



NEWS RELEASE

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Cleveland Better Home Town Board Members Finalize Annual Work Plan Over the Weekend

Cleveland, Georgia (January 23, 2010) – The Cleveland Better Home Town board of directors devoted their Saturday to finalizing their Downtown Work Plan at a retreat hosted by Board Chairman Garrison Baker, Executive Director, Maria Jurado-Flynn and Jr. Board Chairman Tyler Dorsey. The Work Plan is an important tool used by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs to gauge the success of the local program and prioritize projects for the coming year.

“This Work Plan is paramount to understanding what the community wants to see in the downtown and how our board can continue to make progress in Cleveland’s downtown revitalization,” said Garrison Baker. Billy Parrish, the Director of Downtown Development for the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) and Kathy Papa also with the DCA were on hand to help and guide the discussion. “What Cleveland Better Home Town is doing is so important,” said Billy Parrish. “They are investing their time to make sure that Historic Downtown Cleveland is a vibrant, inviting place for the community, which is the most important element of an effective economic development program. The Work Plan utilizes the Main Street Four-Point Approach to downtown revitalization, (Organization, Promotion, Design and Economic Restructuring).

The organization’s Executive Director, Maria Jurado-Flynn, gave a re-cap of the year’s accomplishments. They included a third State-Wide Award received last year for the work Jr. Board Chairman, Tyler Dorsey has done with the organization. Flynn has mentored 11-year-old Tyler into the Main Street Program and worked with Garrison Baker last year to establish a Jr. Board of Directors, the first of its kind in the state. The kids are actively working on downtown revitalization projects including a proposed Public Safety Monument that will include a piece of the World Trade Center. The 4 Junior Board Members are Tyler Dorsey, Chairman; Connor Smith, Vice-Chairman; Aida Alonso, Treasurer; and Lindsey Hutchinson, Secretary.

Other accomplishments included annual events produced by the Promotions Committee, Chaired by Heather Sinyard. The Fabulous 50’s, Fall Leaf Festival, BBQ Challenge and Christmas in the Mountains are all Cleveland Better Home Town events. As part of the organization’s community outreach, Flynn continues to write a quarterly newsletter and maintains the organizations website. Under Economic Restructuring, the organization has presented 28 Façade Grants to downtown business and property owners totaling almost \$12,000. The Brick Façade on the Cleveland Pharmacy was the largest Façade project to date and serves as a model for excellent design in downtown. Economic Restructuring Committee Chair Vickie Daniel and Co-chair Juanita Pardue are working on a Town Hall Meeting to allow the public to give their input and to learn what’s being done already. This committee will focus on attracting new business to the vacant buildings on the Square and quarterly training for business owners.

Flynn reported that the Historic Preservation Committee also had some significant accomplishments. Through the leadership of Committee Chair Judy Lovell, the committee undertook the revitalization and preservation of the Historic Cleveland Cemetery. This committee raised the funds for the beautiful iron archway bearing the name of the cemetery. Rock pillars are be installed one by one as monies are donated for them.

Flynn closed by reporting that for the third year in a row Cleveland Better Home Town has achieved the National Main Street Accreditation. She attributed the success of the program to the partnerships with the City of Cleveland, the White County Board of Commissioners and of course the support of the Board. "I am so grateful to have a dedicated board of directors and a tremendous leader. Garrison Baker has helped us to bring the right people together to get the job done," said Flynn.

At the end of the retreat, the board of directors approved and adopted the 2009-2010 Work Plan, "It's a comprehensive work plan that involves broad community support and brings together the local community to help itself," said Garrison Baker. "The next step in the process will be for the board to take the Work Plan to the City Council and the White County Board of Commissioners for their review and comments," he added. The Mission & Vision Statements for Cleveland Better Home Town were also revised to better reflect the mission of the organization.

New Mission Statement

*"To encourage and foster economic growth and historic preservation;
and to attract businesses, residents and visitors to the downtown historic business district."*

New Vision Statement for Historic Downtown Cleveland

Historic Downtown Cleveland is the heart of White County where the local community and visitors alike enjoy shopping, dining and celebrating the history that makes Cleveland a special place to live, work and play. Old fashioned light poles and benches along with newly paved sidewalks help to create a sense of place where the community can gather to celebrate year-round.

Cleveland Better Home Town will work in partnership with public and private business, the City of Cleveland, the White County Board of Commissioners, the Historical Society and other organizations to increase the economic growth of the downtown, while preserving our rich history for generations to come.

Board members for Cleveland Better Home Town include Board Chairman Garrison Baker who also serves as Organization Chair; Vice Chairman Jeff Hunt; Secretary Judy Lovell who serves as Historic Preservation Chair; Treasurer Rachel Marshall; and Directors Tom O'Bryant, Rush Mauney who serves as Design Chair, Rick Post, Nadine Wardenga, George Hlavenka, Heather Sinyard who serves as Promotions Chair, Vickie Daniel the Economic Restructuring Chair and Brenda Helton. Juanita Pardue is a co-chair of the Economic Restructuring Committee and Ex-Officio Board Member and Melissa Gill is Co-Chair of the Promotions Committee and Ex-Officio Board Member.

Cleveland Better Home Town, Inc. is a non-profit 501 (C) 3 charitable organization and a Nationally Accredited Main Street Program. Donations to the organization are tax deductible and assist with Cleveland Better Home Town's downtown revitalization projects.

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