



## GARNER REVITALIZATION ASSOCIATION

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### **Garner Selected by the NC Department of Commerce to Participate in the North Carolina Main Street Program.**

*Garner joins Davidson, Kings Mountain and Roanoke Rapids as one of only four communities selected to join the Main Street program.*

Garner, NC – September 23, 2009 – The Town of Garner has been selected by the NC Department of Commerce to participate in the North Carolina Main Street Program. This selection comes after completing a competitive application and extensive review process.

The North Carolina Main Street Program provides technical assistance services to communities that are revitalizing and preserving their downtowns and traditional commercial districts as mixed-use centers of activity, serving the community's needs. The NCMS Program assists communities in developing their own local Main Street Program by utilizing the National Main Street Center's Four-Point Approach, incorporating Organization, Design, Promotion, and Economic Restructuring Initiatives. In the first three years of a local Main Street program, the state of North Carolina invests approximately \$100,000 in on-site visits, training and technical assistance. After the initial three-year start-up phase, the state annually invests approximately \$5,000 in each Main Street community to provide ongoing town-specific technical assistance, and statewide and on-site training for managers and board members.

Garner's Main Street Program will be managed by the Garner Revitalization Association (GRA), an organization started by the Town of Garner in 2005 to spearhead revitalization activities in the North Garner/Downtown area. GRA, which is now an independent 501(c) (3) non-profit organization, was organized following the Main Street Four Point Approach and has been working toward selection in the program since its inception. GRA is run by a nine member volunteer Board of Directors and a full time Executive Director.

“Acceptance into the Main Street Program reaffirms years of hard work and dedication to the Downtown area by elected officials, town staff, the GRA Board of Directors and numerous volunteers and community members” says John Hodges, Executive Director of GRA. “This program will give us access to valuable resources that will help us pull together these efforts into a cohesive program for the revitalization of our Historic Downtown area.” Elmo Vance, Chairman of the GRA Board of Directors commented that “this is a deliberate step in a positive direction for the Garner community.”

Garner Council Member, Kathy Behringer, works as the liaison between GRA and the Garner Town Council. When Mrs. Behringer learned that Garner was selected to participate in the Main Street Program, she stated, “The Downtown Main Street area is where Garner began. Our selection confirms what we've known all along, that this area

of Garner has great value and worth. We can now move forward knowing that one day we will see our vision become a reality as this area returns to what it used to be, a wonderful focal point of our community, and I am excited to see it happen!”

Garner’s Planning Director Brad Bass stated, “I am delighted Garner was selected to participate in the Main Street Program. This was a primary goal recommended by the North Garner Plan adopted by the Town Council in 2004. It represents another significant step in our revitalization efforts in the community.”

While Garner has been fortunate to have many volunteers help with their revitalization efforts over the years, there are many roles that will need to be filled to effectively facilitate the Main Street Program. People who are interested in participating in the program are encouraged to contact the GRA office. “There are plenty of opportunities for everyone who is interested in a vibrant Downtown Garner” says Hodges.

## **About the North Carolina Main Street Center**

The North Carolina Main Street Center promotes downtown revitalization based on economic development within the context of historic preservation, a concept developed by the [National Trust for Historic Preservation](#) that has proven successful in more than a thousand smaller communities across the country. The North Carolina Main Street program helps small towns to recognize and preserve their historic fabric, and, using local resources, build on their unique characteristics to create vibrant central business districts that meet the needs of today's communities. For additional information about the NC Main Street Program, visit [www.nccommerce.com](http://www.nccommerce.com) or contact Liz Parham, Director, NC Office of Urban Development at 919-733-2850.

## **About the Garner Revitalization Association**

The Garner Revitalization Association is a non-profit organization that supports the development of the downtown area as a vibrant business, residential, entertainment and cultural center in partnership with government and private organizations. For additional information about the Garner Revitalization Association, visit [www.downtowngarner.com](http://www.downtowngarner.com) or contact John Hodges, Executive Director at 919-773-4402 (office) or 919-395-8307 (mobile).

## **Press Contact**

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