

2005 Annual Report



The Downtown Development Authority of Augusta was re-established in 1992 by Act of General Assembly to renew, revitalize and beautify distressed areas of downtown Augusta. As an independent public agency that is governed by a Board of Directors appointed by the Richmond County Commission, DDA works with local government and the private sector to strengthen the economic climate of downtown Augusta.

DDA's mission is to lead a coordinated strategy of economic development and civic design strengthening downtown Augusta as:

- The heart of the city of all Augustans;
- The economic hub of the region;
- A prosperous place for business and institutions; and
- An attractive urban environment for residents and visitors.

2005 Milestones

The year 2005 was one of transition and organizational change. Executive Director Chris Naylor resigned in April and the Board immediately began a search for a new executive director. While the search continued, DDA Board members worked diligently to continue to lead downtown forward.



Economic Restructuring

Houghton School/Widows Home

When the Atlanta based corporation who owned both properties announced their plans to convert these historic structures to low-income housing, public and private partners came together with a plan. Historic Augusta exercised their right of first refusal in holding the façade easement and sold the property to businessman Clay Boardman. The Downtown Development Authority had available SPLOST Funds and with the approval of the Richmond County Commission, DDA lent the necessary funds of \$370,000 to Mr. Boardman in the form of a no interest four-year promissory note.

Public/private partnership initiatives are something the DDA plans to repeat. Mr. Boardman has stabilized both historic properties and Heritage Academy is currently fundraising to purchase the Houghton School property (at cost) and for interior renovations. Heritage Academy, a growing Christian based elementary school will bring vitality back to downtown by using the building as originally intended and an economic impact by bringing family's downtown on a daily basis.



The Woolworth Building

The prominent building located on the corner of 8th and Broad Street was in decay and the costs to stabilize the structure were insurmountable. The DDA approved and submitted an application to the Georgia Cities Foundation Revolving Loan Fund. Through public/private partnerships, the Foundation facilitates the redevelopment and reuse of downtown areas and provides funding for downtown capital projects throughout Georgia.

Design

Reynolds Street Train Depot

DDA felt strongly about the preservation and restoration of the Depot located on Reynolds Street. With the City of Augusta and Main Street Augusta as partners, DDA applied for a million dollar enhancement grant through the Georgia Department of Transportation. This past February, DDA was awarded \$450,000 in funding to for the Depot's restoration and is following the example set by other Georgia towns where train depot restoration is becoming an engine for economic development. Pedestrian use of the building will promote tourism along the Riverwalk and provide a venue for large indoor festivals and special events.



2005 Board of Directors

Phil Wahl, Chair / Bank of America; **Sanford Loyd, Vice Chair** / Sanford Loyd, CPA; **Paul King, Secretary** /The Rex Group; **Julian Roberts, Treasurer** / Augusta Information Technologies; **Dr. James Carter, III** / Property Owner; **Earnestine Howard** / Tina's Shoe Gallery; **Commissioner Andy Cheek**; Staff: **Chris Naylor**, Executive Director; **Pat Pendleton**, Assistant

Design

DeLaigle House Sidewalk Project

Owner Jan Hodges approached the DDA to provide funding to restore the historic public sidewalk along side of the building located at 551 Greene Street across from the Municipal Building and the famous Signers Monument. Ms. Hodges, who purchased the building in 2004, has spent over \$750,000 to restore the exterior and interior of this neglected historic structure that was threatened with being torn down for a parking lot. Today, the beautifully preserved building houses 4 vital new businesses in downtown Augusta. The project was awarded to Horizon Construction, a minority owned firm, this past month and will begin in mid-May. At the bid opening bids arranged from 47,000 to \$53,000. Another public/private partnership evolved when Ms. Hodges agreed to pay for the brick removal to keep the project costs down in case of unforeseen contingencies during construction. The project costs are now at \$40,935 and DDA is delighted at the outcome as this compliments an already beautiful restoration effort.



Promotion

James Brown Statue

The Downtown Development Authority partially funded the James Brown Statue that was installed in 2005 on Broad Street. This life-size statue dedicated to the King of Soul and Augusta resident has been popular with tourists and residents alike. This new amenity to the central business district gives just another great reason to come downtown and have your photo taken. It feels GOOD!



Organization

Executive Director Search

After an extensive six-month search and over 100 applicants, the Search Committee for DDA announced in November that lead candidate Margaret Woodard accepted the job as executive director for the organization. Woodard, a Building Science graduate from Auburn University is leaving her position as the Executive Director of the Heart of Brevard, a Main Street Program in North Carolina, where in three short years; she earned state level awards and national media exposure for the City of Brevard. DDA Chairman Phil Wahl and the Search Committee selected Ms. Woodard due to an unmatched diversity of experience and talents that will boost the development efforts and enhance the positive momentum evident in downtown Augusta.

