



## YEAR IN REVIEW 2024

## Athens Main Street

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 - 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.

Summer Sippin' - NEW event homemade summer drinks, voted on by the public held in conjunction with Restaurant Week in August 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 recently completed an \$800,000 project to revitalize the historic farmers market, a cornerstone of the downtown community and a vital hub for a diverse socioeconomic population. This project supports local producers, prepared food vendors, and artisans while enhancing the market's appeal and functionality.

The revitalization increased vendor capacity by adding more stalls and beautified the site with local art, landscaping, and shade trees. A new multi-use pavilion was also built, offering a versatile space for youth education, quality-of-life events, music performances, and community gatherings.

As part of the project's sustainability efforts, an EPA grant administered by ADEM funded the installation of porous asphalt, pavers, and a rock filtration system to improve the Swan Creek Watershed. Additionally, Athens Main Street renovated the city parklet across from the market, creating another inviting space for relaxation and socializing.

The project was made possible through a collaborative effort, with \$298,000 in private funding from businesses, grants, and individuals; \$337,000 from an EPA grant; \$28,000 in local public contributions; and over \$200,000 worth of in-kind work donated by the community. This revitalization has transformed the farmers market into a vibrant, multifunctional space that strengthens community connections and enriches downtown Athens.



**NEW BUSINESSES**  
13



**PUBLIC INVESTMENT**  
\$755,000

**2024**



**PRIVATE INVESTMENT**  
\$4,699,200



**VOLUNTEER HOURS**  
1,063



## Economic Vitality - Restaurant & Retail Boom

Athens Main Street, in collaboration with the City of Athens, the Limestone County Economic Development Association, and the Athens-Limestone County Chamber of Commerce, continues to focus on key projects to attract investment to downtown Athens. Thanks to these efforts and the dedication of many community partners, downtown Athens has welcomed THREE new independent upscale restaurants, bringing the total to SEVEN new dining establishments over the past two years. In addition to the culinary boom, the downtown area now boasts SEVEN new retail shops, offering a mix of clothing boutiques, vintage goods, and a cozy coffee shop. These exciting additions are transforming downtown Athens into a thriving destination for dining, shopping, and community experiences.



## Community Comes Together

The Athens-Limestone community truly came together in the aftermath of the December EF-1 tornado. The City of Athens, the Limestone County Commission, our first responders, and countless volunteers demonstrated extraordinary determination through their swift and tireless efforts to restore our beautiful downtown.

In response to this devastating event, Athens Main Street established two recovery funds to support both the community and local businesses impacted by the storm. We are profoundly grateful that no injuries or loss of life occurred—a true blessing amidst the destruction.

While the damage could have been far worse, the losses sustained to some of our cherished public spaces remain significant and will undoubtedly impact tourism and everyday life in our community. However, we are confident that with the continued resilience and support of our citizens, Athens will recover stronger than ever.

## Testimonials

"Congratulations on another successful year as Director of Athens Main Street. Thank you for your kindness in welcoming us to the community. We appreciate all that you do to help everyone enjoy living, working and playing in Athens. You enrich our lives, and we can't thank you enough. 🎉🥰🎉" Tonya Thomas, License Partner ENGEL&VÖLKERS

"I would like to personally thank you all for everything you have done for restaurant week. The photo shoot and the advertisement were a wonderful idea. The shoot exceeded our expectations and we are just loving the positive feedback along with the gorgeous photos! We especially would like to thank you all for the advertisement. We sold out of our feature dish the very first night! Thank you again for all you do and it does not go unnoticed." Seth & Savanna Stanfield Ro's Grille



[www.athensmainstreet.org](http://www.athensmainstreet.org)

