

Danville Business Alliance

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Danville Business Alliance
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Façade Grant Program

For the third year in a row the Danville Business Alliance (DBA), a non-profit organization, announces the Danville Main Street Program is offering funding for façade improvements throughout the designated downtown program area. The area largely includes much of what is already zoned as the central business district, roughly following state route 54, U.S. route 11, Ferry Street, and Front Street. **In late 2010 the DBA requested Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) approval to enlarge the Main Street area to include part of the east side of Ferry Street and additional blocks of Mill Street north of route 11. Action on the request is expected soon, and if it is approved, that will mean commercial buildings in those areas will be eligible for façade grants, as well.**

The program is fully funded with over \$30,000 available now, and as funds are committed and spent, the potential for at least an additional \$30,000 before the Main Street Program terminates on June 30, 2012. **For the first time, improvements to REAR BUSINESS FACADES are eligible, if the building has a REAR BUSINESS ENTRANCE, and will be considered on a first-come, case-by-case basis.**

Funds are provided to business and property owners in the form of matching grants. Grant recipients must match dollar for dollar the amount of money received from the DBA. Funding may be allocated to any one business location for up to 50 percent (50%) of the total project not to exceed total reimbursement of \$5,000 per project.

Six improvement projects were completed in 2010, totaling over \$15,000. Of the \$60,000 in grant funds made available to date through DCED, a total of nearly \$30,000 has been awarded in the form of grants since the inception of the program in mid-2008 to assist with projects to make the downtown business district more attractive. Downtown buildings and businesses assisted include Hometown Abstract, Pub II, City Girl Bakery, D's Clothier, McWilliams Home Care & Uniform Shoppe, Collectables Unlimited, Abigail's Attic, Columbia Montour Visitors Bureau, Central Susquehanna Valley Board of Realtors, and the Iron Heritage Festival. Together with the matching investments by building and business owners, these grants have leveraged nearly \$80,000 in downtown improvement projects in the last 2½ years.

Such improvements make the business district more inviting for existing as well as new shoppers, businesses, and residents; stimulate further improvements in the surrounding, largely residential areas; and preserve the historic character and architecture of downtown Danville.

Anyone who owns or leases commercial property in the designated downtown program area is eligible to apply. Commercial tenants may apply with the written approval of the building's owner. Buildings with outstanding code violations are not eligible for this grant. Further information about the façade grant program can be found at the DBA website, www.visitdanvillepa.org/dba-facade.html.

The DBA Façade Design Committee has developed a comprehensive publication of Design Guidelines to serve as a reference guide. The Design Guidelines offer basic information about physical improvements which have proven to be effective in the revitalization of other downtown business districts throughout Pennsylvania. In addition, the Design Guidelines establish a set of principles to ensure that improvements are consistent with the scale, character, and history of downtown Danville. These principles stress good property maintenance and preservation of original architectural features and encourage the compatibility of any replacement architectural elements and building additions. Copies of the Design Guidelines and grant applications are available at the DBA office.

The DBA will review applications, determine eligibility, and approve the buildings to receive assistance. Projects will be evaluated on the basis of quality, design compatibility, and the level of visual and economic impact. If more applications are received than there is money available, grants will be awarded from available funds on a first-come, first-serve basis to eligible applicants. Applicants not funded can reapply if additional funding becomes available.

If you have questions or need additional information, please contact Jim Wilson, DBA Executive Director, or his Executive Assistant, Mary Dinehart at the DBA office, 284-4502/4503 or visit them at 17 East Mahoning Street in Danville. Normal business hours are 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

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