

**Paducah, Kentucky Honored with 2010 Great American Main Street
Award®**
*National Trust for Historic Preservation Praises Arts-Driven Revitalization
Strategy*

WASHINGTON, D.C. (May 5, 2010) — Yesterday, the National Trust for Historic Preservation announced that Paducah Renaissance Alliance in Paducah, Ky., is a winner of the **2010 Great American Main Street Awards®** (GAMSA). Distinguishing itself by focusing on incentives and the arts as a revitalization strategy, Paducah Renaissance Alliance was honored at the Main Street Awards Ceremony during the National Main Streets Conference in Oklahoma City, Okla.

The National Trust Main Street Center's annual GAMSA winners are recognized for their exceptional accomplishments in revitalizing the nation's historic and traditional Main Street commercial districts by using the proven Main Street Four-Point Approach®.

To celebrate the achievement, a public reception will take place at 1:30 p.m. (CDT) Friday, May 7 at Paducah's downtown gazebo, located at the corner of 2nd and Broadway streets.

Paducah Main Street's Artist Relocation Program has proven to be a hugely successful revitalization strategy – one that has been emulated by many other cities. By offering artists from across the U.S. attractive financial incentives to rehabilitate historic homes and buildings for living and working space, the city now has a critical mass of creative residents and related galleries, arts-related businesses, and an arts school. Dramatically improving quality of life and the local economy, Paducah Renaissance Alliance's efforts have yielded a net gain of 234 new businesses and 1,000 new jobs.

“Paducah boasts nearly \$200 million in yearly tourism income from its strong arts and cultural district. That's an impressive figure for a city of 26,000 people,” said Doug Loescher, director of the National Trust Main Street Center. “Paducah Renaissance Alliance has reversed years of negative public perceptions by creating a ‘historically hip’ downtown filled with beautiful buildings and exciting attractions. Paducah raises the bar for maintaining an authentic community while becoming a major tourist destination.”

Paducah is one of more than 80 Kentucky communities working in partnership with the Kentucky Main Street Program, the oldest statewide Main Street revitalization program in the nation, administered by the Kentucky Heritage Council/State Historic Preservation Office. Since the program was established in 1979, more than \$3.5 billion in public-private funding has been reinvested back into the state's economy.

In 2009 alone, Kentucky Main Street and Renaissance on Main programs reported more than \$350 million invested in downtowns through these programs, representing:

- 1,971 net jobs in Main Street districts;
- 377 new businesses created; and
- 417 downtown buildings rehabilitated.

This investment, totaling \$350,649,922, includes:

- \$127,486,018 in public investment;
- \$223,163,904 in private investment; and
- 80,792 volunteer hours committed by board members and community supporters.

According to Chris Black, “As chairman of the Kentucky Heritage Council and a resident of Paducah, I am proud and thrilled that my hometown has been recognized for its efforts in becoming a center for cultural arts through preservation and redevelopment of Paducah’s Downtown and LowerTown neighborhoods. This prestigious award represents decades of work and commitment by many thousands of volunteers and our entire community, and recognizes the leadership of the Kentucky Main Street Program.”

“Paducah has been working with the Kentucky Main Street Program for more than 20 years and has done some really creative work, particularly with the Artist Relocation Program and streetscape project, which have brought excitement back to their downtown and riverfront areas and make it a very vibrant city,” said Mark Dennen, Kentucky Heritage Council executive director and state historic preservation officer. “Along with Danville, which earned the award in 2001, Kentucky now has two Great American Main Street communities.”

The other four 2010 GAMSAs winners are Main Street Columbus, Columbus, Miss.; Downtown Fairmont, Fairmont, W.Va.; Downtown Ferndale, Ferndale, Mich.; and Downtown Lee’s Summit, Lee’s Summit, Mo.

GAMSAs winners demonstrate exemplary achievement in the process of strengthening their downtowns and commercial districts based on selection criteria including active involvement of the public and private sectors, broad-based community support for the revitalization effort, quality of achievements over time and commitment to historic preservation.

The winners were selected by a national jury composed of former award winners, community development professionals, governmental agency representatives who are active in community economic development and historic preservation. The 2010 Great American Main Street Awards are sponsored by Chesapeake Energy.

The Main Street Four-Point Approach® is a proven methodology for historic preservation-based economic development that was developed by the National Trust for Historic Preservation 30 years ago and is used in more than 2,000 communities throughout the U.S.

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Established in 1980, the National Trust Main Street Center® helps communities of all sizes revitalize their older and historic commercial districts. Working in more than 2,200 downtowns and urban neighborhoods over the last 29 years, the Main Street program has leveraged more than \$44.9 billion in new public and private investment. Participating communities have created 370,514 net new jobs and 82,909 net new businesses and rehabilitated more than 199,500 buildings, leveraging an average of \$25.36 in new investment for every dollar spent on their Main Street district revitalization efforts. To learn about previous GAMSAs winners, visit www.preservationnation.org/main-street/awards/gamsa/

An agency of the Kentucky Tourism, Arts and Heritage Cabinet, the Kentucky Heritage Council / State Historic Preservation Office is responsible for the identification, protection and preservation of prehistoric resources and historic buildings, sites and cultural resources throughout the Commonwealth, in partnership with other state and federal agencies, local communities and interested citizens. This mission is integral to making communities more livable and has a far-ranging impact on issues as diverse as economic development, jobs creation, affordable housing, tourism, community revitalization, environmental conservation and quality of life. www.heritage.ky.gov