



**MAIN STREET COLDWATER IS  
DRIVING TRANSFORMATION IN  
THE HEART OF THE  
COMMUNITY**

# DOWNTOWN COLDWATER

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Narrative by Audrey Tappenden, Coldwater Main Street Executive Director, and Courtney Dirschell, Coldwater Main Street Board Member, and Phil Eich, Storyville Social, as part of the Michigan Main Street Story Series

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

## **The Pulse of Michigan**

“Coldwater used to be called ‘the pulse of Michigan’ because we are nestled between Indiana and Ohio, and we are about the same distance from Detroit as we are from Chicago. It’s very community-centered and very active. The number of service clubs we have for a community of our size is incredible, along with the number of projects that we have going on. People love spending time at the parks. We’ve got great lake chains and tons of cultural institutions like the Tibbits Opera House and our historic library, making us a very culturally rich community.

This community is just an amazing and giving community, and we’re proud to live here.”

—Audrey Tappenden, Coldwater Main Street Executive Director, and Courtney Dirschell, Coldwater Main Street Board Member

## **Downtown Revitalization, Hops on Monroe**

“South Monroe Street has become a hub of activity and development, which is very exciting. We received funding from MEDC’s CRP program and recently finished a renovation there: adding upper story apartments and

ground floor commercial space to a historic building. We even had a public vote on the color scheme for that, so it was very engaging for the community.

Monroe Street itself has also become an outdoor event location for us, which has been amazing. The city has done lots of improvements in terms of infrastructure, lighting, and things like that to make it a great location to host different events. We have our Hops on Monroe event there every Thursday, which is an incredible 10-week event in the summer. It's essentially an outdoor beer garden where we close down the street. It's dog friendly, it's kid friendly, and we bring in different food trucks and entertainment every week. We have vendors and restaurants on the street selling things. But apart from events, there's also been lots of service clubs and organizations who have also taken advantage of that space, and that's great to see.

Our Downtown Development Authority also purchased a building on Chicago Street in the fall of 2019. We spent the next few years trying to figure out what would make great use of that space. Our local children's museum wanted to expand and to be closer to downtown, so it became an awesome partnership. We pursued the project right after finishing our transformation strategy, and one of the things the community said they wanted downtown were 'experiences and things for families to do'. So it was really just a perfect fit for bringing the community's vision to life.

The City Council loaned the DDA a portion of funds to help finance some improvements, and we did a massive public fundraiser that many, many entities chipped in. We also received a \$50,000 match through Patronicity and MEDC's Public Spaces Community Places program. So after many improvements and much work, the children's museum got 50% more space and we're really happy to see thousands of families visiting downtown."

—Audrey Tappenden, Coldwater Main Street Executive Director, and Courtney Dirschell, Coldwater Main Street Board Member



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## Support of City Council

"We have an amazing city council that is fully supportive of our downtown to where our focus has changed from the recruitment of industrial manufacturing companies to a focus on our downtown. And I will say again and again, we have to have community involvement in order to make all of these things happen, and we do. Whether that's sponsorships or people buying buildings and fixing them up, sometimes not even knowing what they're going to do with them, everybody pitching in really makes our revitalization possible."

— Courtney Dirschell, Coldwater Main Street Board Member

## The Value of Michigan Main Street

"You want to find ways to give the people who live in your community and want to be involved a role to play, and the structure we gain from being part of the Michigan Main Street program gives us the tools to figure out how to do that. It's a science and an art to bring a lot of people together for the collective vision of creating a place that everyone can call home, and having an effective structure plays an important role in that.

Being part of Michigan Main Street also makes us eligible for technical assistance and grants for our businesses, and a lot of support that is only available being part of a program that has been proven to be incredibly successful in a lot of other places, and I'm so glad we're a part of it."

— Audrey Tappenden, Coldwater Main Street Executive Director



# COLDWATER MAIN STREET

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# Michigan Main Street Story Series



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