



# NEWS RELEASE

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## **Cleveland Better Home Town Approves Façade Grants for Two Local Businesses**

**November 12, 2007 – Cleveland, Georgia** – As part of the ongoing downtown beautification program, Cleveland Better Home Town’s Façade Grant Committee met recently to review two new grant applications received. The committee approved grants for Aubrey’s Barbara Shop and the Merchant Square Building.

The Façade Grant Program was instituted last year with the financial assistance of five local banks (United Community Bank, Habersham Bank, Regions Bank, Mountain Valley Community Bank and Stephens Federal Bank). The monies were earmarked for Façade Grant improvement to merchants on the Square and within the Cleveland Better Home Town working area, which extends one – two blocks either way from the Cleveland Square. “The goal of the program is to create an incentive for the Cleveland Downtown Square property and business owners to restore, refurbish, and rehabilitate existing properties,” said Maria Jurado-Flynn, Manager for Cleveland Better Home Town. Property owners on the square will be reimbursed 20% of the total cost of the improvements made to their building, with a maximum of \$1,500. The Façade Grant Committee is Chaired by Gene White, President of United Community Bank. Other committee members include, Judy Lovell, President of the Historical Society, Architect George Hlavenka, Tom O’Bryant, Director of Economic Development for White County and Maria Jurado-Flynn, Manager of Cleveland Better Home Town. To date, (11) business have taken advantage of the façade grant program. “The application processes is relatively easy, but you must submit the application before the work begins, “said Gene White. “We want to make more businesses aware that this program is available and to encourage them to take advantage of it.”

# Cleveland Better Home Town, Inc.

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## **PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY:**

- Cleveland Downtown Square property owners and/or leaseholders are eligible to apply.
- Grant monies are available for: exterior paint, awnings, signs/signage improvements, entryways, display windows, exterior lighting and bricks/mortar rehabs, to the facades of the building only.
- All applications must be accompanied by a professional cost estimate by a licensed contractor, including specifications of colors and types of materials to be used. Sketches of the finished project must be included and be approved by the city building inspector before submission.
- All projects must comply with “Designing Downtown” storefront guidelines, copies of which are attached to the application, and are also available at Cleveland City Hall for preliminary preview. Your proposed design must be submitted to Cleveland Better Home Town and approved by the Façade Improvement Commission (FIC) before construction begins.
- Award is contingent on historical authenticity, impact on community, quality of materials, and extent of renovation or improvement.
- Once FIC approval has been received, the project must be completed according to the design submitted, including building materials, colors, awnings, etc. and in accordance with the building permit received before commencing restoration, repair, improvements or construction. The grant request is subject to denial if this procedure is not followed.
- All applications must be submitted to the Cleveland Better Home Town Manager and will be reviewed by the Façade Improvement Commission (FIC) for approval / denial. Questions should be directed to Maria Jurado-Flynn, Cleveland Better Home Town Manager.
- The grant will be awarded upon final inspection and project completion. Necessary documentation will include: application, invoices of completed work with final expense total and building permit.
- Publicly owned buildings are not eligible for façade grants.

Applications may be picked up at the Cleveland Better Home Town office located in the City Hall Annex Building or you can contact Maria Jurado-Flynn at (706) 969-3336.

Earlier this year Cleveland was officially designated a “Better Home Town” by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs. Cleveland Better Home Town is a non-profit 501 (c) 3 organization with an active Board of Directors that are committed to making Cleveland a “Better Home Town.”

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