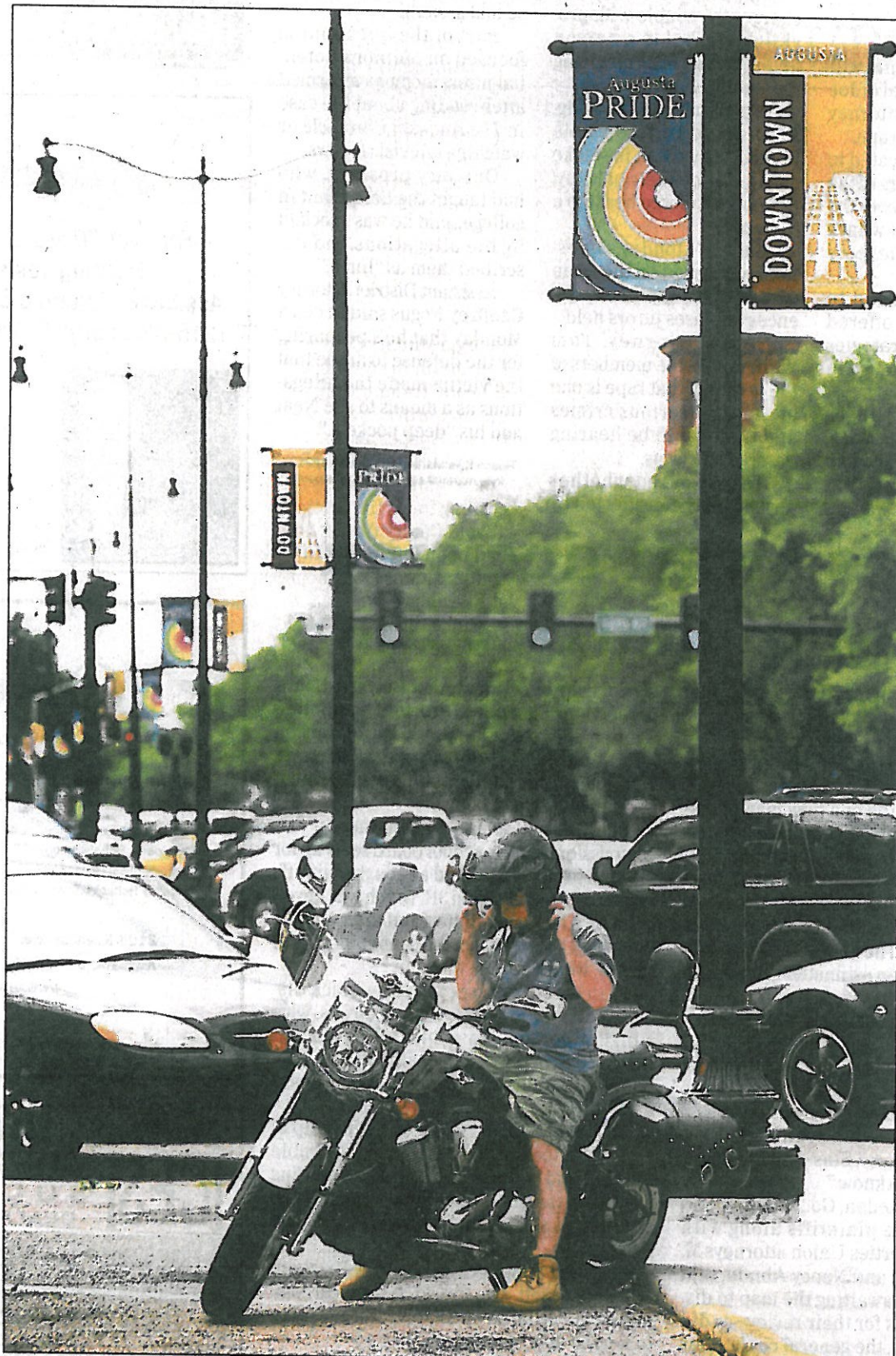


DOWNTOWN PROMOTION



EMILY ROSE BENNETT/STAFF

Groups can now promote themselves and their events with banners on poles on downtown Augusta's Broad Street. Augusta Pride spent \$3,300 to fly its banners for National Pride Month.

Groups can fly banners

By Meg Mirshak
Staff Writer

Banners promoting downtown business and events were installed on Broad Street light poles last week.

Guidelines for the temporary banner program were written a year ago, but the program was delayed until new light posts were completed, said Jennifer Bowen, the vice president of product development for the Augusta Convention and Visitors Bureau.

Temporary banners are available for organizations and events to promote an activity for 30 days. Generic banners promoting downtown shopping, dining and arts and featuring downtown architecture will be displayed when groups aren't using the poles.

"It's a good location for people to place the banners and get some good exposure for their event," said Rob Sherman, the city's licensing and inspection director.

Organizations must apply for the program and have the design approved by a banner ordinance advisory committee.

Groups cover the costs of designing and printing the banners and pay a fee to the city for installation and removal.

Augusta Pride, the first organization to participate in the program, spent \$2,300 for 24 banners and \$1,000 in city fees, spokesman Chris Bannochie

said.

The banners are on display for National Pride Month this month.

The group will hold a parade June 23 as part of a four-day festival downtown.

"We wanted a way to highlight that it's pride month for the entire community," Bannochie said.

No other groups have applied for the banners, but several have made inquiries, including the Westobou Festival, the Augusta RiverHawks, the Ronald McDonald House, Garden City Jazz, the Savannah Riverkeeper and the United Way, Sherman said.

The convention and visitors bureau reviewed programs in Philadelphia and Kalamazoo, Mich., before writing its guidelines, Bowen said.

The Downtown Development Authority allocated \$15,750 to the Convention and Visitors Bureau from Phase V of the special purpose local option sales tax for the banner program. About \$4,000 was spent for the Broad Street banners and \$2,500 for design costs.

The remaining money is reserved for future and replacement orders.

Light poles near the Augusta Convention Center on Reynolds Street and Ninth and 10th streets from Riverwalk Augusta to Broad Street are also available to hold the banners.

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