



A collaboration of business owners, property owners, local officials and individuals dedicated to the revitalization and growth of Caro's downtown and the surrounding business area!

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Caro Seeking Community Supporters for Michigan Main Street Training Program

Caro, Michigan – August 10, 2010 – The Caro Downtown Development Authority (DDA) and the City of Caro are pleased to announce the City of Caro has been selected as an Associate Level participant in the Michigan Main Street program coordinated by the Michigan State Housing and Development Authority (MSHDA).

Associate Level participants are Michigan Main Streets in training. Over the next six to nine months, volunteers from the Caro community will learn how to incorporate the nationally-recognized, four-point approach to creating a thriving Main Street community. This approach includes learning the four-points of organization, promotion, economic restructuring and design from the Michigan Main Street Center staff, and Selected and Master Level Main Street communities across the state.

"Michigan's economy cannot thrive without vibrant downtowns," shared Keith Molin, Executive Director for MSHDA. "This program is creating opportunities for new development and economic growth in downtowns across our state."

This is the next step toward fulfilling the vision of 'Caro 2013' as shared by the community in the initial stages of the Caro Blueprint Project. The Caro Downtown Blueprint was a comprehensive-market study done in 2008 led by Caro business leaders, property owners, local officials, and community supporters. The Blueprint studied the "traditional" downtown business district, the market area served by those businesses and the Caro community.

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“Our participation in the Main Street program is not about finding a quick fix,” said Tom Striffler, Mayor for the City of Caro. “It’s about building upon what we learned from the Blueprint project and understanding how we can incorporate the four-point approach into our planning in order to see sustainable improvements.”

Participation in the Michigan Main Street program is being spearheaded by the Caro DDA and the Caro Blueprint Advisory Board, and is being driven by the need for a continuation of the community-focused revitalization effort. Caro’s participation in the program is at no cost to the City or DDA. The only requirement for participation is that at least one volunteer from the Caro community must be present at each of the four core training sessions. Each session is held twice in different Michigan Main Street communities. Sessions typically run 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

“Though the training is focused on downtown, we see it as being about the Caro community as a whole,” continued Striffler. “The quality of business and life downtown has a ripple effect on the entire area ... a thriving downtown equates to a vibrant community.”

Volunteers from the Caro community are encouraged to get involved. They can join the Caro Blueprint Advisory Board and/or learn how they can channel their passions and skill set to a specific area of the four-point Main Street approach. For instance, if a volunteer has a skill set for marketing then that person would consider getting involved with the Main Street Promotion Committee. Or maybe you have someone who is great at planning. That person would be ideal for the Main Street Organization Committee

“A vibrant community starts with board spectrum of volunteers who form a well-rounded team,” stated Kris McArdle, Facilitator of the Blueprint Project and President of Caro-based Infinite Creative Services, Inc. “We’re looking for passionate volunteers who are actively dedicated to rebuilding Caro’s Main Street.”

The Main Street training program kicks off on Aug. 24, 2010, in Marshall, MI, introducing the four-point approach. This session will also be offered on Sept. 9, 2010, in Scottville, MI. Reservations are required as space is limited. Interested volunteers can contact McArdle at (989) 672-0323 for more details or attend the monthly Caro Blueprint meeting on the 2nd Wednesday at 7 p.m. in the City Hall Board Room.

To learn more about the Michigan Main Street program, visit <http://www.michiganmainstreetcenter.com/Program.aspx>.

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