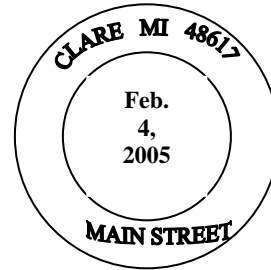


POSTMARKED: MAIN STREET



By Abigail Kulick, Main Street Manager

Greetings from Main Street! One of the many cool projects Main Street will tackle this year includes, completing a market study analysis of the Main Street district. I was given the pleasure of spending the first half of my week in Lansing at the Michigan Economic Development Corporation building. Jim Allen, Chairperson of the Main Street Board and I were sent to Lansing to meet with the MEDC's Community Assistance Team (CA Team) and consultants from the Downtown Professional Network (DPN). Jay Schlinsog and Lisa Bennett from DPN have been studying market trends in cities, large and small across the nation for years, recently including Boyne City, Marshall and Calumet, which are all Michigan Main Street Communities. The Downtown Professional Network has worked with Main Street communities and has a clear understanding of the program's goals and structure. The market study is one of the technical services given to Clare by the State of Michigan through the Michigan Main Street program. The \$30,000 study will be funded through a Community Development Block Grant from the State of Michigan. The City of Clare is very fortunate to be a Main Street community and receive these wonderful services from the State.

Findings from the Main Street professional market study analysis can be used to:

- Provide direction and help to establish market-based priorities for Main Street committee projects and activities.
- Establish benchmarks and systems for tracking economic data, trends and progress.
- Identify areas of economic strength and opportunities for business retention, expansion and recruitment.
- Gauge the appeal of the downtown among various consumer segments and identify marketing strategies to attract key audiences.
- Identify and lend support for possible business assistance programs and economic development initiatives.
- Document and build a case for possible downtown redevelopment and revitalization strategies.

The Downtown Professional Network promises that their approach to the project will respect the unique nature of Clare's downtown commercial district, build on its assets, and identify market-driven opportunities to re-shape Clare Main Street as a great place to live, work, shop, play and invest!

The market study process will include the community and asks for volunteer assistance. DPN wants the people of Clare to be involved in the project every step of the way. The DPN team will come to Clare for public meetings where they will explain the purpose of the market study and the process ahead of us, they will conduct on-site research, visit businesses on Main Street, and train and utilize the Main Street Board and volunteers to conduct a business and consumer survey.

The final report given to Clare by the Downtown Professionals Network will include:

- Summary of findings, directions and recommendations.
- Map and description of defined trade area.
- Summary assessment of the Main Street area business and housing climate.
- Profile of trade area's population, including demographic, economic and socio-economic characteristics and trends.
- Business clustering strategy narrative and map describing market niche and clustering opportunities.
- Sales leakage and surplus analysis and competitive analysis for Main Street's trade area.
- Strategy concepts outlining and describing possible opportunities and implications associated with key findings for Main Street program leaders, staff and committees and Main Street businesses, including suggestions and recommendations for ongoing economic restructuring, housing development, and marketing & promotion initiatives.

This market study will be a great asset for Clare Main Street. We will be able to see what we are doing well and where we could improve. The study will show us the customer mix we are missing out on and how to attract them to Clare Main Street. Downtowns are meant to be the gathering place within the cities. The market study will show us how to retain the existing gatherers while enticing more to come.

Check out our new website! www.mainstreetclare.com