

2010 ANNUAL REPORT

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR - ANGIE MORELOCK

Downtown Fremont, Inc. had a banner year in 2010. This report will highlight the many activities and events that we hosted, the successes we celebrated, the programs and services we offered, and the businesses, both new and old that we partnered with to make it all happen.

I have been the part-time Director of this organization for nine years and have witnessed many positive changes over the years. However, 2010 is a year that will stand out in my memory because this is the year I feel we transitioned from a program that was in its infancy stages to a more mature program that has not only continually gained momentum and support from the business community, key leaders, and stakeholders, but perhaps more importantly this year, we gained credibility from the community. The Fremont community is becoming very supportive of downtown and more and more people are realizing the true value of downtown to the economic health of the City of Fremont. The national movement of promoting buying local can certainly be felt in Fremont. People seem to understand the importance of supporting independent businesses, in turn providing a more stable economic foundation.

In addition to the support received by the community, the business community began supporting each other in new and innovative ways this year. There has always been an atmosphere of cooperation and collaboration in the downtown among business owners. However, this year, a real shift took place and owners truly realized the benefits of being located in the central business district by working together, cross promoting the products and services of each other, and valuing the support of their neighbors. They now realize the advantage they have and that they are stronger together than other businesses that are in a "stand alone" situation. This cooperation was even recognized by Jon Schallert, world-renowned marketing expert who was quoted saying "The Fremont Community Reinvention Scholarship participants were the most cohesive, cooperative group of independent business owners I've ever had attend our Destination BootCamp. What was immediately apparent was that they were attending my workshop to improve their businesses, but they were just as committed to improving downtown Fremont in the process. They were also very sharing with each other and the other owners from other parts of the country who attended. I think they understood that their competition is not other independent owners; they were there to help every other owner become the best they could be." says Schallert. He continued by saying, "If all downtowns in America had business owners like these Fremont ones, what a vibrant shopping environment America's consumers would find in every downtown!" What a great compliment and victory for Downtown Fremont!

DOWNTOWN FREMONT BUSINESSES OPEN LATER

In September, Downtown Fremont announced that they would be open for business on Thursday nights until 7:00 p.m. The Promotions Committee of Downtown Fremont has been discussing the need for coordinated evening hours for quite some time. The decision was made after Jon Schallert visited our community in May of this year, and helped the business owners understand today's shopper and their need to be able to shop after normal business hours in their central business district. As a result, the downtown business community worked together and coordinated hours with each other so that they could meet the needs of the shopper and make sure they wouldn't have to go out of town. The committee then developed a long-term radio, print, and billboard campaign to spread the word to the community in hopes that they would take advantage of the opportunity to shop local during the extended hours. If the response is positive, it could lead to additional extended hours in the future.

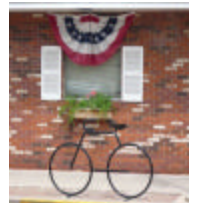
The following stores have coordinated their hours for your shopping pleasure on Thursday nights until 7:00 p.m.: Amish Country Deli, Bark Avenue Pet Boutique, Buchele's K-9 Service, Coco Beans Candy, DaVinci's Gallery and Coffee House, Fremont Athletic Supply, Fremont Uniform Shoppe, Gift Baskets & Bouquets, Grund Drug, Looking Good, Ralph's Joy of Living, Raleigh's Closet, Scrapbook Attic & Thingamajigs!

NEW BIKE RACKS

Downtown Fremont identified that an important component of our downtown revitalization efforts was to take advantage of the proximity of the North Coast Inland Bike Trail and its exit to Historic Downtown Fremont. It is a convenient stop for biking enthusiasts and therefore we wanted cyclists to feel welcome in the central business district.

One way we wanted to do this was to strategically place bike racks in the downtown area where cyclists could secure their bikes. Thanks to the generosity of the Flatlanders Bicycle Club, we were able to do just that in 2010. The club purchased two racks for this purpose that were installed by the City of Fremont near Grund Drug and DaVinci's Gallery and Coffee House. To coincide with the placement of the racks, The Rotary Club of Fremont donated money to create signage that would direct cyclists from the trail into Downtown Fremont.

We are excited that there is now a way for visitors from the Bike Trail, as well as the local bike riding community, to secure their bikes while spending time in Downtown Fremont.



“DESTINATION BOOTCAMP”

In March 2010, seven Fremont small business owners attended a Colorado-based business improvement “Destination BootCamp”, where



The Fremont Delegation takes a moment out for a photo opportunity with Jon Schallert.

they learned hundreds of new methods to bring more customers and tourists to Fremont. The delegation of business owners from Downtown Fremont were among a group of business owners from across North America who attended the two and one-half day, 20-hour workshop.

Thanks to the Croghan Colonial Bank Small Business Reinvention Scholarships, Downtown Fremont is the first

group from Ohio to ever attend the Destination BootCamp. Scholarship recipients include: Donna McNemar owner of Coco Beans Candy and More, Marie Perkins co-owner of DaVinci’s Gallery and Coffee House, Bob Hammer owner of Fremont Athletic Supply and Fremont Uniform Shoppe, Gerry Gonya co-owner of Harvey Oaks Jeweler, Julie Kreilick owner of Looking Good Aveda Concept Salon and Spa, Julie Smothers co-owner of Ralph’s Joy of Living, Deb Hellman owner of WAMH Design, LLC, and Angie Morelock Executive Director of Downtown Fremont, Inc.

The two and one-half day “Destination BootCamp”, created by marketing consultant Jon Schallert, teaches independent business owners how to reposition their businesses as “consumer destinations”. With the principals learned at the BootCamp, the retailers are better able to satisfy more customer needs and attract more visitors and tourists from outside Fremont.

The BootCamp was the kick-off to a six month Community Reinvention Project. After their return, the business owners completed a six month program with Schallert that included conference calls and even a site visit by Schallert where he offered insight to them regarding the interior and exterior of their businesses. Also, as a part of the Community Reinvention Project, the delegation is sharing the knowledge they gained about the 14 destination principals during monthly sessions that are open to other business owners where they discuss the different steps and how they are implementing them in their business.

BROWN BAG MUSIC SERIES

Birchard Public Library began hosting Brown Bag Music on the Library Lawn in 2010. Every Tuesday in July from 12-1 p.m. people were invited to bring a blanket or a chair and a lunch of their liking to enjoy an entertaining variety of musical instruments and styles. There were new, live musicians each week. What a great way to spend your lunch hour!



Visitors enjoy the weather and music at one of the outdoor concerts at BPL.

Special Points of Interest:

- “Increasing Sales and Profits as a Destination Business” was presented by Jon Schallert in May, 2010 at the Paramount Theatre to over 100 attendees.
- NBC 24 provided Downtown Fremont several free commercials to promote shopping and our special events.
- Downtown Fremont was featured on a segment of “Detective Deals”, a TV program that airs in the Dayton and Columbus markets. Thanks to the Sandusky County Convention and Visitors Bureau for spearheading this project.
- Downtown Fremont partnered with Eagle 99 to produce commercials that could be heard on the outside speakers throughout downtown. Business owners paid a nominal fee to create a 30 second commercial that was then mixed with other commercials and music. Thank you to Eagle 99 for their cooperation with this project.
- Congratulations to Gift Baskets and Bouquets owner, Sharon Esker for placing in the top 10 in the Basket Design Challenge at the National Gift Basket Convention in 2010.
- The Fremont Ministry Association began supporting the 3/50 project and worked with downtown businesses in order to track their efforts.
- Downtown Fremont participated in the Sandusky Co. Volunteer Recognition Event for the 7th year in a row. The event featured Mayor Terry Overmyer as keynote speaker and served as a way for us to thank the volunteers who help make all of our events possible throughout the year.
- The Downtown NEWS newsletter was once again published twice in 2010.

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Special Points of Interest: (cont. from pg. 2)

- For the 3rd year in a row, Downtown Fremont was the site for the May Business After Hours sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce of Sandusky County.
- Coco Beans Candy and More made the "World's Largest Buckeye" on October 2nd. It weighed in at 270 lbs and for a donation to the local food pantry, people could sample this confection.
- The Santa Mailbox returned to Downtown Fremont for the second year in a row. Over 150 area children visited downtown and placed their letters to Santa in this special mailbox. Once again, Sandusky County Relay for Life answered those letters that included a donations to their organization.
- The Sandusky County American Cancer Society held their first annual Wine and Cheese fundraiser in Downtown Fremont in October. Downtown merchants participated in the event by providing door prizes and auction items, and also donated a percentage of sales that took place on the day of the event to the ACS.
- Croghan Colonial Bank once again hosted Santa in the Little Red Santa House. He was available to hear Christmas wishes from area children throughout the season.
- The Organization Committee spent much of 2010 creating an Action Plan. This Action Plan was created with three goals in mind. 1. A focused direction for the future, 2. A living and breathing document to measure continued progress, 3. a tool for seamless continuation of progress when new people join the efforts, or current people are no longer involved.

DOWNTOWN FREMONT WELCOMES NEW BUSINESSES

There were many changes that took place in the Historic District in 2010 including several new businesses opening, property sales, and business expansions. This should be noted as one of the biggest accomplishments of the year based on the current economic conditions. While many downtowns around the state were experiencing store closings and higher vacancy rates, we were welcoming new stores and celebrating at ribbon cutting ceremonies. This is due to the fact that Downtown Fremont is an affordable place to do business and has many advantages to both start-up businesses and businesses looking to relocate or open a second location. Downtown Fremont welcomed the following businesses who opened their doors in the central business district:

- A Cut Above Barber Shop (121 S. Front St.)
- A Cut Above Beauty Salon (123 S. Front St.)
- Amish Country Deli and More (112 S. Front St.)
- Bloom by Jill Gray (309 Garrison St.)
 - Buchele's K-9 Service, LLC (116 N. Arch St.)
- CG Insurance Agency (118 N. Arch St.)
 - Dr. Edna Jean Podiatry (319 Garrison St.)
- WAMH Design, LLC (108 S. Front St.)

These businesses are a great addition to the district and complement our existing well established quality businesses.

Along with the addition of the new businesses, there were notable investments made in Downtown Fremont as well. Raleigh's Closet expanded into two storefronts. This expansion not only allowed for product line expansion, it also added a resource room for parents and a play room for kids to enjoy while their parents shop. Lee Witt, owner of Pee-Wee's Restoration expanded his business with a 24' X 40' addition to his property at 101 Ewing Street. The Paramount Theatre also made a significant investment in December by converting to digital technology, at a cost of over \$400,000. Thanks to their investment, the local community will be able to stay in town to enjoy all of the 3D movies that are scheduled to be released nationally in 2011.

Another investment that should be celebrated is that long time business owner Bob Hammer invested in Down-

town Fremont by purchasing two buildings on Front Street. Bob is the owner of Fremont Athletic Supply and Fremont Uniform Shoppe and previously rented his storefronts. Now though, he became a true stakeholder in downtown redevelopment by purchasing the building Fremont Athletic Supply is located in (203 S. Front St.), and also became a landlord when he purchased the old Masonic building (108-116 S. Front St.). He will be locating the Fremont Uniform Shoppe to that building (110 S. Front St.) in early 2011 which is the final storefront available, a huge accomplishment since that building has struggled with high vacancy rates for many years.

In addition to the above, a few other notable property sales should be mentioned. The southern half of the corner of North Front and State Street went up for auction and was purchased by Ron Mayle. Mayle is the owner of the northern half of that same corner, which puts the entire property under single ownership. The former location of Fremont Pets on Garrison Street has also been purchased and extensive interior renovations are underway. This sale is a real positive considering the building was close to being condemned by the Fremont Fire Department. Also, the former Peeble's building (127 S. Front St.) was sold at auction to the Miller Brothers. This building sat vacant the last five years while Peeble's still held the lease on the property. Since the sale, the Miller Brothers have been completing work on the interior addressing issues that surfaced while it sat vacant.



Raleigh's Closet celebrated their expansion during a ribbon cutting ceremony with the Chamber of Commerce Ambassadors, and Mayor Overmyer.



Once Upon A Christmas was introduced in Downtown Fremont in 2009 and was well received and therefore came back in 2010 with a few changes. The week-long event was shortened to four days, but still featured many of the same activities and events including contests for kids and adults, a wine tasting, extended hours and in store specials, prize drawings, and much more. It was also scheduled to coincide with the annual holiday parade, which was celebrating its 20th year.

Saturday December 4th was a day packed full of kid's activities, family time and great holiday shopping. Families spent the day on Front Street, which was closed down to accommodate all of the activities including kids craft stations, the I Spy Window contest, marshmallow roasting stations, ice and wood carving demonstrations and train rides. At 2:00 p.m. the movie Polar Express was shown for FREE at the Paramount Theatre to more than 550 people! Immediately after the movie, the 20th annual Festival of Lights parade stepped off from Rodger Young Park and featured The Big Nut and Tressel Vessel as grand marshals. After the parade, The Big Nut was available for photo opportunities and autographs at Fremont Athletic Supply. In addition, more than 400 kids participated in the Free Prize Hunt and redeemed their tickets that were distributed along the parade route. Events continued on Sunday and included store open houses and Art Sunday.

Once Upon A Christmas is providing a venue for area families



Kids enjoyed FREE Train Rides during Once Upon A Christmas.

to celebrate the holiday season and is helping create holiday memories. Many generations have special memories of coming to Downtown Fremont for special events and holiday shopping and our efforts with this event are continuing that for this generation. That sense of community is a very important part of our revitalization efforts!

ALLEYS GET MAKE-OVER

The two downtown alleyways got a make-over in 2010. The alleys serve as a walk way for visitors and downtown employees to get from parking areas to the businesses. After several years of overgrowth and little maintenance, it was determined that an overhaul was needed in order to make these passages more appealing to those who use them. Sharon Esker coordinated the project on behalf of Downtown Fremont and received both support and generous donations from many community businesses and organizations. The Sandusky County Juvenile Court Community Service Program, under the direction of Phil Collison and the Vanguard Horticulture Program, spent several days working up and weeding the flower beds and pruning the existing bushes. Once that phase was complete, they planted both perennials and annuals. Mulch was the finishing touch. Once the alleys were completed, various downtown businesses each volunteered for one week during the Spring and Summer to keep the flower beds weeded and watered.

Thank you to the following for their help in this project: City of Fremont, Master Gardener Program, Sandusky County Juvenile Court Community Service Program, Schmittuz Gardens, Stony Acres Garden Center, Universal Farms and Vanguard Career Center. A special thank you goes out to Joe Fisher who hauled water several times during the season to make sure the plants were adequately watered, despite the lack of rain.



L- Students hard at work. R- Picture of alley after work was completed.

Downtown Fremont Becomes a REACH Business Partner

The REACH career education program, sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce of Sandusky County is designed to introduce area upper-elementary school students to the "world of work" by providing Consultants from Business Partner Chamber members that visit schools on a monthly basis. They discuss the types of jobs available in their community and present lessons designed to encourage students to develop life skills that will assist in preparing them to join the workforce in the future. This is done through the use of a curriculum book developed by The Ohio State University – Marion that presents a series of lessons, reinforced by hands-on activities.

During the 2009-2010 school year, Downtown Fremont was paired with Mr. Boegli's fifth grade classroom at Stamm Elementary in the Fremont City School District. Downtown Fremont was one of 25 business partners that presented the program in 29 classrooms in 14 schools throughout Sandusky County. A highlight of the program was a visit to Downtown in May, 2010 where students toured businesses, met the Mayor, and interviewed small business owners. Please visit <http://animoto.com/play/Tux8Mn2S7mNsFJrrYh5miA?autostart=true> for a short slide show of their field trip to Downtown Fremont.

2010 Ralph's Joy of Living Farmer's Markets Continue to Grow

Everyone loves the Ralph's Joy of Living Farmer's Markets! The fifth year of hosting the markets in Downtown Fremont, Inc. was the best year ever. In fact, our market was named *The Biggest Market* around on www.FunCoast.com, which is a great honor considering there are over 365 markets that take place in Ohio. The markets continue to grow and get better every year. Once again this year, the markets were held on the third Saturday of June through October; however two additional markets were added in 2010 because of their popularity and requests made by vendors, downtown business owners, and the public. July 31st and October 2nd were added as additional dates based off of peaks in the produce season and were well received by the public which was demonstrated by high attendance. This attendance, along with the support of our generous sponsors, the commitment of the downtown business owners, and the number of high quality vendors who register for every market, are the reasons we continually experience success. Downtown Fremont is very proud of the markets and very thankful to everyone who is involved.



2010 Special Event Sponsors

- Name and Title Sponsor- Ralph's Joy of Living
- Car Show- Fremont Federal Credit Union
- The Dog Days of Summer (NEW Event in 2010) - Green Bay Packaging
- Service Club Olympics- Croghan Colonial Bank
- Scarecrow Decorating Contest- Memorial Health Care Systems

Other sponsors include:

- Bella Cuisine, Crown Battery, Eshleman Fruit Farm,
- Gries Seed Farms, Mosser Construction, Rick Holland CPA,
- Rimelspach Farm & Produce Co., TJay's Produce Co., Valley View Health Care



"The Fremont Farmers' Market is by far the biggest one I've been to this summer and it's kind of a shame it's not every week or every other week, but that's just how it is. Fremont Farmers' Market is definitely a must for anyone that loves to go to an open-air market. My family spent at least two hours walking around and shopping. Most of the farmers' markets we have gone to we are done within 30 minutes tops. This is a great place to bring the kids and spend a day getting them excited about produce shopping and because they block off the street there were lots of little kids running around having a great time. Plus everyone was incredibly nice."

Christy Seyler, Sandusky, OH

THANK YOU

Thank you to the City of Fremont for all of their support of the Ralph's Joy of Living Farmer's Markets. Many different departments are involved in the success of the events and we truly appreciate your partnership!

Thank you to Darl Schiets for providing a "Mule" during each market for the Director to travel around on.

Thank you to The UPS Store for providing printing services for the In-Store Specials Sheet that were created for each market.

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

MARKET VENDORS GIVE BACK

A new feature was added to the markets in 2010, but it is one that many people wouldn't notice. This year, at the conclusion of every market vendors donated their unsold, perishable items to local non-profit organizations who distributed them to those in the area that needed them most. The response to the program was overwhelming and we were thrilled about the amount of items that were collected this season. The generosity of the vendors was overwhelming and the recipients were truly appreciative that the vendors were kind enough to help support the local community through this unique form of giving."

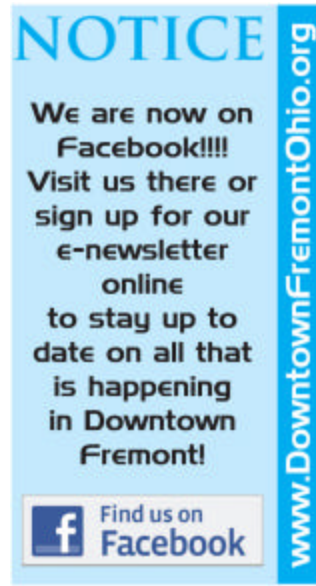
A special thank you goes out to the WSOS Senior and TRIPS Program volunteers who helped with the collection of the items at the end of each market.



Cindy Horn of WSOS stands with the July 17th collection.

WELCOME PACKET

New business owners in the Historic District now have a great resource available to them. A Welcome Packet has been developed and is hand delivered to new owners providing them with information regarding Downtown Fremont and resources that are available in the community to small business owners. It outlines services offered by our organization as well as others such as the Chamber of Commerce, Convention and Visitors Bureau, and the Small Business Development Center. The packet also informs them that their membership fee to the Promotions Committee is being waived for the remainder of that calendar year in order to encourage their involvement. A calendar of events is also included so they are aware of all that is going on in Downtown Fremont along with other current printed materials (annual report, newsletters, etc...). Other resources and opportunities for new business owners are being developed and will be included in the welcome packet once they are complete.



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*Mission:
To Empower
Stakeholders To
Achieve Ongoing
Downtown
Revitalization*

VOLUNTEERS

Our organization is lucky to have many great and faithful volunteers that contribute in various ways throughout the year including serving on committees, planning activities, and helping out at special events. However, this year, Downtown Fremont was lucky enough to find someone to volunteer on a weekly basis to help out in the office. Donna Supra of Green Springs volunteers in the office one afternoon a week and completes a variety of tasks including everything from data entry and mailings, to creating chalkboard signs and photocopying. She played a large role in many different aspects of the 2010 Farmer's Market season! She is a huge help and her time, effort and smile are truly appreciated!

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

Jodi Albright, Carol Baker, Doreen Barren, Laura Birkholz, Ken Buchele, Laurie Buchele, Tony Camilleri, Sandy Clark, Dian Dauch, Stephanie Deneau, Connie Durdel, Holly Elder, Sharon Esker, Tom Esker, Kim Farrar, Barbara Fisher, Joe Fisher, Joe Fisher Jr., Fran Gierhart, Marc Glotzbecker, Gerry Gonya, Jill Gray, Bob Hammer, Eileen Hammer, Cathy Harpster, Brenda Havens, Adam Hellman, Brittney Hellman, Deb Hellman, Kasey Hellman, Marge Hirt, Cindy Horn, Mike Jay, Ben Kenny, Brad Kepler, Nancy Kleinhenz, Julie Kreilick, Ted Kreilick, Brittney Laird, Daniel Laird, Shantel Laird, Chris Lauer, Tim Leemaster, Jenny Leighton, Amy LeJeune, Dave Lester, Joe Lyszak, Betty Love, Joyce Mapus, Dr. Mark Mathews, Amy Matt, Michelle McGovern, Anthony McNemar, Darren McNemar, Donna McNemar, Rachel McNemar, Peggy McQuiston, A. J. Mehlow, Al Mehlow, Jim Melle, Krista Michaels, Larry Michaels, Becky Miller, Brandy Miller, Coleen Miller, Scott Miller, Jim Miranda, Kay Miranda, Lynn Monday, Barb Moran, John Musteric, Nancy Oakleaf, Jim Parkhurst, Gary Perkins, Marie Perkins, Abby Pfleiderer, Brenda Provinsal, Valerie Reed, Diane Reif, Ray Rendon, Tammie Robbins, Peggy Rodriguez, Ginny Schepflin, Chuck Schepflin, Darl Schiets, Tanya Schling, Hope Schumacher Sheidler, Julie Sieving, Abby Slemmer, Josh Smith, Julie Smothers, Ralph Smothers Jr., Jill Simpson, Holly Stacy, Dianne Staib, Charlotte Urban, John VanDoren, Monica Verhoff, Carol Walters, Paul Walters, Sandusky County Park District, Tim Wasserman, Brian Walker, Jim Walter, Kim Walter, Johnny Wellman, Tammy Wellman, Sue Wiersma, Laurie Zyski