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**JOHN BRY, MAIN STREET OAKLAND COUNTY PROGRAM COORDINATOR,
HONORED WITH 2023 MARY MEANS LEADERSHIP AWARD
For Developing Innovative Ideas to Support Historic Main Street Neighborhoods**

CHICAGO, ILL., (March 29, 2023) – Main Street America announced John Bry, Program Coordinator at Main Street Oakland County (MSOC) in Michigan, as the 2023 Mary Means Leadership Award recipient. This prestigious award is the organization’s top honor recognizing individuals who demonstrate outstanding leadership in the field of comprehensive preservation-based economic development and commercial district revitalization. The award highlights the impact of these individuals and amplifies the critical role that leaders play in shaping the Main Street Movement.

Nominated by colleagues, and selected by a national jury, Bry is being recognized for his ability to develop innovative ideas, build organizational capacity of local programs and leaders, and lead through understanding as program coordinator.

“Main Street coordinators play vital roles as conveners, mentors, and advocates,” said Hannah White, Interim President and CEO at Main Street America. “And John Bry is exemplary in these roles and many more. John’s passion for historic preservation and ability to rally local leaders around the Main Street Approach have made a lasting impact on countless communities.”

The Oakland County Economic Development staff nominated Bry for the award. The directors and downtown managers of Main Street Oakland County (MSOC), former colleagues, and faculty of Southeast Missouri State University submitted letters of support, all describing Bry’s ability to apply creative solutions to complex problems and bring together diverse stakeholders through shared visions.

At 19, Bry founded the Champaign County Preservation Alliance, Ohio’s first countywide preservation organization. After receiving degrees in historic preservation and conservation, Bry embarked on a career establishing, managing, and coordinating Main Street programs in Indiana, Ohio, Missouri, Pennsylvania, and Michigan.

Notable accomplishments include securing \$600,000 of a \$1.7 million commercial and public space project in Flora, Illinois; advising Kendallville, Indiana in securing a \$2 million PreservINg Main Street grant to transform the community’s historic downtown; and providing guidance on the establishment of the Cape Girardeau Main Street program, which later earned a Great American Main Street Award and continues to be nationally and state Accredited.

“John has always been on the forefront of what’s next for historic preservation and Main Street, providing the type of strategic thinking and leadership that helps transform people and communities,” writes Steven J. Hoffman, Ph.D., Professor of History & Anthropology at Southeast Missouri State University.

In his current role as Program Coordinator at Main Street Oakland County, Bry has played a crucial role in growing the organization’s network of members from 19 to 28. This growth includes recruiting three

communities that had previously left the program. Bry's hands-on approach to providing guidance to communities can be seen in his work with Main Street Pontiac, where he assisted in transforming the board of directors to one that reflects the community, securing sponsorships to fund their business and façade grant program, and helping the organization establish better communication with city government.

"John is the most compassionate and dedicated community development champion that I know, and it is not surprising that he is being recognized with the prestigious Mary Means Leadership Award," said Kristi Trevarrow, Executive Director at Rochester Downtown Development Authority in Michigan. "He is a staunch supporter of our Main Street Oakland County communities, and we are fortunate to have the opportunity to work with him for the betterment of our downtowns!"

Perhaps the most poignant example of Bry's collaborative leadership is evidenced in his efforts to successfully change how MSOC engages with local programs from an, at times, prescriptive approach to one that is tailored to deliver services that are needed and wanted by the community. Bry also nurtures strong relationships among the program's diverse programs and supports the professional development of local downtown managers through Main Street Now Conference scholarships.

"John's respect of people, place history has transformed Oakland County's Main Street program. He has refined all aspects of our county-level Coordinating Program around the unique political, social and economic context of each downtown," says Bret Rasegan, Manager of Planning and Local Business Development at Oakland County Economic Development. "His ability to lead, find common ground and build consensus on actions provides the environment for success across Oakland County."

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ABOUT THE MARY MEANS LEADERSHIP AWARD

Introduced in 2019 and named after Main Street America's founder, the Mary Means Leadership Award celebrates outstanding preservation-based commercial district revitalization leaders and highlights the critical role that their leadership lays in shaping the Main Street movement. Candidates for the award are considered and selected by a jury of peers, previous winners, state coordinators, Main Street America board members and staff, and Mary Means. Recipients are recognized at the annual Main Street Now Conference and receive professional development scholarships. For more information, visit mainstreet.org.

ABOUT MAIN STREET AMERICA

Main Street America leads a movement committed to strengthening communities through preservation-based economic development in older and historic downtowns and neighborhood commercial districts. For more than 40 years, Main Street America has provided a practical, adaptable, and impactful framework for community-driven, comprehensive revitalization through the Main Street Approach™. Our network of more than 1,200 neighborhoods and communities, rural and urban, share both a commitment to place and to building stronger communities through preservation-based economic development. For more information, visit mainstreet.org.

ABOUT MAIN STREET OAKLAND COUNTY

Main Street Oakland County (MSOC) is the only full-service county-level Main Street Coordinating Program in the United States. Housed within the Oakland County Economic Development department, MSOC supports local government and non-profit organizations in maximizing the economic potential and preserving the heritage and sense of place of Oakland County's historic downtowns and commercial districts. Learn more at MainStreetOaklandCounty.com.