



National Main Street Center

a subsidiary of the
National Trust *for* Historic Preservation



DAHLONEGA, GA HONORED WITH 2016 GREAT AMERICAN MAIN STREET AWARD

Washington (May 23, 2016) - The National Main Street Center, Inc. announced today that Dahlongega, Georgia has been chosen as a 2016 Great American Main Street Award® (GAMSA) winner. The City of Dahlongega and the Dahlongega Main Street program were recognized at the 2016 Main Street Now Conference held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

With a charming and walkable downtown, first-rate restaurants, and unique shops featuring the best of Southern Appalachian hospitality, downtown Dahlongega is a top destination in the Southeastern United States. Located just 65 miles north of Atlanta and the site of the first U.S. Gold Rush, more than a million visitors travel to Dahlongega (pop. 6,000) every year. With the Main Street approach as its guide, Dahlongega Main Street uses a combination of tools, including preservation grants, design guidelines and promotion strategies to preserve downtown Dahlongega's strong sense of place while also expanding economic development opportunities.

"Downtown Dahlongega is a sparkling example of how careful planning, small business support and historic preservation can combine to create a thriving downtown," says Patrice Frey, president and CEO of the National Main Street Center. "Its downtown district, art galleries, restored theater and courthouse stand out in North Georgia, making Dahlongega a truly distinctive shopping and dining destination and a charming place to call home."

"Dahlongega's economic success has been built upon our precious historic architecture and resources," says Dahlongega Mayor Gary McCullough. "Local leaders, partners and stakeholders continue to plan and work diligently to preserve and promote our historic village as an economic center of North Georgia."

In its 15 years of operation, Dahlongega Main Street distinguished itself as a vital downtown partner in several ways. When a fire devastated several businesses in 2014, the organization led the effort to assess the damage, create an action plan and relocate displaced businesses and 40 employees. In partnership with the Dahlongega-Lumpkin County Chamber of Commerce, local and state government agencies, and the University of North Georgia, Dahlongega Main Street has facilitated 180 building rehabilitations, 108 new business openings and a reduction in retail vacancy rates from 20 percent in 2000 to 2 percent today.

The other two 2016 GAMSA winners are Shaw District in Washington, D.C., and Audubon Park in Orlando, Fla.

To learn about GAMSA and previous winners, visit <http://www.preservationnation.org/main-street/awards/gamsa/past-winners.html>

For more information about Dahlonega Main Street, visit www.dahlongegadda.org and find them on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Pinterest](#) and [Instagram](#).

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About the Great American Main Street Awards

Each year, Main Street America, a program of the National Main Street Center, celebrates the country's best examples of comprehensive commercial district revitalization. Winners are selected from a nationwide pool of applicants by a national jury based on successful and innovative uses of the Main Street Approach.® Criteria for winning include: strength of the Main Street in creating an exciting place to live, work, play and visit; commitment to historic preservation; implementation of model partnerships, and demonstrated success of the Main Street Approach.® The National Main Street Center is a subsidiary of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

About the National Main Street Center

Originally launched as a program of the National Trust for Historic Preservation in 1980, the National Main Street Center pioneered a transformative, grassroots strategy to help flagging downtowns counteract booming suburban growth. This novel approach was in stark contrast to the urban renewal projects that were destroying commercial districts and neighborhoods all over the country. Today, the Center leads a coast to coast network of revitalization programs – known collectively as Main Street America – who share both a commitment to place and to building stronger communities through preservation-based economic development.

About Downtown Dahlonega Development Authority

Strike gold 65 miles north of Atlanta in Dahlonega, Georgia, site of the first U.S. Gold Rush. This gem of a destination recently received the 2016 Great American Main Street Award® (GAMSA) from National Main Street Center, Inc., and it's easy to see why. A National Register District, Dahlonega's downtown area has 12 buildings individually listed on the Register. Rooted in history, Dahlonega today maintains a hip vibe, drawing more than a million visits each year with Southern Appalachian hospitality experienced throughout its locally-owned businesses, art galleries and restaurants. A restored theater and courthouse, plus special events like Dahlonega's "Gold Rush Festival," "Bear on the Square Festival," and the Southeast's largest bicycle event, "Six Gap/Three Gap" keep the good times rolling. In only 15 years, Dahlonega Main Street has catalyzed remarkable investment, with 180 projects generating \$64.8 million in private and public investment and netting 108 new businesses and 289 new jobs within the central business district. Downtown's economic activity averages more than \$300 million dollars annually showcasing an American Main Street at its finest. Dahlonega is also home to the University of North Georgia, founded in 1873. Gold medal wineries, waterfalls, wedding venues, world-renowned bicycling, hiking trails, rivers and relaxing lodging accommodations, from boutique hotels, villas, B&Bs, to the "Historic Hotels of America" affiliate, the Smith House, keep guests coming back again and again. Whether visiting or establishing permanent roots, treasure awaits you in Dahlonega, Georgia.

DahlonegaDDA.org