Mainstreet Waynesboro, Inc.

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Eligible communities are part of Pennsylvania Downtown Center’s statewide network of nearly 200 organizations, including Main Street and Elm Street programs, making the Townies a competitive award process each year, the PDC said in the news release.  “We are very humbled and honored for the recognition,” said Bill Kohler, Mainstreet Waynesboro’s director of economic development. “The Townie Awards are very prestigious and mean a lot to our organization and really help validate the work that we do.”  The One Brick at a Time project started with a Keep America Beautiful painting grant in collaboration with Zoe Tsoukatos, co-owner of Zoe’s Chocolate Co., and then transformed into a community project that not only improved the aesthetics of Zoe’s building, but also turned the walkway into a safe, bright and colorful traveling point for people to reach Main Street.  Highlights of the project were café-style string lights, brick pavers stretching the entire walkway, white lattice screens to cover air conditioners, a candy land drawing by former intern Veronica Camp, colorful tables and chairs and big urban-style planters filled with flowers.  “We literally turned a dark, trash-littered and dangerous walkway into a place where people take photos, feel safe walking from back parking areas and hang out with some coffee and chocolate,” Kohler said. “The community really got behind this project and supported it with donations and grants. It really was a tremendous community accomplishment.”  “We even had a community member offer to pay for the Frozoe chocolate mousse when we cut the ribbon for the new walkway, which we renamed Chocolate Alley,” Kohler said. “So many people had a part in this. This is a community award.”  Cooley served as an intern during the 2018-19 school year through the Waynesboro Area Senior High School’s Cooperative Education program run by teacher and coordinator Thomas Hoffman.  Cooley played a key role in planning several Mainstreet events, including Puppies in the Park, One Brick at a Time, Market at the Park and the Chocolate Extravaganza.  “Marcus also played a big role in increasing our presence on social media, especially Instagram and Facebook,” Kohler said.  Cooley played a big role in Mainstreet establishing a downtown-centered podcast, one of the only of its kind in the state.  “He took care of all of the technical aspects and set up the logistics to get us started. He even served as the co-host until he left for college in the summer of 2019,” Kohler added.  Kohler and Cooley went on to host nearly a dozen episodes of “Downtown Now!” and made a presentation on the topic at the state conference in Erie in 2019.  F&M Trust sponsored the podcasts. Kohler plans to begin recording new podcasts by the end of the year, featuring local businesses and focusing on trends and tips for downtown stores and eateries.  Kohler said the key with interns is to get to know them and make them feel part of the team. Mainstreet has had several top-notch high school and college interns since 2016.  “Once you find their strengths, give them room to grow and some ownership of projects. I knew Marcus was smart and capable as I had known him since he was in elementary school. He also was very driven toward success, which was what made the ‘Downtown Now!’ podcast get off the ground quickly and become a success,” Kohler said.  For more information about Mainstreet, visit mainstreetwaynesboro.org or follow them on Facebook, Instagram and Tik Tok.  The awards ceremony typically takes place as part of PDC’s [annual statewide conference](about:blank), held in a different commonwealth community each year highlighting the respective city or town’s accomplishments in community and neighborhood revitalization.  This year’s conference in Reading has been postponed until 2021 when both 2020 and 2021 Townie Award winners will be recognized. This year’s winners will be featured in PDC’s winter newsletter, the “CenterPiece,” and highlighted throughout the year on the website.  Other 2020 winners include:  **Organization Development:** [Easton Main Street Initiative a subsidiary of Greater Easton Development Partnership](about:blank) – “Easton’s Community Communications”  **Community Partnerships:**  [Downtown Inc](about:blank), York’s Main Street Program – “Together for the Better”  **Individual Façade Restoration:** [West Reading Community Revitalization Foundation, West Reading Main Street](about:blank) – “West Reading Motor Club” Formally the A-Z Building  **Public Space Improvement:** [Downtown Connellsville, an initiative of Fayette County Cultural Trust](about:blank), “Connellsville Public Art – Leading the Way”  **Special or Neighborhood Events:**  [Venture Lititz](about:blank), Lititz’s Main Street Program – “Fire & Ice 2019”  **Retail Promotions:** [Easton Main Street Initiative a subsidiary of Greater Easton Development Partnership](about:blank) – “Creative Holiday”  **Anchor building award:** [Venture Lititz](about:blank), Lititz’s Main Street Program – “Wilbur Chocolate Factory”  Pennsylvania Downtown Center Executive Director Julie Fitzpatrick said the annual Townie awards “provide an opportunity for us to celebrate these exceptional and inspiring community revitalization projects throughout our commonwealth.  “Our Main Street and Elm Street programs, staff, board and volunteers work tirelessly throughout the year to make impactful change in their business districts and neighborhoods, and the Townies give us a chance to reflect on these success stories,” Fitzpatrick said. | |