

Downtown Spotlight Flagship Issue

“Viva” literally means to come alive, which is exactly what Viva Downtown Redding, a vivacious community group, envisions for downtown Redding. You actually may already be quite familiar with some of this group’s work. Viva Downtown Redding started out six years ago as a support group for the popular downtown event, MarketFest.

On March 19, 2001 the Redding Redevelopment Agency, with the collective cooperation and financial assistance from Viva Downtown Redding, Renaissance Redding, The Downtown Redding Business Association (DRBA), and Midtown Mall Benefit Corporation, hired Burnes Consulting of Grass Valley to bring the nationally acclaimed “Main Street approach” to Redding. The Main Street approach to downtown revitalization is a comprehensive management strategy which builds on the idea that the total image of an area must be addressed for revitalization efforts to be successful. A thriving downtown needs an appropriate business mix, visually appealing buildings, and a group of individuals from the public and private sectors who are committed to managing and maintaining a healthy downtown.

There are four main components of the Main Street Approach: Organization, Promotion, Design, and Economic Restructuring. These components provide the names and functions of the Main Street committees: the energy behind all Main Street programs. While the Main Street Approach has successful results in hundreds of communities across the country the question remained: would it be right for Redding?

The first public meeting to receive input about the Main Street Approach was held in the new Council Chambers on April 10th of this year. Over eighty members of the public attended and the support was overwhelming. That night approximately sixty signed up to serve on Main Street committees. Viva determined that it would be willing to evolve into a Main Street Organization.

In May, the consultants returned and trained each of the four Main Street committees, Viva board members and Executive Director, Keli Anthis. On June 13th the process was completed.

Viva Downtown Redding officially accepted the responsibility of implementing the Main Street Approach. The newly named Viva Downtown Redding – A Main Street Organization also expanded its Board to represent the different downtown business group interests. Since that date, Viva’s Board and the four committees have been working diligently, establishing goals and action plans. The committees’ plans are coordinated with the overall effort of downtown revitalization. Both of Viva’s previously established programs were a natural fit for the Main Street approach. Keli Anthis was happy to see how MarketFest and the **Art aRound Town** Program slid so neatly into the Main Street Four Point Approach.

Viva’s own history reflects the positive growth that it envisions for downtown. The new Viva enjoys tremendous community support because it has grown from local efforts while absorbing the new, innovative ideas outlined by the Main Street Approach. Everything is being done by the new Viva to respect and build upon the valuable efforts the original downtown organizations contributed.

Viva Downtown Redding – A Main Street Organization envisions a downtown Redding that reflects a vibrant, healthy downtown community. Their mission is centered around fostering an environment for investment while preserving, protecting, and enhancing the historic and unique character of the area. If you are still wondering what Viva Downtown is all about, then stay tuned. Soon you will be wandering, not wondering, about a downtown that engages you with a creative array of businesses, exciting events, and an aesthetically pleasing design. See you downtown!

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