



Ferndale DDA 149 W. Nine Mile Rd. Ferndale, MI 48220 / p: 248-546-1632 f: 248-591.7034 / downtownferndale.com

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Contact: Chris Hughes, Communications & Marketing Manager
248-546-1632 chughes@downtownferndale.com



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District Earns Seven Awards

Downtown Ferndale Achievements Recognized by Main Street Oakland County

Ferndale, MI – Downtown Ferndale’s successes continue to earn accolades from those in the business of judging downtowns. Main Street Oakland County (MSOC) called on the Ferndale Downtown Development Authority (DDA) and its partners repeatedly at MSOC’s annual banquet that honors its downtowns for achievements in historic preservation and economic restructuring. The event was held Friday, March 4 at Glen Oaks Golf Club in Farmington Hills.

Downtown Ferndale and several of its businesses were recognized for saving history, creating it or contributing to the economic stability of the thriving business center. Key partnerships that produced dynamic change were also acknowledged when it came time to announce winners.

“Partnerships at every level make all the difference in the success of a program,” said Ferndale DDA Executive Director Cristina Sheppard-Decius. “The good news that keeps coming out of Downtown Ferndale is a result of the ongoing and extensive collaboration among all of our businesses. Change brings more change, success breeds success and good players make a great team...and we’ve got the best.”

Specifically, Downtown Ferndale and its businesses won for the following:

- Outstanding Private/Public Partners – The Pedestrian Alley, a collaborative project of the Ferndale DDA, The City of Ferndale, Foley & Mansfield, PLLP and the Michigan Economic Development Corporation.
- Outstanding Public Improvement Project – The Pedestrian Alley, a project generated by the Design Committee of the Ferndale DDA.
- Outstanding New Construction – The Lofts on Nine and its developer, Bob Wolfson.
- Outstanding Downtown Investment – Rosie O’Grady’s and owner Brian Kramer.
- Outstanding Preservation Success Story – Foley & Mansfield, PLLP, and partner William Osantowski.
- Outstanding Main Street Business of the Year – Dino’s Restaurant & Lounge and owner Dean Bach.
- Special Achievement – The Ferndale DDA for winning the National Main Street Center’s 2010 Great American Main Street Award, part of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

In addition to honoring its downtowns, MSOC also celebrated its 10 year anniversary by bestowing its Spirit Award to the program's champion - Oakland County Executive L. Brooks Patterson. Patterson instituted the program in 2000 in an effort to help stabilize and reboot the county's downtowns with the Main Street Approach, a successful trademark program established by the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Downtown Ferndale was brought into the program in 2001 and became its shining star in 2010 when it became the first city in the county (third in the state) to win the Great American Main Street Award. The GAMSA acknowledged ten years of growth and transformation in Downtown Ferndale, a district once abandoned and now thriving. Today, Downtown Ferndale encompasses 3.9 linear miles radiating from the iconic intersection of Nine Mile & Woodward; 75% of its buildings have been renovated, restored or rebuilt; its vacancy rates hovers at 6% and it is home to 350+ businesses.

"With careful planning, and the dedication and hard work of volunteers and businesses, Downtown Ferndale continues to evolve," said Sheppard-Decius. "Those who live, work and volunteer here know what a great place it is, but it is especially gratifying to be judged by your peers and mentors, and to come out a winner. It validates the plan, the process and the progress."

For more information on the Ferndale DDA, please call 248-546-1632 or visit www.DowntownFerndale.com.

See attached for additional information
Ferndale DDA Photos available on request



Background Narrative & Photos of Entry Information for MSOCAwards

Outstanding Private/Public Partners & Outstanding Public Improvement Project – The Pedestrian Alley



Before



After

“What once served as the front door to Ferndale’s school in the mid 1920’s, then bastardized into a utility filled alley with overhead utility lines, stinky restaurant dumpsters and slick grease bins, has once again returned to serving the public’s greater good. This unique collaboration between public and private ownerships guided by vision of best use resulted in an overhaul of the back-door alley to a thriving pulse point for pedestrian interaction... We are proud of the collaborative results of this project. Without Foley & Mansfield, the City and DPW, the businesses, and MEDC, the DDA Design Committee would not have a new location to have their monthly meetings. You should come visit it, too!”

Outstanding Preservation Success Story – Foley & Mansfield PLLP



Before



After

“With its original grace restored and 7,000 square feet addition consistent with preservation building practices in June 2008, this former under-utilized 1915 State Historic designated building is preservation at its best. The original schoolhouse brick, wood beams and flooring, Pewabic tile and fountains blends with

modern, loft-style, sustainability features including a fitness center and green roof patio overlooking the city. After investing over \$5,000,000, Foley & Mansfield completed its renovation and expansion of the historical building, which contributed to the revitalization of East Nine Mile. Foley & Mansfield not only brought about the original allure of the historic structure, but also reinvigorated the east side of Nine Mile with over 40 new employees and intensification of use, all adding a positive economic and social impact to Downtown Ferndale."

Outstanding New Construction – Lofts on 9



Before

After

"Once a dilapidated auto repair facility, called Stop & Go, the corner of East Nine Mile Road and Bermuda has literally transformed the life, activity, environment, walkability and livability of Downtown Ferndale...It has spurred a rebirth of the east side of Nine Mile.

Lofts on 9, LLC not only deserves this award for their persistence, patience and guts of building a product during the worst economic climate, but also because of their resourcefulness to figure out how to make it work with a changing market, the vision for what Downtown Ferndale could grow to, and their commitment to the community. This is not just about a building, but a man (Bob Wolfson) behind the building who continues today to take that vision and run with it by reinvesting in new projects in Downtown Ferndale and the welfare of the community."

Outstanding Downtown Investment – Rosie O’Grady’s & Brian Kramer



The Transition

"Built in 1939, 279 W. Nine Mile changed hands and faces over the course of the last 70 years, from an A&P grocery store to infamous Sam's Jams record store to an art supply store to an eyeglass factory with a small retail presence and small workforce (less than 10 employees)..."

After a \$3.5 million reinvestment, the building now showcases its history through the preservation of the basket-weave brick and limestone, maintaining the public art on the side of the building that was installed in previous years, and restoring things such as skylights and rafters on the inside.

The night and day transformation of this building has directly improved the economy of Downtown Ferndale while keeping with local design standards and goals. It is a perfect example of teamwork that tells a story of how good economic development initiatives can impact the quality of life and vitality of a downtown."

Main Street Business of the Year – Dino's Restaurant & Lounge



"When patrons enter Dino's Restaurant & Lounge they feel like they just walked into the family room of Dean Bach's personal home. In many ways, they have. Dean opened his "upscale but not uptight" lounge in 2002 and since then has consistently delivered a perfect combination of good food, good beverages, good service & good times. Most nights, Dean or his wife Denise, are the party hosts, revving up the karaoke or live band or reveling in entertaining their friends, who also happen to be their paying customers.

Dean chose Downtown Ferndale for his business because "the community had a great core of support and its was ripe for a resurgence." Recently, he also choose it for his home with the purchase of a downtown Loft. Locals were thrilled because once you know Dean Bach, you want Dean Bach to be a part of every plan. The Ferndale DDA is happy to note that he usually is."

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