LOOKING BACK
...and Thinking Ahead
P2

P6
PEDESTRIAN AND PEDALCYCLE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
An update from Julie Fitzpatrick

P10
AND THE WINNERS ARE...
The complete roster of award recipients from PDC’s 30th Anniversary Gala

Meet the Outstanding MANAGER OF THE YEAR
The 2016-2017 fiscal year has come to a close and we are now moving ahead into 2017-2018. The past fiscal year was a significant one for PDC and bears a bit of retrospective. The new fiscal year is full of opportunities and challenges and warrants spending some time considering the future.

First, the past year. During 2016-17, PDC did the following:

- **HOSTED THE 2017 NATIONAL MAIN STREET CONFERENCE**
- **RAISED OVER $250,000 IN SUPPORT OF THE MAIN STREET CONFERENCE**
- **HELPED ONE OF OUR OWN – WEST CHESTER - WIN A GREAT AMERICAN MAIN STREET AWARD**
- **CELEBRATED ITS 30TH ANNIVERSARY**
- **FORMALLY UNVEILED ITS NATURE-BASED PLACEMAKING MANUAL**
- **SURPASSED 500 DIFFERENT INDIVIDUALS HAVING ATTENDED THE PDC COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION ACADEMY SINCE ITS INCEPTION.**

By any measure it was a year of accomplishments for the organization. The Main Street Conference in Pittsburgh was a great success. It’s the third time Pennsylvania has hosted the conference since 1999. A letter from National Main Street Center President and CEO Patrice Frey proclaimed it as “the best conference ever.” Over 1,580 people attended the event. Pittsburgh foundations provided funding for over 65 scholarships. DCED Regional Director Johnna Pro and her helpers baked over 319 dozen cookies - something they are still talking about and a story that made it into the Wall Street Journal.

PDC helped raise a record amount of contributions and sponsorships and West Chester’s Main Street Program was deemed one of the three best in the country this past year, from among more than 1,700 potentially eligible programs.

As an organization, PDC celebrated its 30th Anniversary—a major milestone in its corporate history. While early year records between 1980 and 1987 are scarce, conservative reinvestment statistics between 1987 and December of 2016 indicate that Main Street Programs have assisted in the creation of a net 6,800+ new businesses, a net 20,500+ new jobs, over $1.3 billion in new investment and over 919,000 volunteer hours. During that same thirty year period, PDC helped to bring about the implementation of the Commonwealth’s Elm Street Program in 2004 - and oversaw a $3.0 million Elm Street demonstration program; took on the role of coordinating the Blueprint Communities Program for the Federal Home Loan Bank of Pittsburgh; and worked with DCNR to develop the concept of Nature-Based Placemaking.
All the credit in the world goes to the board and volunteers of PDC, and especially the staff, who did all of this while maintaining their regular duties providing educational and technical assistance to communities around the Commonwealth.

So one might think that this would be a good time for a breather. But as life would have it, there is “no such rest for the wicked.” The new fiscal year is here and we have no choice but to jump in with both feet. The Commonwealth did pass an “expenditure budget” on time and, as in the last few years, the Keystone Communities program saw a last minute bump to over $13 million. By this time next year we will be well into a new gubernatorial race with all of the inherent uncertainty that carries with it. We at PDC are anxiously awaiting the renewal of our contract with DCED for the 2017-2022 timeframe. During this time we expect to see the growth of the Nature Based Placemaking effort, the next round of PA Blueprint Communities, and the growth of an “UrbanMain” program at the National Main Street Center. During this five year period we will also hold two national elections and see a major legislative re-districting effort after the 2020 Census. PDC’s board will hold a strategic retreat during the 2017-18 fiscal year to plot out its course for the next five years. PDC’s staff will undergo significant changes during this period as well, as we as an organization deal with pending retirements and changes to staff structure.

For all of these reasons we have chosen the programmatic theme for the 2017-2018 year to be “Embracing Change – Empowering the Future of Your Community’s Revitalization Effort.” In addition to the factors defined above, innovation, technology, diversity in all its forms, and constantly evolving lifestyle preferences – how we shop, how we play, how we engage in our communities and how we interact as a society, will all be taken into account.

The first thirty years of PDC-assisted community revitalization in Pennsylvania are behind us. The next thirty years await.

I have been doing this work for almost forty years. That probably means that some of you will be reading, or writing, an article similar to this in 2047. How will the world, our Commonwealth and our communities have changed by that time? What role did you play in facilitating that change? As Gandhi said... “Be the change you wish to see in the world.”

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## 2017 Events Calendar

For more information or to register for an event or training, please visit our online events calendar.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Manager Training</td>
<td>Monday, July 24 - Tuesday, July 25</td>
<td>8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Harrisburg, PA PDC Offices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Revitalization Academy: Organization</td>
<td>Wednesday, July 26 - Thursday, July 27</td>
<td>8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Harrisburg, PA PDC Offices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project for Public Spaces - Placemaking Invitation only</td>
<td>Monday, September 11 - Tuesday, September 12</td>
<td>9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Reading, PA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managers Meeting – East</td>
<td>Wednesday, September 13</td>
<td>9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Reading, PA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership Forum</td>
<td>Wednesday, September 13</td>
<td>9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Reading, PA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managers Meeting – West</td>
<td>Tuesday, September 19</td>
<td>9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Ebensburg, PA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership Forum</td>
<td>Tuesday, September 19</td>
<td>9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Ebensburg, PA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Manager Training</td>
<td>Monday, September 25 - Tuesday, September 26</td>
<td>8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Harrisburg, PA PDC Offices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Revitalization Academy: Physical Improvement (Design)</td>
<td>Wednesday, September 27 - Thursday, September 28</td>
<td>8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Harrisburg, PA PDC Offices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BID Managers Meeting</td>
<td>Wednesday, October 11</td>
<td>10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Harrisburg, PA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Manager Training</td>
<td>Monday, November 13 - Tuesday, November 14</td>
<td>8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Harrisburg, PA PDC Offices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Revitalization Academy: Community Marketing</td>
<td>Wednesday, November 15 - Thursday, November 16</td>
<td>8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Harrisburg, PA PDC Offices</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THE NEWEST FACES
on Main Street & Elm Street

**Bellefonte Borough**
**Shannon Wright,**
**Main Street Manager**
A native of the Centre County region, Shannon brings to Bellefonte a love for the area and a passion for historic preservation.

She holds a Bachelor’s degree from the Pennsylvania State University in Art History with a focus in Architectural History and a Master’s degree from Clemson University and the College of Charleston in Historic Preservation.

Her previous experience is wide ranging and includes non-profit work, event planning and design, museum cataloguing, hospitality services, and real estate. She is thrilled to be in Bellefonte, using her passion and skills to help revitalize an area she grew up in.

**Hollidaysburg Community Partnership**
**Shalen Perehinec,**
**Main Street Manager**
Shalen Perehinec is a 2012 graduate of Altoona Area High School and earned bachelor’s degrees in both Health Communication and Psychology with a minor in Spanish from Juniata College in 2016. Prior to working as the Main Street Manager, Shalen served as the AmeriCorps Community Outreach Coordinator at United Way of Blair County, where she planned several fundraising events and coordinated volunteers. Shalen hopes to bring new energy to the borough and to enhance its appeal to both residents and businesses.

**Ridgway Main Street Program**
**Beth Shuttleworth,**
**Main Street Manager**
Beth Shuttleworth began her position as the Main Street Manager for the Ridgway Main Street Program on May 1st. Beth is a lifelong resident of Elk County, leaving only long enough to earn a bachelor’s degree in Political Science from Indiana University of Pennsylvania.

The Ridgway Main Street Program is run by a unique partnership which includes Ridgway Heritage Council, Ridgway-Elk County Chamber of Commerce, Ridgway Industrial Development Corporation, Ridgway Borough, Ridgway Township, and Ridgway Area School District.

Bringing visibility and knowledge to Ridgway about the Main Street Program is one of Beth’s first priorities as she develops her relationship with Main Street.
PDC is now represented by Julie Fitzpatrick, who has a seat on the PennDOT Pedestrian and Pedalcycle Advisory Committee. Her first meeting was on June 1st, 2017. Some of the updates include:

**CELL PHONE BAN FOR NOVICE DRIVERS**

In the near future, Senator John Rafferty, Jr. and Senator John Sabatina, Jr. intend to introduce legislation for a primary law prohibiting novice drivers (16 and 17 years of age) from using cell phones while driving in this Commonwealth.

Their argument: Distracted driving is a serious traffic safety issue for novice drivers. Novice drivers have the highest crash risk of any age group and, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, are three times more likely to be involved in a fatal crash than drivers age 20 and older.

Their legislation will follow provisions from the federal Fixing America’s Surface Transportation (FAST) Act and make Pennsylvania eligible for the federal distracted driving incentive grant. If enacted, Pennsylvania would become the 38th state to ban cell phone use by novice drivers.

In 2015, there were 14,810 crashes in Pennsylvania involving a distracted driver. Additionally, from 2011-2015, there were approximately 280 distracted driving fatal crashes or an average of 57 fatal crashes per year – a statistic that has remained stagnant in this period.

They are looking for other legislators to co-sponsor this legislation with them.

**PENNDOT’S LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES**

**INCULDE** promoting protected bike lanes; the Senate is currently looking for a sponsor for this initiative.

**AMERICA WALKS WILL CONTINUE TO WORK IN PA.** Recommendations and implementing partner strategies will be released shortly.

**LOOK FOR THE PA STATEWIDE BICYCLE/PEDESTRIAN MASTER PLAN** that should be announced very soon!
AS WE LAUNCH THIS ISSUE OF THE CENTERPIECE, we are pleased to unveil our long-awaited new website. We have teamed up with Pixel & Hammer, based in Carlisle, (who, by the way, developed member programs Main Street Hanover and Harrisburg Downtown Improvement District websites as well) in creating a website that we believe is visually fresh and intuitive while continuing to be informative. Rest assured that your member login credentials have not changed nor any content in the Reporting section.

As you navigate through the site and have questions please contact Maria Wherley at 717-233-4675, ext. 116.
This particular occasion took place in a local consignment store (you know, the one with the *ooh la la* upscale merchandise) whose owner hosts gatherings for a group of friends and extends a deeper discount with the right accompaniments so that your shopping leads to an experience. Better than word of mouth advertising—this is first-hand advertising times 10—and the bottom line is a positive customer experience and an evening of sales with a better than good probability of returning customers. Who knows, maybe their 10 other friends and family will be back for a similar experience. So, no matter whether you're outing includes a craft such as painting - or in my case shopping (well, not a craft but still an experience) - the business owner had a captive audience eager to capitalize on what the evening had in store for us. And, at the end of the evening all of us felt pleased having enjoyed our mid-week outing—surely just as pleased for this outside of the (big) box experience.

*Here's another approach!*

**THE FASHION BUS**
**BY BOUTIQUE NO. 9**

It’s a boutique on wheels—a refurbished bus converted into a mobile store. Check it out >>
Celebrating

30 YEARS OF REVITALIZATION

30th Anniversary Gala Recap
PHOTOS, AWARD WINNERS & A NOD FROM GOVERNOR WOLF
Pennsylvania’s governor Tom Wolf in a written statement lauded the achievements of Pennsylvania Downtown Center’s (PDC) Executive Director at the organization’s 30th anniversary gala held in Harrisburg, PA on June 13.

Referring to William S. Fontana who has led PDC for seventeen years, Governor Wolf wrote: “Under your guidance, PDC has expanded the services offered, grown stronger as an organization, and fortified connections with intra and interstate governments.”

“We appreciate Governor Wolf’s recognition of Bill Fontana’s achievements at PDC,” said Larry Newman PDC Chairman and Executive Director of Wilkes-Barre-based Diamond City Partnership. “Bill’s interaction with Pennsylvania’s Department of Community and Economic Development, Main Street managers across the commonwealth, and select communities in nearby states has made PDC a leader in successful downtown revitalization,” Newman continued.

As an indication of downtown vibrancy, 10 communities, during the PDC 30th anniversary gala, received Townie Awards wherein communities from across the commonwealth are recognized for noteworthy revitalization projects or events from the previous year.
PDC is honored to recognize that 35 Pennsylvania downtowns have been named “Nationally Accredited Programs” by the National Main Street Center (NMSC). Receiving National Accreditation Main Street Program status is seen as a prominent recognition.

The determining criteria measures program activity as reported annually by local Main Street Managers. Community revitalization organizations are then ranked from top to bottom, with the top performing program in each of the sixteen evaluated categories receiving a score of 1. This year there were 40+ community organizations eligible to be evaluated. The rankings across all of the categories are then tabulated and the organization with the lowest total number is the top performing program.

PDC is honored to see these downtowns acknowledged for the goals they have set, accomplished and in many cases, exceeded. Each community has also met the ten performance standards established by National Main Street Center to be a nationally accredited Main Street Program. These standards include topics such as training requirements, planning methods, and community involvement. The top performing Main Street Programs across the Commonwealth for 2017 are:

1st | EASTON MAIN STREET INITIATIVE
2nd | EBENSBURG BOROUGH
3rd | THE ARDMORE INITIATIVE
4th | HISTORIC KENNETT SQUARE
5th | OIL CITY MAIN STREET PROGRAM
6th | DOWNTOWN HAZLETON ALLIANCE FOR PROGRESS
7th | BUILDING A BETTER BOYERTOWN
8th | KUTZTOWN COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP
9th | WILKINSBURG COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORP.
10th | ALLENTOWN - 7TH STREET

Best Performing Programs

This award recognizes those programs that have demonstrated an “across the board” capacity to generate new jobs, new businesses, public and private investment and volunteer hours. The determining criteria measures program activity as reported annually by local Main Street Managers. Community revitalization organizations are then ranked from top to bottom, with the top performing program in each of the sixteen evaluated categories receiving a score of 1. This year there were 40+ community organizations eligible to be evaluated. The rankings across all of the categories are then tabulated and the organization with the lowest total number is the top performing program.

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Nationally Accredited Programs

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Accredited Main Street programs are evaluated annually by their coordinating program. PDC is proud to see these downtowns acknowledged for their determination to meet Main Street principles. All of the 32 communities have met the ten performance standards required by NMSC. These standards include topics such as training requirements, planning methods, and community involvement.

All Main Street programs involved have worked together to build an accomplished community revitalization effort through training and education. Receiving national accreditation shows that these programs are dedicated to creating a change in their community and leading as an example for other programs in the revitalization process.

PA DCED SOUTH EAST REGION
The Ardmore Initiative
Main Street Mount Joy
Quakertown Alive!
West Chester Business Improvement District

PA DCED NORTH EAST REGION
Eastburg Community Alliance
Easton Main Street Initiative:
Our Town Foundation:
Reading D.I.D.
Selinsgrove Projects Inc.

PA DCED CENTRAL REGION
Main Street Gettysburg
Main Street Hanover
Downtown Lewistown Inc.

PA DCED SOUTH WEST REGION
Downtown Bedford Inc.
Castle Shannon Revitalization Corp.
Borough of Hollidaysburg
Mt. Lebanon Municipality
Waynesburg Prosperous & Beautiful
Wilkinsburg Community Development Corp.

PA DCED NORTH WEST REGION
Downtown Bradford
Clearfield Revitalization Corp.
Erie Downtown Partnership
Oil City Main Street Program
With the long-term goal of the Elm Street program: to enable local neighborhood revitalization leaders to achieve results, demonstrate worth, and build a sustainable program, Sustainable Organization is of the utmost importance. This priority of focus stems from PDC’s many years of experience with the Main Street program. Neither downtown or neighborhood revitalization is a short-term process; both require constant attention, which calls for sustained organizational capacity.

Though all Elm Street neighborhoods are expected to focus on action in all five areas, inevitably each neighborhood is different and will therefore exit the planning phase with its own unique set of priorities and goals. The Five Areas of Focus are: Clean, Safe & Green; Neighbors & Economy; Design; Image & Identity; and Sustainable Organization.

PA Downtown Center is proud to see these neighborhood programs acknowledged for their determination to meet Elm Street principles. Each has met the annual performance standards required by PDC for work completed in 2016.

Receiving statewide accreditation shows that these programs are dedicated to creating a change in their community and leading as an example for other programs in the revitalization process.

2017 Statewide Accredited Elm Street Programs

PDC is honored to recognize these nine Pennsylvania neighborhood revitalization efforts as statewide accredited programs.

Bradford – 2nd Ward Elm Street (Northwest PA)
West Reading – Center Point (Southeast PA)
City of Allentown – Upside (Lehigh Valley PA)
Downtown Lewistown – Five Points (Northeast PA)
Lansdowne EDC – Lansdowne-Yeadon (Southeast PA)
Our Town Foundation (Hamburg) (Southeast PA)
PA Interfaith Housing: Olde Getty Place (South Central PA)
Sisters of St. Joseph Network (Erie) – Little Italy (Northwest PA)
United Neighborhoods of NEPA – South Scranton (Northeast PA)
30th Anniversary Event Photos
Naomi Naylor the Executive Director and Main Street Manager of Quakertown Alive! recently won a prestigious award given by the Pennsylvania Downtown Center at its 30th Anniversary Gala. The Townie Award for Outstanding Achievement by a Program Manager was awarded to Naomi on June 13, 2017 in Harrisburg. This award recognizes a Main or Elm Street manager who has dramatically impacted the revitalization effort in their community.
In 2007 the organization known as Quakertown Alive! was having difficulties surviving and its major events were losing money. The Board of Directors was considering canceling some of the events. At that time Naomi was hired and took on the challenge. Through her leadership skills and creativity, she brought the organization back onto its feet and helped to regain interest and raise awareness in the downtown. This award is given where actions taken by a manager were beyond those normally required by a program manager. Her performance was outstanding and this expose will attest to her perseverance and success.

Naomi’s professional background includes 24 years at Strawbridge & Clothier and the Clover division working in various departments from retail, auditing, and personnel. She also spent 12 years at World Team Mission overseeing and planning events coordination as well as volunteer management. She is an active member of the Association of Fundraising Professionals and frequently attends workshops and conferences to develop her fundraising skills.

As Executive Director, Naomi has enjoyed developing partnerships with St. Luke’s Hospital, Habitat for Humanity, and the Heritage Conservancy. She assists with grant writing for the borough and is a designated champion to process approved grants with DCED, DVRPC, Penn DOT, and engineers to completion. Naomi enjoys encouraging and mentoring business entrepreneurs, recruiting new volunteers and working with local high school students to provide videos featuring their projects and events.

Naomi, along with Jann Paulovitz, recent past president of Quakertown Alive, spearheaded the Quakertown Alive’s first black-tie gala the ‘Pumpkin Ball’. This event was viewed by strategic leaders in the community as a very successful fundraising effort with strong emphasis on the revitalization efforts and accomplishments of Quakertown Alive!

Naomi serves on the Krupp Park Committee, the Union Cemetery Committee, and the Borough Economic Development Committee. For Krupp Park, she is on the fundraising subcommittee for the passive park and the new amphitheater. Her focus on the Union Cemetery Committee is to coordinate volunteers. Ninety headstones have been restored and $30,000 saved in landscaping and mowing costs due to coordination of volunteers over the last two years. On the Economic Development Committee, Naomi has partnered with the Borough to write streetscapes grants and implement design and construction on streetscapes improvements.

GREATEST ACHIEVEMENTS IN TEN YEARS AS A MAIN STREET MANAGER:

- Million-dollar grant for streetscapes improvements to visually transform the Business District into a more attractive and inviting pedestrian area.
- Quakertown Alive! purchased a three-tiered fountain for the park in the center of town.
- Their organization has funded Quakertown Borough’s first historical mural showcasing Borough landmarks which will become the centerpiece for an art pocket park.
- After working on the Park committee with the Borough of Quakertown, they now have a new amphitheater in the newest park. There is lawn seating for 1200 people. Nationally recognized bands will perform in this new venue; Blood, Sweat, and Tears, Herman’s Hermits, and Chubby Checker will all be performing this summer.
- The project that Naomi is most proud of is the Properties of Merit. Their Properties of Merit program began in 2007 as a state-funded program. Even though the state no longer funds this program, Quakertown’s Properties of Merit program has not only continued, but it has grown. Properties of Merit is sustainable because of their fundraising efforts. They are the only Borough in the Pennsylvania that has this program.

Naomi feels that her greatest accomplishment is in growing Quakertown Alive!’s volunteer base and expanding a healthy Board of Directors. Last year, they logged over 8,000 volunteer hours in their programs, events, and committees. They have developed a Board of Directors who take an active interest in the events and fundraising.

One of her skills is developing collaborative partnerships with over 20 local businesses, churches, and civic groups. Ten years ago, Quakertown Borough Council committed $15,000 yearly to Quakertown Alive! Because the Council recognizes the accomplishments and the impact Quakertown Alive! has on the businesses, that commitment has been raised to $70,000.
annually. The Borough’s Public Works Department, Police and Fire Departments provide support for all of their events.

Two other Townie Awards that Quakertown Alive! has received are:
• 2014: Organizational Excellence for the Lofts at Stationview
• 2015: Anchor Building for the Best Made Center

The following is a list of their successful fundraisers and events that render a positive net-profit:

• Pumpkin Ball – a premier bi-annual fundraising gala emphasizing art and culture.
• Upper Bucks Brewfest – is their second most successful fundraiser
• Autumn Alive – in 2007, this event lost $1,300 and after accepting the challenge and refocusing the event to a pet-theme, over a three-year period, it consistently profits over $10,000 each year.
• Properties of Merit
• Arts Alive
• Garden Affaires Garden Tour & Marketplace
• Christmas Tree Lighting

Naomi enjoys the charm and quaintness as well as the historical architecture of Quakertown Borough. Quakertown is a very walkable community with an extensive park system. Downtown shops and cafes, a library, concerts in the park are easily accessible and make living and working in the borough a great place to live.

Naomi has established great relationships in her office among the staff, and also with the public. Quakertown has hosted Philadelphia’s local morning show at their request. They generally have a short time to pull that all together and get quite the mix of businesses on the street. Last year, the hostess was surprised to find out that she was going to be a part of a dumpling-eating contest, no hands used!

When Naomi goes on vacation, she is never quite sure what her office will look like when she returns. Her assistant and volunteers have decorated her office in a beach theme using mannequins, and even wrapped all of the items on her desk in Christmas wrapping paper.

Naomi and her husband, Ernie, moved to Quakertown from the Central Bucks area in 2005. They have five adult children and six grandchildren and enjoy traveling especially since they have a bi-coastal family with several children enjoying life and careers in Seattle. As a native New Englander, she also enjoys visiting her father in Maine but also appreciates the warm weather of Florida and visits extended family twice a year.

Naomi Naylor
Executive Director/Main Street Manager
Quakertown Alive
312 West Broad Street
Quakertown, PA 18951
(215) 536-2273
info@quakertownalive.com
www.quakertownalive.com
IT WAS NICE GETTING BACK TO HANOVER
in May for their next required designated program assessment; Hanover was the first assessment I did when I started with PDC in 2015. My connection to Hanover goes back as far as 2004 and it is exciting to see how the community continues to evolve. One of the most interesting things that Main Street Hanover has played a part in through the Main Street Manager, Justine Trucksess, is The Hanover, Pennsylvania, Bucket List: 100 Ways to Have a Real Hanover Experience. This quirky tome is a fun and educational way to experience a Main Street and the community as a whole with its unique take on a cornucopia of places, eats, and stories that Hanover has to offer. I am particularly fond of the pages with a pretzel logo because those are indicative of food related activities (Hanover, of course, a claimant to the title of “Snack Food Capital of the World”).

A high point in the assessment was talking with the new Borough Manager in Hanover and hearing his perspective on the importance of downtown revitalization. Like so many of the Commonwealth’s boroughs, Hanover is almost completely built-out. Therefore, the best opportunity to improving the financial stability of the municipality and in enhancing the quality of life for community residents is downtown revitalization. It is this kind of forward-thinking that represents the best of what professional municipal leadership can be; when combined with a strong community revitalization program there is no doubt that Hanover has great days ahead.

Summer is upon us; the longer days, the heat and humidity, the Farmer’s Markets, and the overabundant blossoming of our unofficial state flower: the orange road cone. The intensity of the lead-up and follow through for the Main Street Now! Conference in Pittsburgh and the nostalgia of PDC’s 30th Anniversary Celebration gives way to a summer schedule full of my colleagues and I crisscrossing the state to spend time with many (if not most) of you talking about the work you are all doing locally as well as the newly released Main Street Approach refresh. Here is just a sampling of what I’ve seen and learned about recently:
WHILE VISITING WITH THE DOWNTOWN HAZLETON ALLIANCE for Progress in May, I learned that in the 1880’s Thomas Edison built one of his earliest power plants in Hazleton. To both celebrate this significant historical distinction as well as the diversity of the community a new downtown mural was dedicated. The depiction recognizes not just Edison’s contribution to Hazleton and the industrious and creative spirit of the community, but most importantly the future generations who will in due time contribute their own unique “spark” of originality to their hometown. This is the first in a flurry of mural activity that will take place in Hazleton over the coming years; the bar has been set high for the murals that come in the future.

Speaking of the diversity of Hazleton, during my visit I met with a group of Latino business owners, entrepreneurs, and professionals. They were very open about their experiences, both good and bad, as they have built a life for themselves and their families. We talked about the challenges of transferring professional credentials and experience from other countries to the United States, the role of the schools in connecting with the community as a whole, the importance of events in engendering a spirit of inclusiveness, and the overall experience of being Latino in America for themselves and their children at present. It was a very candid, thought-provoking, and poignant conversation that I am very grateful to have been a part of. We need more conversation like this in all of our communities.

IT WOULD BE REMISS OF ME - not to mention the great pride we all have shared in West Chester being awarded a 2017 Great American Main Street Award. About a week after the national conference, I was very pleased to attend the annual meeting for the West Chester BID. In addition to recognizing the significance of winning the GAMSA, the evening also included a dance presentation (as part of West Chester’s move to develop deeper and more diverse arts & cultural attractions). Another highlight of the evening was a postcard video that included music arranged and performed by Malcolm Johnstone himself. I encourage everyone to check out this video; you can find it by following the “West Chester/Scarborough Fair Music Video” link on the West Chester BID website homepage.

THIS MAY HAVE BEEN THE TOUGHEST COMPETITION in good meals out yet as the winner for this edition’s good meals out isn’t the salmon cakes I had in Hazleton, nor the crab soup I had in Hanover, nor the fish tacos I had in Quakertown (those do merit an extra honorable mention though for the very generous portion of avocado therein), and not the chicken parmigiana sandwich I had in Easton. No, there can be only one winner and it is THE Cookie Table from the Main Street Now! Conference Big Bash. Not enough can be said for the impressive array of cookies and it would be hard to pick a favorite (and I know my cookies). More importantly, just the time, effort, and thoughtfulness that all the bakers put into it in addition to the exceptional commitment to executing above and beyond what anyone could have imagined from Johnna Pro (with a strong assist from Ali Doyle) made it a truly special, final Pittsburgh experience for everyone in attendance. The overall response from everyone I’ve spoken with regarding the conference has been overwhelming. I think it is fair to say Pittsburgh and Pennsylvania did not disappoint.

As always, be sure to follow Pennsylvania Downtown Center on Twitter (@Pa_Downtown) and on Facebook. As we are all out and about we will do our best to share photos and stories about what we’re seeing and learning from the communities we visit. Hope to see you all soon at the Main Street Now Conference in Pittsburgh!