



Tower Times

Marion Main Street
PO Box 535
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March 2008

Letter from the President

We have a banner year coming up. A fund raiser called Dining to Donate at Applebees, a taste of Marion, a Main Street Day at the Miners Park this June 27th, and a grandiose week in September starting with the Celebration of Freedom play at the Civic Center on Friday, the Veterans on Parade on Saturday, the Veterans reunion also on Saturday at the VFW and the Vietnam Memorial Wall all in the first week of September.

Our fund raising is coming along just great. Our target of \$8,000 for the 2007/2008 year has been met and we should do the same for 2008/2009. Our membership drive is now enhanced by various gifts offered to those new members who sign up, thanks to Terance Henry and Alan Rushing. The name of Marion Main Street is now fairly well known to the general public and almost all of the businesses in Marion. This wasn't always the case. Marion Main Street is on the move! A big thanks to all. Especially to Bob Jackson who designed the banners around town and the displays for the Main Street convention in Springfield, a job well done.

Thank You!

Jo Loomis, President

Promotions Committee News

Hello and as Promotions director we have some great news!

We now have a Coffee shop open in downtown Marion. Latta Java Located 2 Doors South of Adams Shoe Store serves coffee's, teas, lunch, & More! They will also deliver to local business free of charge! Hours are

- 7 am-4 pm but will more than likely change due to the increase of business
- Also I am pleased to report the antique mall on North Madison will be opening soon. They will bring in vendors from all over southern Illinois. They hope to be open sometime in March or early April!
- Construction work will begin soon to the Williams hotel which will be the new home to Meredith Ashe, but she likes to be called "M". She plans on bringing her popular clothing store from Town and Country shopping centre to downtown Marion next door to Bennie's.
- Did anyone Notice the New Nascar store! Its open and ready for your business and appears to be doing well! Marion Main Street wishes them the best of luck!

If there's anyone or anything that I left out please let me know and I will be sure to add you next time, & please feel free to stop by Latta Java and lets talk about how we can better promote downtown Marion!

I also need committee members for the future upcoming events! If you are interested, please stop in and let me know.

Thanks again and
Go wildcats

Terance Henry
Promotions director of Marion Main Street

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Open House

Join us at the open house for Latta Java on March 10th at 10 am.

Mark your Calendar

- April 21 Annual Dinner
- June 27 Evening with the Miners
- Sept. 5 Celebration of Freedom
- Sept. 6 Veterans Parade
- Sept 4-8 Viet Nam Wall in Marion



Twenty Five New Businesses and Counting in Downtown Marion

In the past six years the Marion Main Street organization has seen significant growth of downtown Marion.

This growth occurred as a result of businesses moving from a previous location and/or starting a new business downtown. In addition, seven businesses have expanded and two businesses have improved their buildings due to growth.

One of the largest and most extensive projects has been the major renovation of the five story State building on the square into what will be new retail on the first floor, professional offices on the second floor, and apartments/condominiums on the remaining floors with the expectation of being completed in the next several months.

New construction downtown includes the Marion Cultural and Civic Center which seats 1050, Marion's proud peacock on the Tower Square that opened its doors in 2004. Other new buildings are the CVS Pharmacy, Doug's Locksmith, Baysinger's Design Group, Family Video and First Baptist Church.

New businesses moving into existing buildings are, Little Egypt Arts Assoc. which has also renovated and expanded to the second floor, Fox Sports Cards and Memorabilia, Williamson County Court House Annex, Dreams Do Come True, WBVN radio station, APC Sales & Service, Pop's BBQ, Melise's Consignment, Taco John's, Papa Murphy's, the Salvation Army, Wilson McReynolds Funeral Home, Gretchen's Flowers and Gifts, Auto Specialist's, Crane Printing, Handfuls on Purpose, the Nascar Store, and two new antique stores.

The old Marion Hospital has a sale pending to a California company, and if successful, we're told will be used for a special care facility.

The newest addition to downtown is a coffee shop, LATTA JAVA, now open on north Market Street next to Randy's Chop Shop, as well as a new antique shop next door to LATTA JAVA. A new restaurant

the square next to Hill Printing, which by the way, has also expanded with the purchase of a print shop in Harrisburg.

Other businesses which have expanded are, Walt's Pizza, Sandi's Sewing Center, Hilliard Lyons, and Adams Shoe store.

The Tower Square has seen the addition of antique French Quarter style lampposts on the circle and around the square as well as some new sidewalks. Mayor Butler has also budgeted for the remaining improvements of sidewalks and additional antique lamppost on the square, thus eliminating the unsightly 30 foot lampposts and wiring from years past as well as a substantial savings in electricity. A number of businesses have also installed French Quarter lampposts.

Marion's growth downtown has been spectacular. There are only three empty stores that are waiting for someone to take advantage of the 16,000 cars that pass through the Tower Square every day. Then there are the nine hundred people that work in and around the square and the multiple of 1000's who take advantage of the many services offered by these dedicated workers. In addition, just think of the many people who take in the opportunities at the Marion Cultural & Civic Centre and all the residents who come downtown to do business and shop or eat making the atmosphere downtown a very busy place.

We are proud of the many changes in the Marion area at large and especially proud of the activity taking place in our downtown. We wish to thank all who have had a hand in making our downtown a better place for all now and for generations to come. While we still have much to be accomplished, we thought it would be good to pause for a moment and reflect where we have come in the last six years.



NEWS! NEWS! - MARION MAIN STREET EXTRA!

Columnist Jim Davidson is coming to Marion! Known for writing encouraging insights and positive perspectives about people and communities, Jim Davidson will be the Keynote Speaker for Marion Main Street's Annual Awards Dinner and Meeting on Monday, **April 21**, 2008, beginning at 6:00 p.m. at the Marion Cultural and Civic Center. He will entertain; he will advise; and he will inspire!

The **Annual Awards Dinner and Meeting** is designed to include anyone who is interested in community betterment, and who works as a volunteer or would like to. Volunteer-based organization leaders will enjoy and be inspired by Jim Davidson's humor and encouragement. Jim delights in motivating caring people to get involved and make a difference in every community he visits.

"Learning, Earning, and Giving Back" is the book Jim Davidson has written to show the way with an idea and a plan. He has spearheaded a project in his hometown of Conway, Arkansas, and others. It is called "A Bookcase For Every Child." The profit from his book goes back into the community which starts its own Bookcase Project aimed at improving literacy among children at risk. Anyone who is interested in or deals with literacy issues will be highly inspired by Jim Davidson's approach to this problem. He notes that **volunteers** working in a team effort are the key to success, whether in this project or in any community action activity.

The program for the evening includes other very special guests as well. Samantha Guesentine, Miss John A. Logan Pageant Queen, and Meredith McCoy, Miss Southern Illinois Pageant Queen will entertain with their winning musical talent. In addition, if there are no "missed calls or fouls", our great Marion High School Football Coach, Kerry Martin, will ignite a fresh spark of enthusiasm with his words of wisdom. You will have a chance at many choice items in a Silent Auction, and the person who brings the most people to the banquet will win a valuable gift. From the minute you enter the door you will walk through the Newsy Arch of Opportunity, fill your mouth with "storied sensational" food, delight your eyes with "picture-perfect" ambience, and be reenergized by the "Extra! Extra!" scoop on the message.

Marion Main Street and The Marion Daily Republican is honored to provide this opportunity to all Marion community leaders and volunteers to hear Jim Davidson's uplifting story, and be reminded that all our volunteer hours and donations really count. "Yes, we CAN make a difference in our town" is a worthy motto.

Your purchase of a ticket for this event is your agreement and willingness to "make a difference." The meal will be catered by Walt's Restaurant. Tickets are on sale for \$25.00 and are available from the Civic Center office, (997-4030), Main Street Executive Director Bob Stein (993-5299), the Marion Daily Republican (993- 2626), and are limited to the first 130 responses. The proceeds will cover expenses for the event and help to fund special projects by Marion Main Street, such as Patriots Day activities, Christmas On The Square, and facilitate partnering with other Marion groups to build up the community in many ways.

**Annual Dinner
..... Be sure to
attend**

*"Help us get the
word out about
this special event"*



Marion Civic Center



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We are on the move.



MARION
MAIN STREET INC

TO:

Vietnam Wall coming to Marion in 2008

Marion Main Street will be hosting the Traveling Vietnam Wall September 4-8. The Wall is a traveling replica of the Viet Nam Wall Memorial in Washington DC. The Wall will be in Marion for over a week and be the featured attraction for our Freedom Celebration and the Vets on Parade annual event.

We expect visitors to come from several miles around. This is the largest of the traveling memorials and is a true memorial to those who served our country so well.

Sponsors are needed. If you would like to help, contact Bob Stein or Jo Loomis.

