

2006 Fall Update



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, the DDA works with local government and the private sector to strengthen the economic climate of downtown Augusta.

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

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

2006 Milestones

Building on accomplishments of 2005, and with a strategic plan in place for 2006, the DDA will continue to guide the redevelopment of downtown Augusta.



Economic Restructuring

New Downtown Businesses

The DDA held its first ribbon cutting for Le Chat Noir this past quarter and thank Justin Anderson and his partners for their investment in the old Capri Theater at 8th & Ellis. Other new businesses include New Moon Café, Mid Town Threads, Fredella's Bistro, Blue Horse Music Hall, Metro Spirit, Red Hugh's Irish Pub and the Georgia Medical Center Authority. Currently DDA is working to find space for 10 active prospects and is receiving as many as 15 calls per day from investors and new businesses interested in locating to downtown Augusta.

Watermark Condominium Project

The DDA played a major role in the commission approval of this exciting condominium project located on the former Pension Property at 5th & Reynolds Street. Environmental studies are underway and a definitive contract is near completion. The 182 unit project will create 700 jobs and six million dollars in tax revenue over the next 10 years. In addition, this project will increase downtown's current residential population by 25% and act as a conduit for new business recruitment for needed services such as a grocery store.



Recruitment Package

The DDA received a \$10,000 grant from Wachovia Bank to complete Phase II of the Downtown Profile Reports. Augusta State University is currently creating a data bank of available space adding to a demographic profile of downtown Augusta now available on the DDA website at www.augustadda.org. This valuable tool will be completed by the end of the year and will assist property owners in leasing their available properties and serve as a marketing tool to recruit new businesses to downtown. Currently, the DDA is researching and compiling an active prospect list to begin a mailing campaign in January 2007.



Business Improvement District (BID)

The DDA continues to undertake the work in establishing a BID. An informational forum for key property owners was held in July. In addition, a draft management plan has been completed as well as a power point presentation and speakers bureau to garner further support from community partners and downtown businesses. Preliminary survey results reveal that safety and cleanliness are the main concerns to downtown property owners and why a BID is crucial. A bus trip to Columbus is planned for early 2007 to see first-hand the benefits of a BID.

2006 Board of Directors

Paul King, Chair / The Rex Group; **Julian Roberts**, Vice Chair / Augusta Information Technologies; **Dr. James Carter, III**, Secretary / Property Owner; **Phil Wahl**, Treasurer / Bank of America; **Steven Kendrick** / Augusta Blueprint; **Brad Owens** / Owens Contracting; **Commissioner J.R. Hatney**; Staff: **Margaret Woodard**, Executive Director; **Sherry Miller**, Assistant

Design

Demonstration Block Streetscape Project

The DDA continued its efforts to move ahead on a model streetscape project on the west side of 10th Street between Broad and Ellis St. This quarter private partners completed a survey and a proposed rendering for pricing purposes. The project would include streetlamps, new sidewalks with brick pavers, street furniture, trees and landscaping for this highly visual and historic block that was the original home of Paine College. DDA hopes this project will serve as a stimulus to complete a block-by-block streetscape project for downtown with public/private partners. DDA extends a special thanks to Haltermann Properties and Cranston, Robertson & Whitehurst.



Branding Project

This year with public/private dollars, the DDA will roll out their brand in late October at a press conference. The Branding Committee selected the Smith Group to complete this initiative because of their experience in developing the brand for the Augusta Convention & Visitors Bureau. The new brand for downtown will appeal to businesses, residents and visitors and will clearly state that downtown Augusta is authentic, alive and on the move.



Promotion

Celebrating Rural Georgia Conference

The DDA believes that promoting downtown to residents and visitors is key to the revitalization process. On August 21st—23rd, the DDA played local host to 800 conference attendee's for the biennial conference organized by the Georgia Rural Development Council to foster positive development in rural Georgia.. Over 40 educational sessions, plenary speakers, and in-depth skill building clinics were held during the three day period. DDA planned a special event that highlighted downtown Augusta called "Destination Downtown". Tour guides led participants to simultaneous receptions at Artist's Row and the Imperial Theatre and restaurants were filled to capacity with folks enjoying dinner on their own. The conference ended with a reception and closing remarks by Governor Sonny Perdue. Direct visitor spending during the conference is estimated at \$808,640.

