



# Historic Downtown Dahlonega A Georgia Main Street City

## BUSINESS TIPS NEWSLETTER

November 2012

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The City of Dahlonega Street Department has started to hang the lights for Old Fashioned Christmas!

When you see these guys working, please thank them for their assistance. Without them, downtown would not have the lights in the large trees!!!

The street crew will do their best to work around your business hours. However, as all of downtown has to be decorated by November 21, there may be days they will have to be working during business hours. Thank you for your patience & good holiday cheer!

For questions on the light schedule, please contact Rebecca, [rebeccashirley@dahlonegadda.org](mailto:rebeccashirley@dahlonegadda.org), 706-482-2707.

## OLD FASHIONED CHRISTMAS

**Old Fashioned Christmas festivities are right around the corner!**

Beginning with the "Merchant Open House" and the lighting of the square on November 23 until the New Year, merchants are asked to remain open until 8 PM on Friday and Saturday evening. To provide customers with the full experience, merchants are also asked to consider dressing in "old fashioned" attire and offering holiday snacks or warm beverages for customers.

Share Old Fashioned Christmas event information with your customers on your website and social media sites! Every weekend during the holidays offers a variety of events and entertainment for everyone! We hope the full schedule of events will encourage all your customers to stay downtown longer and spend more money!

Old Fashioned Christmas posters and promotional event cards are available for you to pick up from the Chamber of Commerce.

### SCHEDULE OF EVENTS:

Friday, November 23rd  
Lighting of the Square  
At Dark

Downtown Merchants' Open House  
Until 8pm

Saturday & Sunday, November 24th & 25th  
Small Business Saturday!  
Visit Santa Downtown  
Saturday, 1pm-6pm  
Sunday, 1pm-5pm

Saturday, December 1st  
Visit Santa Downtown  
Saturday, 1pm-4pm  
On the Visitors Center Plaza

Gingerbread House Competition  
Saturday, 1pm-4pm  
At Dahlonega Baptist Church Fellowship Hall

Handbell Choir  
Saturday, 1pm-2pm  
On the Visitors Center Plaza

Old Fashioned Christmas Parade  
Saturday, 4:30pm  
On the Dahlonega Square

Lighting of the Tree  
Directly following the Parade  
On the Visitors Center Plaza

Kurt Thomas Concert  
Directly following the Parade  
On the Visitors Center Plaza

North Georgia Symphony Orchestra  
Saturday, 7:30pm  
At Dahlonega Methodist Church

Friday, December 7th  
Luminaries  
At dusk, In Downtown Dahlonega

Saturday, December 8th  
Lumpkin County High School & Middle School Chorus  
3pm-5pm, On the Visitors Center Plaza

Gallery Walk  
Saturday, 5:30pm-8pm,  
In Downtown Dahlonega

Sunday, December 9th  
Sleigh Bell Tour  
Tour of Inns and B&Bs in Dahlonega

Live Nativity  
Live Nativity Scene with Animals  
November 30th through December 2nd, 6:30pm-8pm,  
At Park Place Hotel on the Square



December Santa Schedule  
Visit Santa Downtown Every Weekend through December 23rd, Saturdays, 1pm-6pm  
Sundays, 1pm-5pm

Historical Tours of Downtown Dahlonega  
Ride the Old Fashioned Trolley  
November 23rd through December 22nd  
Fridays at 7pm & 8pm  
Saturdays at 6pm, 7pm, & 8pm  
Tickets are \$5 for adults and \$3 for children 12 and under and can be purchased at the Visitors Center

Horse-Drawn Carriage Rides  
November 23rd through December 22nd  
Daily, Weather Permitting  
Tickets are \$8 for adults and \$5 for children (minimum of \$15 per ride) and can be purchased at the Carriage. Ask about their family rate. Cash only.

Entertainment at the Holly  
"It's a Wonderful Life" at the Historic Holly Theater  
December 7-9th, 14-16th, & 21-23rd  
Fridays & Saturdays at 8pm,  
Sundays at 2pm. Tickets are \$15 and can be purchased at the Holly Box Office or at [www.hollytheater.com](http://www.hollytheater.com)

For more information, follow this [LINK](#).

*Have a specific topic you would like to suggest for an upcoming newsletter?*

*Send ideas to Rebecca, [rebeccashirley@dahlonegadda.org](mailto:rebeccashirley@dahlonegadda.org). Thanks for helping us provide the most relevant material for our business community!*

## The 2012 Farmers Market, First Friday Night Concert Series & Appalachian Jam have concluded!

These annual events bring residents and visitors to downtown for shopping, dining, and exploring! It is estimated the three events bring a total of nearly 18,000 people downtown between the months of April and October.



## 5 THINGS THAT BELONG ON THE FRONT OF YOUR WEBSITE CYNTHIA BORIS

In business, you only get one chance to make a good first impression, and your company's website is no different.

When customers arrive at your site they should instantly have a clear understanding of who you are and what you do. But statistics show that many small-business websites lack the basics, which puts them at risk of losing a customer with just one click.

The relationship between a customer and a business is based on trust. Is your website customer-friendly? Start with the five things that belong on the front page of every business website.

**1. Contact information:** A recent survey by Chantilly, Va.-based local media and advertising research group BIA/Kelsey indicates that nearly 75 percent of small-business websites don't have an email link on their homepage. And six out of 10 don't have a phone number.

Minimally, your site should have a clear email link and a phone number. If you have a physical location, consider including the full address with the state and zip code, as well as a map and directions.

**2. Images that represent what you do:** If you sell wedding cakes, for instance, the front page of your website should have a picture of one of your cakes. As basic as this sounds, many business sites use irrelevant graphics such as butterflies and family photos, or worse, no graphics at all.

But be mindful of how you display images. Think twice before making them spin or

shake or do anything else that can be distracting or irritating.

**3. Clear navigation with working links:** The front page of your site should have a clear navigation system either across the top or down one side of the page. The buttons should be clearly marked with words that correspond to the content on your site and help customers quickly find what they're looking for. Also consider including buttons for shipping options, FAQs and background on your company.

It's also important to click your links on a regular basis to make sure they all work, or use Google Webmaster Tools to identify any 404 errors. Broken links not only prevent shoppers from completing their orders, they can also make it appear as if you don't care about your business.

**4. An email signup box:** One effective way to encourage customer loyalty is with a regular newsletter. Put a signup box on the front page of your website and offer rewards, such as a discount on a future order to anyone who submits his or her email address. Services such as Mailchimp offer simple ways of doing this.

**5. Social media links:** Help customers stay in touch by providing links to your social media accounts right on your front page. Use recognizable icons linked to Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest or LinkedIn. You can also use feed widgets to encourage instant follow-up as well as social media sharing.

Visit, [Entrepreneur](#) for more articles.

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# HOW TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF A MAIN STREET EVENT

## ORLANDO MAIN STREET

It's that time of year when all our Orlando Main Street Districts will be putting on lots of great events. Here's some suggestions to help your business get the most out of each one!

Each year, Main Street Districts host promotional events that are designed to bring people to our districts. Their main purpose is to showcase our commercial districts as a lively, inviting place to be so that customers will remember us when it comes to making decisions about where to shop, dine, conduct business, and potentially live or invest.

Each of these events gives your business a chance to shine, but not necessarily added business on the DAY of the event. Whether or not your registers ring during an event depends on what you sell. Your best opportunity to take advantage of an event is to look at it as a way to meet potential customers and greet existing ones to make FUTURE sales.

So, what can you do to take advantage of the hundreds or thousands of people who are visiting the Main Street district during an event?

**1) Put your best foot forward.** Make sure your storefront is attractive. If you have window display areas, make them match the event theme. Put out welcome signs (not handmade) for the event. Make sure there

is no litter on your sidewalk or in the gutter in front of your building. Close dumpster lids. Better yet, hide dumpsters! And make sure there is no smell coming from them!

**GREAT IDEA:** Go across the street and take a critical look at your building from the opposite sidewalk to see how customers will see you.

**GREAT IDEA:** Make sure all 5 senses are accounted for. If it's a themed event, make sure you are offering the appropriate music; (Example: don't play rock or hip-hop during a holiday event), make sure everything "smells" good; nothing draws people inside more than a great scent.

**2) Come out on the sidewalk.** Don't crowd it, but do come out and greet people.

Invite them in for something to eat or drink, or something to do. Do not put your "dogs" on the sidewalk -- this is not the time to get rid of stuff that isn't selling because it gives the image that this is the best you've got! Not what you had in mind.

**GREAT IDEA:** Have something interactive inside, but do the inviting outside. It is the Main Street program's job to get people to the event...but it's the job of the businesses to get people to come over their thresholds! Be creative and make sure you make everyone feel welcome...good customer

service is vital.

**3) Think bounce-back coupons.** Bounce-back coupons invite people to come back in the future (like 2-3 weeks from the event) for a discount, freebie, or even just for an experience in your business (like free workshop, demo, wine tasting, etc.). Hand those out on the street.

**GREAT IDEA:** Have a door prize give-away, collect names and email addresses for your database (start a database, if you don't already have one) so that you can continue to invite people year round!

**4) Add value to the event by hosting something yourself** such as a musical performance, artist, book signing, charity drive, or other event.

**5) Let your customers know about the event.** Inviting your existing customers brings more people to the event, creates more excitement. Don't forget social media...it's free!

**GREAT IDEA:** Remind your staff that anyone coming in that day may be creating their first impressions of YOUR business. Make sure EVERYONE is on their toes!

**6) Be a Sponsor when possible!** Helps you get exposure, helps us pay the bills and makes sure we can have even more special events!

A Georgia Main Street City



## Mark Your Calendars!

### Old Fashioned Christmas Schedule

Literacy Festival  
November 10 & 11

Merchant Coalition Meeting  
Wed, Nov 28, 8:30 AM  
Chamber of Commerce

Diving Bell Ceremony  
Fri, Nov 30, 11 AM  
Hancock Park

Visit us Online  
[dahlonegadda.org](http://dahlonegadda.org)

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### Become our Fan!



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