

# DOWNTOWN GOLDSBORO WINS BIG

Downtown Goldsboro was recognized by the NC Main Street Center at the 2009 NC Main Street Annual Conference and Awards Program held in Statesville, NC, January 29, 2009 with four awards! The Downtown Goldsboro Development Corporation submitted nominations in several categories for projects, events or initiatives that have occurred recently and won the top award in the categories of Best Economic Development Incentive Program for the Homeownership Program, Best Historic Rehabilitation Project for the 1939 Goldsboro Fire Department Headquarters Building, Best Downtown Special Event for the Ice Cream Social and Pet Parade and a Special Recognition for the Best Public-Private Partnership for the Paramount Theatre. The Goldsboro Main Street Community was recognized with more awards than any other NC Main Street Community this year.



Before



After

The Fire Department Headquarters restoration project won because it is perhaps the most distinctive contribution to the local depression era Works Progress Administration (WPA) construction beginning in 1935, a similar federal government economic initiative to the current Obama Economic Stimulus Package. The primary purpose of the WPA effort and the New Deal Agency was to employ unemployed blue-collar workers. The structure has been deemed as a “Significant Structure” to our locally certified Goldsboro Historic District and it is situated centrally from the eastern and western boundaries of the district. The building went through all 3 phases of condemnation and then the local Historic District Commission enforced a six-month stay on the demolition. As things began to change for downtown in a positive direction, this building was a constant

reminder of our past neglect and soon became a hot topic. Many community leaders wanted to tear it down as a quick fix; however, others had very fond memories of the building or felt that it was architecturally unique enough to keep. When the wrecking ball deadline was looming near, concerned citizens prepared a petition to “Save the Station.” A gentleman took the petition to the Mayor and asked for his help to step in and see what he could do to protect the structure. Mayor Al King was happy to help and prepared a letter to the property owner asking for her patience and provided her assurance that the City would no longer pressure her to tear it down as long as she was willing to work with the DGDC to find a buyer that had an interest in restoring the historic structure. The owner decided to hold off on the demolition and concede to the Mayor’s request. Within weeks of this decision Mr. Bobby Parker stepped in with an interest to buy the building. Phase I of the restoration project was complete August 15, 2008. All of the original features that existed in the building were repaired and remain. This project, more than any other downtown project to date, proved to our community that a historic building, even in the third stage of condemnation and declared demolition worthy, can be saved, restored and reused offering a productive use to the community. We applaud all of those people involved in saving this building: Mayor Al King, Kerry Thompson, Charlie Gaylor, Ms. Jane Snipes-Webber, members of the DGDC staff and board, staff of the City of Goldsboro, Historic District Commission and State Historic Preservation Office and Dean Ruedrich but, most importantly Bobby Parker, the purchaser and investor!

**H O M E**  **OWNERSHIP** **PROGRAM**

**Up to \$5,000!**

**Down Payment Assistance**  
*Now Available to Everyone!*

The City of Goldsboro Home Ownership Program provides funds to homebuyers purchasing a home in a defined area of downtown. The loan is forgiven after five years of residency in the home purchased. The City of Goldsboro will match a home buyers down payment costs up to \$5,000 towards a loan/mortgage amount of \$150,000 or less. Other eligibility criteria applies. Contact the Community Development Department at (919) 580-4316 for more details. Program brochure accessible at [www.ci.goldsboro.nc.us](http://www.ci.goldsboro.nc.us).

The Homeownership Program won Best Economic Development Incentive for several reasons. The Home Ownership Program provides funds to homebuyers purchasing a home in a defined area of downtown. The loan is forgiven after five years of residency in the purchased home. The City of Goldsboro will match a home buyers down payment costs up to \$5,000 towards a loan/mortgage amount of \$150,000 or less. Eligibility requirements include: 1) House must be located along established boundaries, 2) Purchase price of house/property must not exceed \$150,000, 3) Purchaser must agree, by contract, to live in the home as a single-family use, and 4) If home is located within the Goldsboro Historic District, the purchaser must agree to adhere to the Historic District guidelines of any exterior improvements and to care for the property, being good stewards of its historic character

and long-term sustainability. This is just one of many efforts that the City of Goldsboro is making to strengthen downtown and to redirect the negative trend that the surrounding neighborhoods have been experiencing for some time. The Program won because it indicates that the City of Goldsboro is committed to improving downtown by

investing in it. And, because the Program demonstrates that the City understands the tie between the commercial core of downtown and the neighborhoods that surround it and is willing to broaden the scope of their efforts to assure the improvement of both.



The **Ice Cream Social & Pet Parade** won the Best Downtown Special Event due to its broad appeal and the collaborative effort between various organizations to benefit various causes and missions. Two years ago, members of the Downtown Goldsboro Development Corporation (DGDC) began discussing an interest to “beef up” our annual Ice Cream Social event that we held every summer. We wanted something better. So, we started asking ourselves, “What did we like to do when we were kids to celebrate the beginning of summer? Or, better yet, what would we have liked to do?” Well, water was a major factor in these visions. So were pets and parades. So, there we had it—we needed a way to incorporate water fun in a space that had no existing water features and we needed some animals! This is how the Ice Cream Social became the Ice Cream Social & Pet Parade. We implemented our new water feature—a hand made sprinkler system that the folks at the City’s General Service

Department made for the DGDC staff. We had over 1,000 people in attendance either to run free through a water sprinkler, nominate and compete in a pet contest, jump in the Moon Bounce, participate in crafts and enter in the Pet Parade that took place at the close of the event on our main street, Center Street. In addition, we asked animal related organizations such as Diamonds in the Ruff, Wayne County Animal Shelter, and the Humane Society to participate. Each organization brought pets to the event for adoption. Several found new, loving homes due to that introduction and exposure. The Pet Contest had several categories to compete in, including Only a Face A Mother Could Love, Smallest, Biggest, and Best Dressed. Entry fees were a mere \$1.50 and all proceeds were divided among the three animal related organizations participating. Prizes were donated by Pet Supplies Plus.



And, finally, the **Paramount Theatre** won a Special Recognition award in the Best Public-Private Partnership category. This project needs very little explanation as to why it would win such an honor, however, we believe the judges with the NC Main Street Center saw this project as a perfect blend between various dynamic interests, including public and private investment, economic need and community sentiment, desire and determination. This project shows a community at its best, rallying behind a long term investment that does not necessarily prove direct, tangible results but bolsters a collective community's pride and increases their quality of life. It was recognized for the sheer determination demonstrated by Mr. Weil and his family, the Paramount Board of Directors and the City Council to overcome all the obstacles that the reconstruction faced. In its first ten months of operation, the Paramount Theatre has had over 30,000 people attend performances. Also a highlight of the Conference was Goldsboro Mayor Al King's presentation during the Mayor's Panel session. Mayor King was asked to be a guest presenter to discuss Goldsboro's recent achievements, our programs evolution and our recent ability to take on complex issues such as the Neighborhood Plan. Mayor King gave a spirited presentation inspiring guests to roll up their sleeves and get the work done that lies ahead of them.