



YEAR IN REVIEW
2023

Athens  Main Street

2023 Limestone County Non-Profit of the Year!

The mission of Athens Main Street is to enhance downtown vibrancy, preserve its historic charm, empower its community of business owners, and foster a center of activity for the community. Athens Main Street utilizes the 4-Point Approach to downtown development and revitalization. These points consist of Economic Vitality, Design, Promotion and Organization.

Promotion (Events & Brand Awareness)

Fridays After Five - Last Fridays in April, May, June, & July. Largest attendance since inception, over 4,000 patrons for each event, 10-12 food trucks, and stores open late for shopping. Free to the public.

Merchants Alley Happy Hour Music Series - Each Friday night April through July and September through November. Local musicians performed from 5:30-7 p.m. Free to the public.

Athens Farmers Market - Each Saturday and Tuesday May through September. Local produce, prepared foods, and artisan items. Local musicians perform on Saturdays. Alabama Certified Farmers Market.

Sippin' Cider - Second Saturday in December. Patrons sample homemade ciders, vote on their favorite, and shop for holidays. Single best sales day for most merchants.

Chocolate Walk - First Saturday in February. Patrons purchase tickets, receive chocolate treats from merchants, and shop for Valentines Day gifts. Tickets sold out to this popular event within five minutes of going on sale.

Boutique Crawl NEW - Held in March to promote the Spring clothing and home goods lines, this new event drew a large number of patrons to over 20 participating businesses. A one day sales total of over \$38,000 was recorded.

Restaurant Week NEW - This two week event was held in conjunction with Alabama Restaurant Week to highlight downtown restaurants.

Partnerships - Through partnerships with the Chamber of Commerce and LCEDA, Athens Main Street worked to bring the community Christmas Open House on the weekend before Thanksgiving and the Athens-Limestone County Christmas Parade on the first Thursday in December.

Design (Placemaking & Historic Preservation)

Athens Farmers Market at Doug Gates Park - Athens Main Street continues the project to revitalize the farmers market, a historic site central to our downtown in a diverse socioeconomic community and key to supporting local producers, prepared food vendors, and artisans. This project will increase the capacity of the market by adding additional vendor stalls and improve the site's overall attractiveness. Local art will be used to increase the vibrancy of the site, landscaping and shade trees will be added, and we will create multi-use areas that will provide for more varied usages such as educational areas for youth and community quality of life events where people can gather, relax, socialize, enjoy music, and support their community. Phase I of the project is complete, including refurbishing the existing pavilion with a new roof, trim, painted siding, festive lighting, painted vendor tables, and additional stalls created by demolishing old restrooms and office space. Additionally, the city parklet across from the market has also been renovated by Athens Main Street. A new block planter was installed, new pergola swings erected, a walkway installed, and planting beds created. Plantings will be finalized this spring.

Merchants Alley - Athens Main Street continues to receive commendations for the design of Merchants Alley. In 2023, we received the North Alabama Chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) highest award for design, The Honor Award. Later in the year, we also received honorable mention from the Alabama Chapter of the AIA.



NEW BUSINESSES
9



PUBLIC INVESTMENT
\$73,000

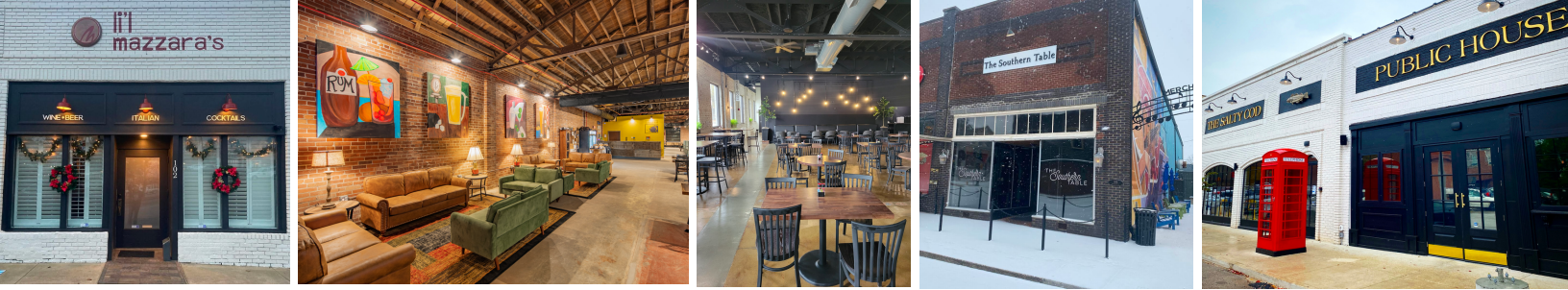
2023



PRIVATE INVESTMENT
\$6,357,500



VOLUNTEER HOURS
1,328



Economic Vitality

The Year of the Restaurant - Athens Main Street partnered with the City of Athens, Limestone County Economic Development Association, and the Athens-Limestone County Chamber of Commerce to identify top area projects that would attract investors to Limestone County. Through our joint efforts and those of many other dedicated individuals, FIVE new independent upscale restaurants have opened in downtown Athens. Athens can now boast of having a vibrant “Restaurant Scene.” Four of these restaurants, saw major renovation and investment in downtown to bring new life to historic properties. Additionally, another beautiful restoration of a neglected historic building is now home to a lovely, extremely popular event venue. 2024 will bring even more restorations and new businesses to downtown.

Testimonials

“Revive Cafe is deeply grateful for all Athens Main Street did to put on and promote Restaurant Week! During those two weeks, we saw a definite increase in customers, including new customers, and an increase in our social media interaction. We had some of our busiest days of the year during restaurant week!” -Briana Walter, owner of Revive Cafe

“Restaurant week was amazing for us. We saw many new customers who are now regulars. Over 200 new Facebook followers. Alehouse will be supporting this annual project in the years to come.” Ken Hill, owner of Athens Alehouse & Cellar

“Thanks to you, Tere, and everyone’s hard work in making downtown Athens a destination. It’s truly amazing to me the foot traffic and amount of folks we have here DAILY. We have had such a wonderful holiday shopping season. I know myself and other downtown business owners really appreciate the efforts.” Amy Higginbotham, owner of Trinity’s

“For us we got clobbered all day with people coming through during Chocolate Walk. One of our top sales days so far since we opened in September.” Todd Seaton, owner of Old Black Bear.

For Boutique Crawl (NEW)

“Our sales were fantastic. Almost Black Friday level so we would love to go it again.” Dawn Douthit, owner of Epiphany Boutique

“Oh Tere it was AMAZING!!!! YES PLEASE!!!! Thank you so much for everything you do!!! And a huge thank you to Dream Key!!!” Brandi Griffin, owner of Boutique Bliss

It was an extremely good day!!! Like Christmas!! Definitely would do it again!! I want you to know I appreciate everything you do, thank you!!! 😊” Tammy Strickland, owner of BeanBeans Boutique

“Wonderful. Thank you for all your hard work that made this an awesome day. Yes let’s do it again.” Regina Crawford, owner of Crawford’s Gifts

