

EXCELLENCE ON MAIN 2019

By Breanne Durham, Main Street Director

On March 25, during the National Main Street Conference in Seattle, Washington Main Street hosted Excellence on Main, an annual event that celebrates outstanding examples of leadership and community engagement across our Main Street Communities. Check out the full list of award winners here, and be sure to follow Washington Main Street on Facebook for more details about each of this year's winners—a new story is posted every Friday.

We began the Excellence on Main program with our *Standout Volunteers*, a noncompetitive award category that recognizes some of the exceptional community volunteers who help make our Main Street programs so successful.

John Baule, Yakima
Tom Burkley, Kent
Stephanie Castillo,
Ellensburg
Bob Culp, Wenatchee
Mary Gorman, Gig Harbor

Tiffany Hein, Selah
Deb Heintz, Prosser
Janet Ploof, Langley
Jan Rockwell-Nontell,
Centralia
Keith Watts, Issaquah

Water Street Enhancement Project, Port Townsend

The Port Townsend Main Street Program was recognized with our *Outstanding Special Project* award for their work managing a significant communication and small business support plan in conjunction with their city's major street rebuild of Water Street, their main street, in 2018. Their plan included marketing, retail promotions, hosting our annual RevitalizeWA Conference, and more. Businesses experienced significantly less in losses than expected, and four new businesses opened during construction.



Above: Volunteers make the world go around on Main Street! We've made a tradition of honoring them as "Standout Volunteers" each year at Excellence on Main.

Right: Presenting the 2019 Excellence on Main Awards at Optimism Brewing.

Center below: Downtown Sounds, hosted by the Downtown Bellingham Partnership, is a summer concert series that was recognized at Excellence on Main as an Outstanding Promotional Event.



Downtown Sounds, Bellingham

The Downtown Bellingham Partnership was recognized for their *Outstanding Promotional Event*, Downtown Sounds, which is celebrating its 15th year in 2019. The summer concert series has grown tremendously but also very intentionally over the years, now bringing approximately 3,000 people to the heart of downtown Bellingham each week. The event has stayed true to its original goals of creating equitable access to the arts, encouraging creative use of space, and fostering community.

Sayers Building, Walla Walla

The Sayers Building, which underwent a meticulous exterior restoration in 2018, was recognized with our *Brick and Mortar* award. The project honors Walla Walla's rich history of specialty tradespeople; some of the contractors recently involved in the restoration recalled having worked on the building as young apprentices. Local knowledge, including preservation resources, was utilized throughout the process of restoring this key building at the heart of downtown Walla Walla.



Above: Our Brick and Mortar award went to the rehabilitation of the Sayers Building in downtown Walla Walla, pictured on the left.



Left: Mayor Deborah Stinson and other local leaders volunteered as "Celebrity Concierges" to greet and assist people through downtown Port Townsend during the Water Street Enhancement Project.

Right: Barb Smith accepts the award for Leadership on Main.

Below: Elmview and the Ellensburg Downtown Association partnered to keep downtown Ellensburg's planters thriving.



Elmview and the Ellensburg Downtown Association

Two nonprofits out of Ellensburg were recognized for their innovative *Community Partnership*, which solved the intractable problem of keeping downtown plants alive during the hot summer months. The Ellensburg Downtown Association struck up a partnership with Elmview, a nonprofit that connects adults with disabilities to job opportunities, that has benefited both organizations, enhanced the appearance of the downtown district, and created new paid positions for community members.

Dia de los Muertos, Chelan

A second *Outstanding Promotional Event* award was given in recognition of a first-time event that was specifically designed to share in and celebrate Chelan's Latino community. The Historic Downtown Chelan Association worked with business leaders and other partners, notably high school Spanish classes and the Todos United student group, to celebrate Dia de los Muertos in downtown Chelan. The event drew large crowds and sparked new partnerships in the community.

Goodfellow Bros., Wenatchee

A fourth-generation general contractor company, Goodfellow Bros., was recognized for the *Economic Vitality* they have brought to downtown Wenatchee for rehabilitating the upper floors of the Metropolitan Building, which now houses their nearly 50 Washington-based employees. The company started in Wenatchee nearly 100 years ago, and their investment of two years and \$2.9 million to bring this key downtown building back to active use showcases their commitment to their roots. (Don't miss the feature on this project on page 8!)

Middle left: Erin McCardle, Erin Peterson, and Heather Teague accept the award for Chelan's Dia de los Muertos, one of this year's Outstanding Promotional Events.

Lower left: Attendees at Dia de los Muertos.



Mario Alfaro Lopez, Ellensburg

Washington Main Street's *Entrepreneur of the Year* is restaurateur Mario Alfaro Lopez. His food truck turned full-service restaurant, The Red Pickle, features a menu inspired by his Guatemalan roots and a community-centered atmosphere. He sources many of his products locally and is always on the lookout for opportunities to partner with fellow business owners. Mario is a fixture in downtown Ellensburg, known for his innovation, generosity, and hospitality.

Barb Smith, Kent

During her ten years as Executive Director of the Kent Downtown Partnership, Barb Smith has shown herself to embody *Leadership on Main*. When she retires this summer she will leave behind a stable organization with many volunteer leaders she has cultivated, led, and inspired over the years. Barb is a master of the art of leading volunteers by empowering them to be creative, productive, and focused on what inspires each of them to serve. We thank her for all she has done for downtown Kent.

Kris Nelson, Port Townsend

Our top honor of *Excellence on Main* goes to the unstoppable Kris Nelson, a successful entrepreneur and dedicated community advocate from Port Townsend. Her four downtown restaurants—Alchemy Bistro & Wine Bar, The In-Between, The Old Whiskey Mill, and Sirens Pub—are local institutions that employ over 70 people. Kris also finds time to serve as a volunteer leader with many community organizations, including as the Board President of the Port Townsend Main Street Program. Her dedication and work ethic make her community a more vibrant place. 🍷

Special thanks goes to our generous *Excellence on Main* event sponsors which included Arnett Muldrow, Rafn Company, SHKS Architects, Swenson Say Fagét, Tonkin Architecture, and Western Specialty Contractors.

Below: The big award of the evening went to superstar Kris Nelson from Port Townsend!



Left: Mario Lopez and his food truck, The Red Pickle, now a full-service restaurant.

Above: We were able to keep Mario Lopez's award for Entrepreneur of the Year a surprise until his name was announced!