboration, Dine Out Downtown was born. Each Friday through the summer and early fall, several Winona streets were closed down to cars, and businesses and restaurants were able to make use of the sidewalk and streets to serve customers. "Business were thrilled to be able to keep some vibrancy despite limitations," stated Christie Ransom, Winona Chamber of Commerce Executive Director (the Winona Chamber of Commerce houses the Main Street Program). Artists creatively used the street space, puppet shows and musicians put on safe shows, and Winona was still able to find ways to share as a community. Winona Main Street is heading in a good direction, and are continuing to find positive ways to use their knowledge of downtown to make it a safe place people want to be.

**SHARE YOUR
STORY!**

We will never say no to sharing about our Main Street Communities! Share your favorite small businesses, community event, or hometown hero at info@rethos.org.

A YEAR of RESILIENCE

FOR ARTISTS ON MAIN STREET

The ability to think creatively is what defines the artist, but within that creativity is also the skill of adaptation.

BY EMILY KURASH CASEY

RURAL PROGRAMS COORDINATOR

This year has been one of widespread adaptation from the individual to the institution. Within the 2020 Minnesota Artists on Main Street cohort, this intersection of creativity and adaptability is on full display. Not to be deterred by a global pandemic, the Minnesota Main Street communities of Northfield, Wabasha, and Willmar forged ahead with their Artists on Main Street programs. With each community in their second year of the program, the themes, approaches, and artistic responses varied, but each saw the program as a necessary step for keeping community spirits high while offering a sense of normalcy and escape.

Northfield's Main Street Director Greg Siems entered his position partway through the community's first Artists on Main Street program and was looking forward to engaging with the process as a whole. When the process became derailed in early-March, Greg and the Northfield Arts and Cultural Commission were forced to change

course. They quickly realized that, not only were the funds needed, but the program could offer something more to the community. Working with the theme "visions of Northfield's Future" they opted against the lots of little approach, which was the first year's goal with Artists on Main Street, instead opening up submissions to larger projects with broader visions.

This approach resulted in two wildly different projects. Local glass artist Geralyn Thelen, alongside metal artist Dave Lewis conducted a two part project called Spreading Love/Finding the Heart of Northfield. The pair began by creating a 6-foot tall metal tree with glass hearts in place of leaves on a prominent intersection in Northfield. Interested downtown businesses were then given a 6-inch glass heart to display in their store, with a corresponding scavenger hunt where the first five people to complete the hunt would be gifted with their own glass heart.

The second project, Musical Portraits of Northfield, will create songs about different places in Northfield with music videos



ABOVE Artists Geralyn Thelen and Dave Lewis with the Spreading Love sculpture. Photo provided by Northfield Downtown Development Corporation

These projects will show that, even under the circumstances, things are happening, people are doing good work, and there are opportunities to get out and experience the community.

filmed at each place. The project is the brainchild of Louis Epstein and Daniel Groll, who make up the family music duo Louis and Dan and the Invisible Band. Louis and Dan are currently working with schools to crowdsource ideas for songs with plans to shoot videos and hopefully do an outdoor performance in the Spring/Summer.

Speaking to the challenges of the times we are in, Greg recognizes that it can be difficult to find bits of normalcy. He believes that Artist on Main Street helps provide a sense of normalcy, while also showing community members that there is still momentum and that the world is still going. These projects will show that, even under the circumstances, things are happening, people are doing good work, and there are opportunities to get out and experience the community.

Situated along the Mississippi River, Wabasha decided to use their mighty flowing neighbor as inspiration for this year's theme - Sounds and Movements of the Mississippi. Main Street Director Mark Flicek hoped that the broad topic would open the program up to people and businesses, who might not normally consider themselves artists. The result is 7 projects that intersect with various aspects of the river town's culture.

While Mary had hoped for a robust series of projects to draw people into downtown alongside the river, she has been pleased with the virtual results: Ukulele lessons with the local library, dramatic artistic interpretations of the rivers with video vignettes available online, and giving away 50 art kits for children and displaying their work in local windows. In addition to the virtual projects, one artist created an interactive quilt. This quilt contained a narrative about river dwelling animals and will remain on display downtown before

Continued on page 28...

Stay hopeful, stay safe, and BUY LOCAL

Rethos' Rural Programs Staff connect with local Main Street Programs on a daily basis.

Covid-19 is wreaking havoc on their small businesses (with restaurants being especially hard hit) and forcing Main Street staff and volunteers to continually rethink programming and fundraising opportunities that seemed secure only months ago. Their commitment and passion for their community is evident. I'm used to seeing it in the enthusiasm and contagious excitement that is visible when they're sharing new ideas, wins, successful fundraisers or development programs.

We're also seeing that commitment and passion in a new light. We're seeing it through tears, through concern and frustration, not only for their own programs, but also for their friends and neighbors who own businesses and are stakeholders in a place for reasons beyond just a paycheck. They are scared for the restaurant owners who don't know if they're going to be able to weather another month of being closed. They're disappointed that events and celebrations that bring the community joy are cancelled. It is hard and Main Streets try to be the sunshine when everything feels cloudy, but it's been a long, tough year.

We are proud though, to say that there's still hope. Main Streets are the poster child for resilience. The Main Street Approach has proven time and again that there is always a new way to look at a challenge. Main Street

Continued on page 28...





Districts know how to identify and prioritize their assets, and that's just what they're doing now. The pandemic has certainly thrown downtowns for a loop, but Main Streets are good at being scrappy, starting small and using lots of little things to make a big impact. They're still planning for the future, even if when that future can begin remains a little blurry.

It's encouraging to hear from small retailers in our Main Street Districts share that, despite a horrid year, their Small Business Saturday weekend broke in-store records. People from towns all over the state are finally taking to heart the message that spending locally matters. Our team is hopeful that this message sticks, and in years to come people continue to spend on the shops and businesses that make up the fabric of their community. If you haven't made a purchase from a small retailer or locally owned restaurant in your community yet this holiday shopping season and you have the income to do so, consider it my personal challenge to you to make it happen!

Megan Tsui, Red Wing Downtown Main Street Executive Director, sums up Rethos: Main Streets as 2020 comes to a close:

"At the end of the day I know there's a lot of heartbreak, and fear, and angst about the future, but there is tremendous amount of opportunity for us. I'm trying to focus on shoring up and stabilizing who and what is here, and work on a new vision for our downtown."



Emily Kurash Casey
RURAL PROGRAMS COORDINATOR

moving to the local library. Another artist is seeking to do a repurposed signage class and is adapting their original idea to better suit guidelines for maintaining safety. The only quasi-public event has been three socially distanced concerts by Wabasha Woodwind. Taking place along the river where music could be heard throughout downtown, giving some sense of normalcy to residents.

In addition to these multiple projects, this year's Artist on Main Street resulted in the town's first permanent public art piece. The Cycledelic Fence is an installation made of salvaged bike wheel parts and mounted atop a colorful foundation. Using aluminum tubing, the bicycle forks are able to shift and spin on the axles with the wind, serving as a vibrant quasi-weather vane. Reflecting on the way the sun shines through the spinning bicycle parts, Mary remarks that every time she drives into town the fence provides a joyful greeting and she can't help but smile.

Continuing in spite of the pandemic was a no brainer for Mary. Not only did she see the creativity that people were exhibiting in adapting to the pandemic, but she also realized a need for the community to engage in something positive when everything seems dreadful. More importantly she sees this round of projects as a symbol of something bigger, "We had to mark this point in time in our lives that we lived through a pandemic. A pandemic creates a certain kind of art, you become more reflective of your time, of nature, of yourself."

One of the most difficult aspects of 2020 is the inability to gather and utilize public spaces. Undeterred by this, Willmar once again



ABOVE Cycledelic! Bike Fence alongside River Rider Cycles bike shop. Photo courtesy of Wabasha Main Street.

The Artists on Main Street program is itself investing in the ideas and actions of rural Minnesota's most creative thinkers to create vibrant spaces.

revisited their 2019 theme of 'creating gathering spaces' for their 2020 Artist on Main Street cohort. In theory, creating a gathering space would seem difficult during a global pandemic, but most of Willmar's applications came after the initial lockdown had been put in place. However, the biggest hurdle was how to still connect everything to downtown. As projects have evolved the ability to have installations that people can visit on their own time has helped maintain downtown as a vibrant social space.

Main Street Director Sarah Swedburg also opted for the lots of little approach, which she feels is more reflective of and conducive to Willmar's diversity. In framing the community as a tapestry, Sarah sees an opportunity to bring in people with really good ideas across Willmar's diverse populations who might not feel like they can step into traditional leadership roles. Using this approach, Willmar funded five projects while receiving outside funding for an additional five.

Thus far three of the five Artist on Main Street funded projects have been completed. A community theater hosted a series of kids classes called Child's Play, that incorporated downtown businesses into arts based virtual learning initiatives. Along the side of Becker Market, a large scale mosaic of broken pottery, marbles, and assorted items serves as Willmar's first permanent public art piece. Two projects are still in progress downtown: a photo exhibit at three restaurants around downtown as well as a series of informational Somali cooking classes providing cooking kits from Somali grocery stores downtown.

The third completed project involving yarn bombing, creating patterned fabric to put around trees, extended its reach internationally. While some socially distanced workshops were held at Spurs Grill & Bar, this project utilized Do-It-Yourself at home methods, which included a Facebook page for the project.



AVOBE Yarn bomb created for Rainbow Trees of Willmar. Photo courtesy of Willmar Main Street.

One resident on the page shared the project, inspiring their family in South Africa to create a yarn bomb and decorate trees in their own town. In addition to creating a vibrant outdoor gathering space along the 4th Street commercial district this act has symbolically joined Willmar's downtown to South Africa through the sharing of art.

Engaging in small scale projects with lasting impact is something Sarah sees as a long term investment in Willmar. While an event that brings out thousands of people is great she sees the act of creating space, empowering residents, and fostering local pride as essential to the sustained importance of Willmar's downtown.

With a variety of projects across all three towns, each one has shown the power of the arts in reflecting a sense of pride-in-place that further establishes local investment. The Artists on Main Street program is itself investing in the ideas and actions of rural Minnesota's most creative thinkers to create vibrant spaces.

During a time when we can feel disconnected from community, Artists on Main Street continues to unite and inspire, finding new means of exploration to bring communities together.

OTTER TAIL COUNTY

STORY MAPPING

PROJECT

Neighborly story sharing and myth making are ingrained in the fabric of every community. In the midst of a global pandemic, the Otter Tail County Story Mapping Project has been forced to rethink how these actions, formerly the cornerstones of community identity and engagement, can be practiced with safety and consideration. In collaboration with our community and story mapping partners on the ground in Otter Tail County, we decided to host two virtual events highlighting some of the ongoing projects in an effort to create a virtual communal atmosphere across the expansive county.

The Otter Tail County Story Mapping Project (OTCSMP) is a project by Rethos: Places Reimagined in partnership with the Otter Tail County Historical Society and Springboard for the Arts. The purpose of this project is to collect and map the stories of Otter Tail County, engaging community members through small projects led by local organizations, historians, artists, students, businesses, etc. These creative community-led projects aim to bring a greater awareness, foster interaction, and build relationships around the people, places, events, cultural traditions, objects, family histories, and folkways that are important to local residents. Ultimately the project will culminate with Otter Tail County's community stories on a customized digital story map showcasing the cultural assets that are important to Otter Tail County's history and identity. The story map will then become a local resource for Otter Tail County that can be used for economic

development strategies, safeguarding heritage resources, tourism, and planning or policy decision making.

For the virtual community sessions two themed events showcased four in-progress projects were presented by their creators. Presentations were followed by short Q&A sessions and concluding with breakout rooms for neighbors across Otter Tail County to meet and reminisce about their own experiences with the event themes. The first event, titled *Water and Wood: Stories about the Lakes and Cabins of Otter Tail County*, featured Jan Smith and Steve Henning presenting on the history and memory of lakes and cabins respectively.

Otter Tail County's 1,000 lakes (and more ponds) Have Stories to Tell by Jan Smith is collection stories from those who use lakes throughout Otter



Tail County for a variety of reasons. By placing story collection boxes around Otter Tail County Jan hopes to elicit reflections on the relationships to lakes that so many, young and old, share throughout the county.

Steve Henning's project, "The Wadena Beach Story," will be a documentary telling the stories of settler families who built cabins around Wadena beach, with a particular focus on those on the north shore of Blanche Lake. Exploring the history of seven families who settled around the lake and how their presence is still felt in the region.

The second event, *The Taste of Community: Foodways of Otter Tail County*, focused on relationships to food amongst various groups throughout the county. With the presenters, Kandace Creel Falcón and Jon Solinger, both drawing connections to the importance of food in building community identity broadly, as well as for immigrant populations historically and presently.

Jon Solinger's *Common Ground: Community Garden Portraits* spotlights the farmers working the soil at the Pelican Rapids community garden. This multi-faceted project includes photographic portraits taken of the gardeners along with their own hand drawn maps of individual garden plots and interviews about how and why they raise their chosen produce. These stories will tell the ways that diverse people use food and cultivate soil to satisfy our universal need for nourishment.

These creative community-led projects aim to bring a greater awareness, foster interaction, and build relationships around the people, places, events, cultural traditions, objects, family histories, and folkways that are important to local residents.

Nourishing Narratives: A Latinx Foodmap of Community Comida by Kandace Creel Falcón will result in a multi-media foodmap exploring the tradition of food for Latinx people throughout Otter Tail County. Nourishing Narratives will examine foodways across

three tiers: restaurants and workers, workers in meat processing plants, and the personal connection to home cooking in rural Minnesota. Across these three tiers Kandace will collect stories and media to visually represent the places and people across Otter Tail County building community through food. Additionally, a series of paintings will be created drawing from the geography, symbolism, and stories collected by those interviewed.

Throughout both events attendees were encouraged to share their own experiences with the themes at hand. As lakes and cabins are a strong source of cultural identity throughout the county, many shared stories about their own experiences with fishing, cabin, and lake culture, ranging from cautionary tales of young love to the community legend of a gigantic taxidermized fish at a local restaurant. One attendee shared a story of family-lore - regarding a chipmunk climbing into her grandfather's pants and the scantily clad aftermath. There were also reflections on the connection to be had with eating food locally, as well as specific familial relationships to food and tradition. Needless to say attendees of A Taste of Community walked away with swelled appetites.

These four projects are only a sampling of what is in development with the Otter Tail County Story Mapping Project. Stay tuned as the projects come together fully over the next six months and are catalogued in story map form. In the meantime as we continue to isolate and perhaps settle into a more singular existence it is important to remember the broader aspects of ourselves. Where we find ourselves placed in the world, the assemblage of ever growing stories imprinted on landscapes and persons, where we have been, and especially where we are going. Reminders that we are not alone and are part of a greater whole, an odd selection of neighbors bound by place, memory, and good food.



PLACES REIMAGINED

Published by the
Preservation Alliance of Minnesota
d.b.a. Rethos
416 Landmark Center
75 W. Fifth St.
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Phone: 651.293.9047
rethos.org

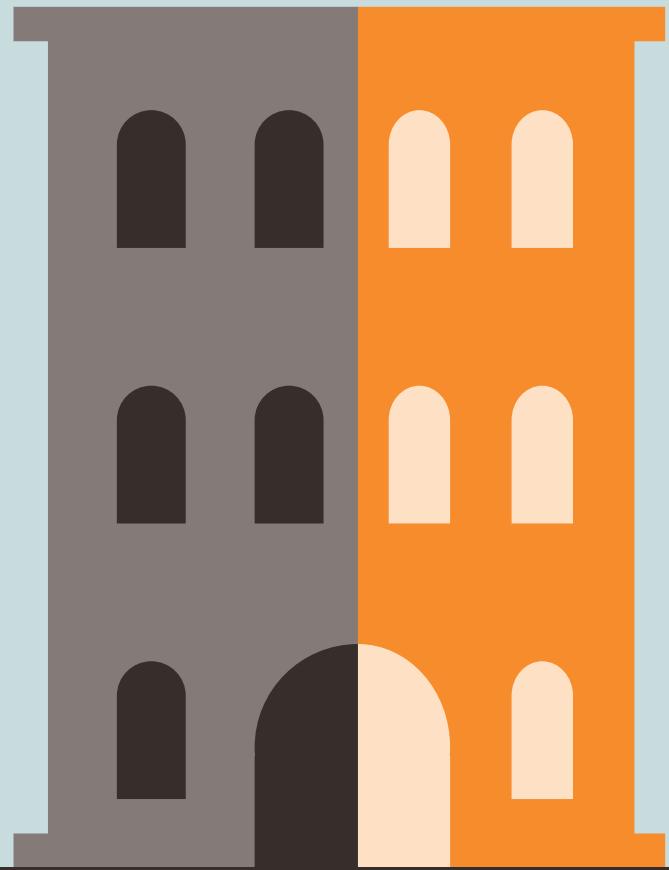
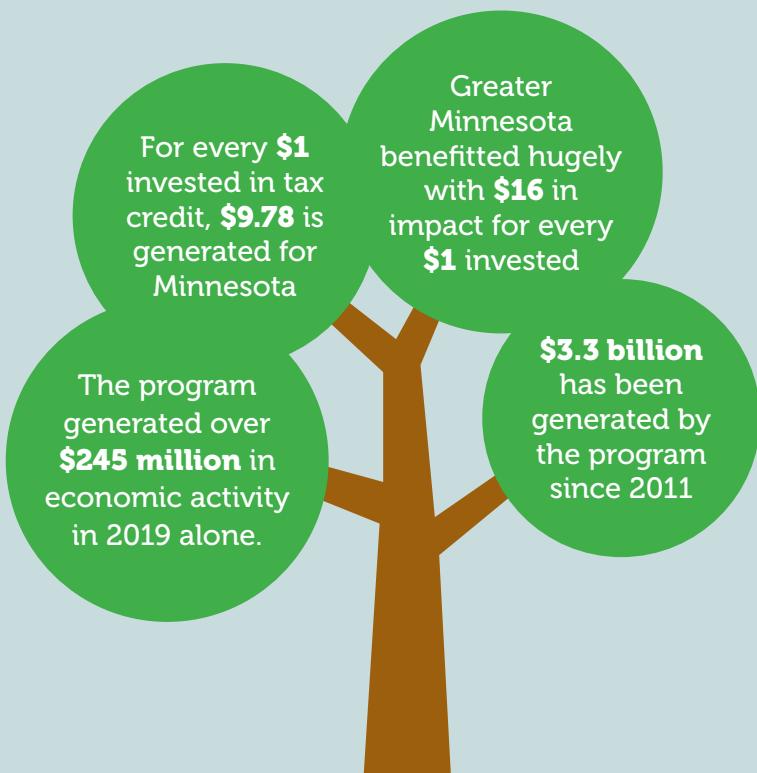
Return Service Requested

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
TWIN CITIES, MN
PERMIT NO. 7241

REVITALIZE MN

Extending the Minnesota Historic Structure Rehabilitation Tax Credit

ECONOMIC IMPACT



JOB CREATION ↑

18,000 jobs created since 2011

The program touches **97%** of the industries in Minnesota

POTENTIAL LOSS ↓

Minnesota stands to lose **\$1.1 billion** in labor dollars annually and thousands of good paying jobs over the next ten years