

# Downtown Fremont, Inc.

## 2009 ANNUAL REPORT

### LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR - ANGIE MORELOCK

Over the years, Downtown Fremont, Inc. has received great support for our revitalization efforts from local government, community leaders and stakeholders. We have gained a momentum in our development efforts and realized many successes. We have had many public and private sector investments into our program that have helped to create a welcoming environment, which is very important. However, it is equally important to have strong retailers who have the necessary tools and training that make them successful. For this reason, a goal was developed several years ago to send a delegation from Downtown Fremont to Jon Schallert's Destination Boot-Camp Community Reinvention Program. The Community Reinvention Program begins when a community sends a group of 6 business owners and a community coordinator from the same marketplace to Destination Business BootCamp, where they receive over 20 hours of instruction on making their businesses Consumer Destinations. A Consumer Destination is defined as a business that is capable of pulling customers from outside their immediate marketplace and one that can cause a consumer to willingly go out of their way to spend money at that business, sometimes even hundreds of miles out of their way. It causes consumers to consciously make a choice to check out that business before they commit to a buying decision. In today's marketplace, one critical key in capturing a customer is to make sure they consider our businesses versus our competition. Only then can that business convince them that they are the BEST place for the consumer to spend their money and commit their time. What business owners learn at the BootCamp is an alternative marketing strategy to what they are currently using to pull customers to their business. It is a new layer of tools and techniques that they can employ that their competitors don't know. Our goal is to help our local businesses in this challenging economy by providing them with the opportunity to attend this powerful training experience that will not only change their business by driving more sales and customer traffic to them, but will also change our marketplace by turning Downtown Fremont into a destination for consumers, therefore bringing more revenue to our area.

Thanks to **Croghan Colonial Bank**, this goal has been achieved. Croghan Colonial Bank announced in December, 2009 that they decided in this tough economy that the best way to grow their business was to help small businesses in the community grow theirs. Because of that, the Croghan Colonial Bank Small Business Reinvention Scholarship, in partnership with Downtown Fremont, Inc. was created. Full scholarships, paid by Croghan Colonial Bank will be awarded to six individual business owners for the March, 2010 session in Longmont, Colorado. This is a \$10,500 investment. BootCamp attendees will be responsible for arranging and paying for their transportation to the BootCamp location, lodging, and dinners. Upon being selected, the chosen business owners will be asked to make a \$500 deposit towards their tuition. This deposit will be fully refunded upon the successful completion of the 6 month program. This includes attending not only the training in Colorado, but also the monthly follow-up meetings and sharing key sales/revenue numbers to measure the impact of the program. Finally, once our business owners return to our community, they will implement what they've learned in their businesses and help their fellow business owners within Sandusky County by sharing what they have learned. For six (6) months following the BootCamp, our community's businesses will receive ongoing technical assistance that will reinforce the strategies and tactics taught at the BootCamp in the form of monthly webinars, conference calls, and a workshop in our city, conducted by Mr. Schallert. Our community will receive over \$16,000 of no-cost consulting services, plus our business owners learn what it takes to grow their businesses in today's economy!

Thank you to Croghan Colonial Bank for believing this program is a worthwhile investment in the economic health and quality of life in Sandusky County. Their support of this program will energize people to take the necessary steps to collaborate and work cooperatively to help their neighbors grow their businesses as well. By equipping businesses with the tools they need to become more successful and increase their sales, they are making a direct economic impact on the whole community. Successful independent businesses in a downtown translates into an extremely stable economic foundation because they keep profits in our community, they support local families and increase their spending power, they support local community projects such as our schools and non-profit organizations, they retain and create jobs, and they use public services and provide tax revenues for the entire community. Not to mention, a stronger downtown will attract more private investment, which will help in the recruitment of new businesses to the area, and also plays a large role in industrial, commercial and professional recruitment.

This is just one of the many exciting things that happened in Downtown Fremont in 2009. Downtown Fremont, Inc. employs a comprehensive approach to addressing the many issues facing a downtown. This Annual Report highlights the many activities, events, partnerships and successes experienced this past year while working towards our goal of downtown revitalization. I hope you enjoy reading this report that reminds us of the many accomplishments from 2009.

#### New Logo

Thanks to the efforts of Brian Walker of Green Bay Packaging, Downtown Fremont, Inc., finally has a logo. Brian worked with a committee to develop a logo that the organization could use to help identify themselves. The end results are pictured to the right. A heartfelt thank you goes out to Brian and his team at Green Bay Packaging. We truly appreciate all of your time and effort!



## CERTIFICHECKS

For over 5 years, Downtown Fremont partnered with Certifichcks of Dayton to provide association gift certificates. The Certifichcks worked similar to a mall gift certificate in that it could be purchased and used at any participating business. However, this program came to an abrupt halt in March 2009, as Downtown Fremont received word that Certifichcks had closed their doors and were filing bankruptcy. Unfortunately, there were outstanding gift certificates out in the community and it was unclear whether or not Certifichcks of Dayton was going to reimburse the purchased certificates. For this reason, Downtown Fremont, Inc. announced that it would gladly reimburse the cost of any un-expired Downtown Fremont Certifichcks in an effort to be fair to all parties involved. Downtown Fremont held \$180 of unsold gift certificates through this program and \$215 of known gift certificates were held by area shoppers, for a total of \$395.00 However, it is estimated that a couple hundred dollars of certificates were still outstanding in the community. The efforts made by Downtown Fremont paid off as there were no negative consequences as a result of the predicament that Certifichcks of Dayton put us in. It is our hopes that another gift certificate program can be implemented for Downtown Fremont in the near future.

## THE 3/50 PROJECT

In the spring of 2009, we learned of a national program designed to strengthen local economies. The 3/50 project was derived to "save the bricks and mortar our nation was built on". The premise of the project is that shoppers are encouraged to think about 3 independently owned businesses they would miss if they were gone and then make a conscious effort to spend just \$50 a month supporting them. Downtown Fremont decided to adopt this project and began encouraging our community to patronize a local business when the opportunity presented itself. Store owners have included this information on their websites, put out flyers at their stores, and even put notices in customer bags to help remind people that it only takes one person to start a trend.

Other businesses throughout Sandusky County have also recognized the importance of the project and are promoting it as well. Please visit [www.the350project.net](http://www.the350project.net) for more information or to become a supporter.

## CYCLISTS IN DOWNTOWN FREMONT

The proximity of the Northcoast Inland Trail and its exit to Historic Downtown Fremont offers a convenient stop for biking enthusiasts. Several efforts were made in 2009 to encourage more bicycle traffic. Efforts included inviting GOBA (Great Ohio Bike Adventure) riders to swing through downtown on their way to the Rutherford B. Hayes Center for lunch on Sunday, June 17th. Stores opened their doors for the riders offering specials and of course, shipping! Downtown is also excited about the commitment received in 2009 by the Flatlanders Bicycle Club to fund the installation of permanent bike racks in downtown. We are hopeful that by strategically placing bike racks in the downtown area, cyclists will feel welcome in the heart of our city.

## SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- Congratulations to DaVinci's Gallery and Coffee House for being named "Business Of The Month" in November by LakeErieLife.com. The same honors went to Ralph's Joy of Living in December.
- Downtown Fremont partnered with the Chamber of Commerce in May for the 2nd year in a row to host the May Business After Hours. Visitors were encouraged to choose any location to start, visit each business to earn a stamp for a chance to win a gift basket. What a great night of showcasing the great stores in Downtown Fremont.
- The tree grates received a face-lift in 2009. Thanks to The City of Fremont Street Department, the previous "rusty" grates are now black in color and match the decorative lamp posts.
- The Downtown NEWS newsletter publication continues to be popular. Editions were completed in the spring and fall and remain a collaborative effort among businesses to cross promote the district. Distribution was changed with the Fall Edition in an effort to reduce mailing costs. Instead, the publication was e-mailed and delivered to the waiting areas of local service providers such as salons, doctors, and dentists.
- Funding for the Downtown Fremont, Inc. organization changed a bit in 2009. Thanks to the continued support of Mayor Overmyer, City Council and City Administration, Downtown Fremont, Inc. now receives 2/3rds of the Hotel/Motel Tax that is collected within the city limits.
- Downtown Fremont continues to try to liquidate the equipment that was once used for Holiday DeLights. Press releases were issued regarding the availability of the equipment. In addition, Craigslist was also used.
- The Sandusky County Community Work Program was a great asset to Downtown Fremont this year assisting with general clean up of the downtown area before special events.
- Downtown Fremont participated in the Sandusky County Volunteer Recognition Event for the 6th year in a row to recognize and thank all of the volunteers who help make all of our events possible throughout the year.
- A special Thank You goes out to the Foster family for their help in painting the windows at the old Peebles store location. Their artistic abilities were a great addition to our downtown and were a great way to advertise our Farmer's Market.



Downtown Fremont unveiled a new look to their website this year. You can now access our website via the City of Fremont website, or go directly to the site by typing in [www.DowntownFremontOhio.org](http://www.DowntownFremontOhio.org). The new design includes more pages which allows us to share more information with you about our program and special events. In addition, the new website allows you to join our new e-mail list. The e-mail list is then used for sharing great deals, exclusive offers, and special event information. This service is provided by a subscription to Constant Contacts and allows participants to opt out at any time.

### Historical Walking Tours Now Available

Downtown Fremont is proud to announce the development of a Historic Downtown Fremont Walking Tour. Authors Larry Michaels and Krista Michaels have developed this walking tour using photographs and information from their recent book *Fremont, Then and Now*. Downtown Fremont is rich in history and home to many historic buildings. The short walking tour was designed so that people could revisit what Downtown Fremont once was and to also educate them about the history that still exists within the Fremont Historic District. Guide maps have been developed for those who are interested in the self-guided walking tour. Maps are available at various businesses throughout Downtown Fremont during normal business hours. Using the guide, people can view different historic photos and compare them to what is there now.

In addition to the walking tours, Larry and Krista have also completed research on the history of some of the storefronts along Front Street, taking a look back at the different businesses that have called Downtown Fremont "home" over the years. Make sure you look for these listings posted in the different store windows.



### 2009 Ralph's Joy of Living Farmer's Markets a Success

After the great success of the 2008 markets, we weren't sure how the 2009 markets could be much better. We quickly learned that the momentum gained in 2008 remained with us in 2009 and that there was room for even more success. Once again, the community showered us with their support and attendance seemed to be at an all time high. The friendly and social atmosphere of the markets promotes a sense of community that is so important for a central business district. Without the generous sponsorships, the quality vendors, and the support of the community, the markets would not be what they are. Because of all of these things, we are able to offer a quality event in the heart of our downtown that benefits community members, vendors, local business owners and our organization.

Once again in 2009, local businesses showed their support of our efforts by becoming market sponsors. Downtown Fremont was very excited that the total number of sponsors increased. Market sponsors included: Ralph's Joy of Living -Name and Title Sponsor, Fremont Federal Credit Union—Car Show Sponsor, AEP— Art and Music Fest, The Croghan Colonial Bank— Creative Construction Contest Sponsor, Carbo Forge— Service Club Olympics Sponsor, Memorial Hospital— Scarecrow Decorating Contest Sponsor, and Crown Battery and Gries Seed Farms— Bag Sponsors. Thank you to these sponsors for investing in Downtown Fremont.

### 2009 Sponsors



Thank you to everyone who participated in all of the special events. We couldn't do it without the support of the entire community. Congratulations to the following winners:

#### June

Car Show People's Choice Winner— Bob Rutherford  
Car Show Sponsor Choice Winner— Glenn Sultz

#### July

A special Thank You goes out to the Bethesda Arts Council and Kindermusik for providing the FREE art and music activities for kids at the Art and Music Fest.

#### August

Creative Construction People's Choice — H.J. Heinz  
Creative Construction Judge's Award — The UPS Store

#### September

Olympic Gold Medal Winner— Fremont Rotary Club

#### October

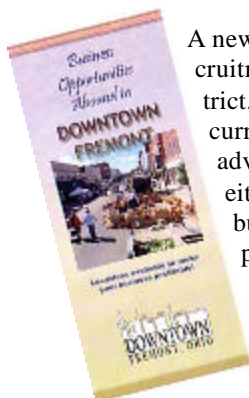
Scarecrow Contest Winner— Looking Good

# Once Upon A Christmas

NOVEMBER 28-DECEMBER 5

Downtown Fremont hosted the first annual Once Upon a Christmas Event, November 28th through December 5th. This week long event featured many new exciting activities for all ages including character greetings, historical walking tours, contests for kids and adults, a wine tasting and holiday tea, nightly live entertainment, extended hours and in store specials, prize drawings, and much more. The event kicked off with a FREE movie at the Paramount Cinema and the annual holiday parade. Willy Wonka served as the Grand Marshall for the 2009 parade and distributed Golden Tickets along the parade route to children that could be redeemed for a prize in participating stores after the parade. The event ended on Saturday December 5th with an all day Christmas in the Streets event from 10 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. In true Farmer's Market style, Front Street was closed down to accommodate vendors, a Wendt Key Canned Food Drive, Toys for Tots Drive, great food and live entertainment. Local musicians and the SJCC Brass Band and Flute Trio entertained us all with holiday music. There was even a live ice carving demonstration by EHOVE. This first time event was very well received and will be repeated in 2010.

**For the first time ever, Downtown Fremont was the home to a special mailbox that had direct access to the North Pole! Area children were invited to write letters to Santa Claus and drop them in this special mailbox to ensure quick and speedy delivery of all of their Christmas wishes. Parents were invited to include a \$5.00 donation in the letter to Sandusky County Relay for Life which resulted in a return letter from the North Pole!**



A new publication has been developed focused on the recruitment of new businesses into the Central Business District. The recruitment brochure includes testimonials of current downtown business owners and focuses on the advantages of businesses choosing Downtown Fremont to either open up a new business or re-locate an existing business. A list of quality businesses that would complement our existing establishments has been developed and those businesses are being contacted to discuss the rewards of locating in Downtown Fremont and joining our district that takes pride in providing quality customer service and unique products.

We're on the Web!  
[www.DowntownFremontOhio.org](http://www.DowntownFremontOhio.org)

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 Angie Morelock, Executive Director

**We would like to thank the following Downtown Fremont Committee Members and volunteers for their hard work, time and dedication throughout this past year:**

*Jodi Albright, Tom Appleby, Carol Baker, Margie Bixler - Foster, Tony Camilleri, Stephanie Deneau, Connie Durdel, Taylor Durdel, Holly Elder, Sharon Esker, Tom Esker, Kim Farrar, John Fey, Matt Fey, Barbara Fisher, Gibsonburg Key Club, Fran Gierhart, Kim Gabel, Gerry Gonya, Bob Hammer, Eileen Hammer, Adam Hellman, Brittney Hellman, Deb Hellman, Kasey Hellman, Mike Jay, Ben Kenny, Nancy Kleinhenz, Julie Kreilick, Ted Kreilick, Brittney Laird, Shantel Laird, Jenny Leighton, Dave Lester, Joe Liszak, Betty Love, Dr. Mark Mathews, Amy Matt, Michelle McGovern, Anthony McNemar, Darren McNemar, Donna McNemar, A. J. Mehlow, Al Mehlow, Jim Melle, Heather Mellott, Krista Michaels, Larry Michaels, Becky Miller, Scott Miller, Lynn Monday, Barb Moran, John Musteric, Deb Orndorff, Jim Parkhurst, Gary Perkins, Marie Perkins, Valerie Reed, Diane Reif, Ericka Reynolds, Tammie Robbins, Peggy Rodriguez, Rob Roth, St. Michael's Confirmation Class Members, Sheri Salyers, Darl Schiets, Abby Slemmer, SJCC Music Program, Julie Smothers, Ralph Smothers Jr., Jill Simpson, Holly Stacy, Terra State Community College Music Program, Toys for Tots, Charlotte Urban, John VanDoren, Monica Verhoff, Tim Wasserman, Corey Wassermann, Brian Walker, Kim Walter, Tammy Wellman, Wendt Key Team Realty*