

# West Plains, Missouri

DOWNTOWN  
REVITALIZATION &  
ECONOMIC  
ASSISTANCE FOR  
MISSOURI



MARKETING PLAN

APRIL, 2009





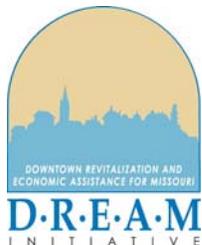
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MARKETING PLAN

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# DOWNTOWN WEST PLAINS

## MARKETING PLAN

Prepared by  
5-Star Public Relations & Marketing, Inc.

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## **MARKETING PRIMER FOR MUNICIPALITIES**

In years past, consumers had fewer choices than they do today. The Internet has, quite literally put the whole world at the consumer's fingertips. Consumers have been courted and wooed by corporate giants from infancy, have had their wants, needs, habits, and interests analyzed by experts, and have been told exactly how a product will make them happier, stronger, sexier, healthier, or any thing else they might desire. Everyday another opportunity presents itself. Consumers have become dependent on marketing messages to ferret through all the options and help them find the best products or services to meet their needs. A marketing plan is needed to cut through all the noise and reach the most profitable target market with the most effective message.

The "product" the DREAM municipalities are selling is their downtown and basic marketing rules and concepts apply. Understanding these rules and concepts can help DREAM cities achieve better success from their marketing efforts.

### **SIX CARDINAL RULES OF MARKETING:**

- **Do an honest and accurate assessment of your product.**  
This can be accomplished through a SWOT analysis, focus group studies, surveys, and other research methods. It is important that the assessment is realistic to get an accurate portrayal of consumer viewpoints. It is more effective to use a consultant from outside the area to help with the assessment as a non-local consultant will see things from a different perspective and won't be inhibited by community relationships and connections.
- **Know your objectives and goals and state them clearly.**  
What do you want to accomplish? If you can't put it into words, you can't achieve it. Goals must be specific enough that they will mean the same thing to every reader. For instance, a goal of "Improving Downtown" is too vague and subjective. Improvement will mean different things to different people. Instead, define what improving Downtown looks like in specific terms. Does it have more shoppers in it? How many? Does it have fewer empty buildings? How many? Once goals have been clearly stated, they should be recorded in writing and adopted by the City Council or organization Board of Directors.
- **Identify target markets and connections between the product and the target market's needs and desires.**  
Identification of the target markets will be based on the goals and objectives. Consideration must be given to which target market would be most likely to find the product appealing and would provide the best return on investment for marketing efforts and resources. This will be the primary target market. Ask yourself, "What about my product connects me to this target market?" The answers to that question will be the messages you want to communicate to the target market. Find out as much as you can about the wants, needs, habits and attitudes of this target market and tailor messages and communication channels accordingly.

There will likely be aspects of the product that will appeal to other target markets. These secondary and tertiary markets can benefit from some marketing efforts and as the market climate changes, could develop into primary markets. However, most resources should be allocated to the primary target market.

- **It's all about them, not you.**  
Target markets are selfish—they want to know, “What’s in it for me?” The benefits of the product must be constantly communicated and the consumer shown how having the product makes their lives easier or more secure, saves them money, provides them enjoyment, or gives them a sense of achievement toward a goal they perceive as worthy. That message must be communicated to the target market through an appropriate communication channel that is used by the target market. Capitalize on the connection between what they want or need and what you have to offer, and communicate that in ways they prefer to receive messages.
- **Get feedback from the plan and monitor its progress.**  
A regular schedule and method of monitoring the plan’s results will help identify areas that are working and what needs to be adjusted. Questions to ask include: did you achieve your stated goals; if so, to what degree; what problems emerged and how were they addressed or should have been addressed; could the problems have been avoided and if so, how? Monitoring the results of the marketing plan will also provide information on changes happening in the marketplace. Where are new opportunities emerging for new markets or expanding secondary markets into primary markets? What markets are waning and why? Are there corrective measures that can be taken to put target markets back on track with your goals?
- **Make adjustments.**  
The marketplace is constantly evolving. When conditions and market attitudes change, changes to marketing strategies are appropriate. These adjustments can help the marketing effort keep pace with the changes needed to keep the product viable and in demand. Without monitoring and adjustments, the marketing plan will eventually become obsolete and ineffective.

#### COMMON MARKETING MISTAKES:

Shotgun approach—trying to be everything to all people. Lack of market segmentation  
Unrealistic assessment of the product and what it offers the target market  
Fuzzy or unrealistic goals  
Incorrect identification of primary target market and missed opportunities with potential target markets  
Not putting the consumer’s wants and needs first  
Failure to monitor and adjust the marketing plan

#### BRANDING:

Branding originally related to burning a significant, identifying mark on something. In marketing, branding connotes burning an image into the minds of the target markets. That image identifies your product with set qualities, characteristics, and emotions. Branding is based on the relationship you build with your target market.

There are two aspects of branding—the experiential and the psychological. The experiential is the sum of all contacts the market has with your brand—the market’s brand experience. The psychological, which is also known as the brand

image, is the expectations and information your target market associates with your product. It is the brand image that sets the product apart and makes it unique in the minds of your target market. When your target market encounters your product or the name of your product, these characteristics and attributes immediately come to mind.

Through consistent and regular reinforcement of the brand through many advertising mediums, the brand image will be built. It is imperative that this image be the image that is intended as branding provides momentum. Once a brand and image has been associated with a project, it will be much harder to change.

Once you have established the desired brand image in the minds of your target market, you have a springboard from which to launch promotions of the product. An established brand image provides a shortcut into your target market's positive emotions and experiences. It makes your product familiar and therefore more readily accepted.

### **BROCHURE DEVELOPMENT WORKSHEET**

To maximize the effectiveness of a promotional piece, it's important to define the purpose; target market; core message; distribution method and frequency; shelf life; if it is part of a series; existence of text/graphics that can be used and what needs to be created/revised; and budget for the piece. Below is a list of questions that need to be answered to help in the development of a piece that achieves your desired results.

- **Purpose:**

What do you want the piece to accomplish? For instance, do you want it to increase the number of local visitors to the downtown or visitors from surrounding communities? Do you want to promote an annual overall list of events for the city, or the downtown? Do you want to interest investors in the downtown? A single promotional piece needs to have a basic focus on purpose that will move to the appropriate target market. Pieces that attempt to be everything to everyone lose their effectiveness to all target markets.

- **Target Market:**

Based on your purpose, what is your primary target market for the piece? Other target markets may benefit, but the piece should be designed to address the needs and desires of the primary target market. Demographic information such as income level, education level, and technological-sophistication level should also be considered.

- **Core Message:**

What is the core message you want to deliver? How can the product address the target market's needs and desires? How can you demonstrate that your product is the BEST product that can meet those needs and desires? Identification of the primary target market's key motivators and concerns is crucial.

- **Distribution Method/s:**

How will the piece be distributed? Based on the information you've developed for purpose, target market, and core message, you can then decide on the most effective method or methods of distribution. Some methods may not be

appropriate for all purposes, messages, or markets. If you are using a printed piece with an interactive CD included, you will also need to be sure your target market is computer savvy enough to use the CD. Most of the time you'll want to design the piece to address a couple of distribution methods.

- **Distribution Frequency and Timing:**

How often and when would be the optimum times to distribute the piece? For instance, if you want to bring people to your downtown, when is the most likely time they will be thinking about trips? If your piece is promoting Christmas events, you'll want the piece to reach them in mid to late November. Decisions will also need to be made concerning seasonal distribution.

- **Shelf Life:**

How long do you expect to use the piece? One year? Two to five years? Longer than five years? The longer the shelf life, the more generic the content should be to preserve the accuracy of the information presented. Event brochures should be created annually or less. You'll also want to be careful not to list specific businesses, elected officials, committee members, etc., because those things can change.

- **Series Piece:**

Is the piece going to serve as part of a series? For instance, you might want one piece that would be the initial contact piece sent to a target market and then have several others that would be sent later at specific intervals. All pieces should build on the core message, but each might present a different aspect of the message.

- **Existing Text, Graphics, etc.:**

What other printed pieces, photographs, text, website content, and other graphics, already exist that can either be used or adapted to the new piece? Using parts of existing pieces not only saves money on the project, it helps with continuity of the product image. Photographs and graphics need to be clear and of high quality. Digital files that are suitable for Web-site use usually aren't high enough quality to use for printed information. Actual photographs can be scanned, but must be scanned at a high dpi and saved as a high-quality JPEG.

- **Budget:**

How much can you spend to have the piece created and distributed? Budget will include the graphic design, concept and content development, printing, envelopes/packaging if needed, and postage or other distribution costs. A highly sophisticated target market with a potential high return on investment of development of the piece will warrant a higher budget. A long shelf life will also warrant more for development of the piece.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To enhance Downtown West Plains as a choice for tourism, shopping, and business, a focused and ongoing marketing plan is needed. The benefits and advantages of the Downtown need to be constantly promoted and connected to the desired and interested target markets. Communication with target markets is crucial and will require proper funding. Ultimately it is more costly to neglect this communication than to implement a regular, focused communication campaign that will build understanding, trust, and interest.

This Plan identifies four primary objectives for West Plains, each with goals, strategies, and target markets. Taken together, these four objectives promote one key message—**West Plains offers a unique, fun place to shop, conduct business or visit.**

The primary target markets are **local residents** (living within the West Plains zip code), **area residents** (living outside the zip, but within 50 miles), **visitors** who are already in West Plains or the downtown, and **downtown business owners**. These markets merit the majority of efforts because changes in their habits and attitudes offer the best return on investment.

Objective 1 addresses the need to monitor and measure the attitudes, needs, and habits of downtown's target markets and benchmark the success of the Marketing Plan. A periodic measurement of target markets is



necessary to determine the most efficient expenditure of effort and finances. Baseline measurements can be determined through the DREAM Community & Consumer Survey task, sales-tax revenue levels, business licenses in the downtown, and preliminary observations.

Objective 2 addresses the need to bring more visitors to West Plains' downtown and keep them there longer to help influence them to become shoppers.

Objective 3 addresses the perception target markets have of West Plains' downtown and activities to improve and adapt that positioning.

Objective 4 addresses activities West Plains can undertake to capitalize on appealing features that are somewhat unique to West Plains. Successful implementation of these goals will help set West Plains apart from other small towns competing for visitors.

It is imperative that some of the goals and strategies associated with each of the objectives receive a higher implementation priority than others. A Suggested First-year Strategies List is included at the end of this Executive Summary.

In addition to the objectives, there are four key strategies identified in the Plan that are interrelated and provide a foundation for many of the other strategies. These four Key Strategies are:

- **The development of a Downtown West Plains website**
- **The development of a primary promotional brochure for West Plains**
- **The development of a special events brochure**
- **The development of a Downtown specific newsletter to communicate with area residents**

Under Objective 1, the website reference serves as a basis for tracking and measuring the attitudes, habits and needs of several of West Plains' target markets.

The website is again referred to under Objective 2 as a communication tool for downtown West Plains' multiple target markets. A dynamic website that focuses on West Plains and the opportunities for tourism, entertainment, shopping, business, real estate investment, and housing is important and multiple strategies in this Plan are contingent on the existence of such a website. To maintain effectiveness it is imperative that the site be kept up to date and the content not be allowed to become stale and static.

The existence of a primary promotional brochure for West Plains that includes shops, points of interest, and a map of the downtown is also foundational. It will ensure visitors already in the downtown are fully aware of the amenities available. Initially it might be possible to combine the primary brochure with the special events brochure, but as more events are added, the events brochure should be developed separately.

The newsletter will remain a key communication tool to connect with the target local market and will provide

residents with an easy way to act as a conduit and invite the broader target markets. "The Open Line" is the City's current newsletter and it may be possible to launch the Downtown specific newsletter as a column in this newsletter initially. An important distinction here is the audience for the two newsletters. The Downtown newsletter to be developed should be distributed outside the community to merchants visitor listings.

With limited resources, it is important to identify which goals and strategies are the most feasible for immediate implementation. The Plan should then be reviewed annually to consider pursuance and implementation of additional goals and strategies. The annual review should also include an evaluation of current goals and strategies to determine their success.

Special events and new initiatives may not be particularly successful the first time. Time is needed for the target market to discover and accept something new and to refine and make adjustments.

### Suggested First-Year Strategies List:

- **KEY STRATEGY:** Downtown West Plains website
- **KEY STRATEGY:** Development of primary promotional brochure that includes downtown shops, points of interest, and a map of downtown
- **KEY STRATEGY:** Development of a special events brochure that includes brief one or two-sentence descriptions of events (might be able to combine with promotional brochure)
- **KEY STRATEGY:** Downtown column in the City's current newsletter, to eventually launch Downtown West Plains, Inc. own newsletter targeting visitors to the City
- Begin development of a multifaceted advertising campaign targeting the City's visitors
- Identification of Visitor Information Centers in the downtown area
- Addition of one new special event
- Launching of a "Shop West Plains First" campaign targeting residents and a "Downtown West Plains Pride" campaign targeting local businesses
- Begin development of a city slogan and related logo to support the branding identified in the DREAM Destination Assessment

### **SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS**

West Plains is described in other DREAM reports as a progressive, but safe and friendly small town with strong cooperation between city government and other entities.

West Plains is also a very participatory community with a lot of people actively engaged in civic activities. Residents have generally been supportive of initiatives such as tax increases or bond issues if they are shown the personal benefits of the initiatives. The City tapes and broadcasts council meetings to keep the community informed and prints a quarterly newsletter called *Open Line*, which goes to anyone who gets a utility bill.

West Plains serves as a hub for several smaller communities and attracts people from a large radius, including northern Arkansas, for employment, entertainment, and shopping. Ozark Medical Center employs over 1,500 people, Marathon Electric employs over 700 people, Bruce Hardwood flooring has more than 400 employees, and a truck manufacturing plant in the area employs more than 200 people.

Located off of Hwy 63, a direct route between Branson, MO and Memphis, TN, West Plains is a stopping point for many travelers. Bus tours to Tunica, MS also stop to eat in West Plains, but they do not stay long enough to shop. The main shopping areas in West Plains are the downtown and the Southern Hills Shopping Center, which has Wal-Mart, J.C. Penney, and other chain stores.

West Plains' downtown has a mix of shops and services. The business hours many downtown shops observe are noted as inconvenient for today's typical shoppers.

Downtown lacks a grocery outlet and there are no high-volume retailers in the downtown to generate a significant amount of sales tax.

Currently, much of the potential retail space in the downtown square is occupied by services that are less attractive to shoppers. West Plains is the County Seat of Howell County, with the County Courthouse located in the center of the square. Many government-related businesses have offices downtown. The Ozark Small Business Incubator is located in Downtown.

As indicated in the DREAM Initiative Community Survey, over 80 percent of the population is in the downtown at least once a month. In addition to governmental business, three churches are located just off the Square that attract a Sunday population. But for most residents downtown is not considered an option for shopping, but only as a Monday through Friday, 9-to-5 service area or a venue in which to attend special events.



Downtown is flanked by two important assets. Missouri State University-West Plains provides a student population and borders downtown to the west. The West Plains Civic Center, a multiuse facility with room for exhibits, banquets, theatre, and sporting events, lies to the east of downtown. The Civic Center draws thousands of visitors annually for rodeos, monthly gospel concerts, performances through the university performing arts programs, and other events. The Center is also home to

the Missouri State University basketball and volleyball program, and has meeting rooms available for rent.



West Plains Civic Center

West Plains has a senior citizens center downtown and a high-rise senior facility across from the Civic Center.

Historic preservation efforts are occurring in Downtown West Plains. In 2003, the National Park Service placed West Plains' Court Square Historic District on the National Register. The historic Avenue Theater, located downtown, has been restored and turned into a performing arts theater. The downtown's historic Opera House has also been restored and contains small office spaces and a large banquet room with a balcony.

The Harlin Art Museum is in downtown and holds six art shows per year. In addition to Native American artifacts and items of historic significance from area residents, the museum houses the Lennis Broadfoot collection of a series of charcoal drawings and biographies of the oldest residents of Shannon and surrounding counties. The genealogy library is located six blocks from downtown.

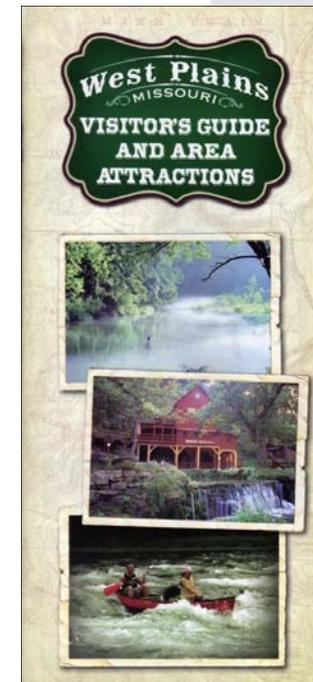
There are also a lot of outdoor recreational opportunities in West Plains. The outlying areas provide hunting grounds, lake and river activities, natural beauty, and hiking and camping opportunities.

West Plains is also home to the second largest dirt racetrack in the country, which attracts up to 10,000 people to certain weekend events.

West Plains has developed several strong special events to draw visitors to the area. The downtown district provides an excellent venue for many public events that include the Second Saturday Stroll, the Old Time Music Festival, and the annual Home and Garden show. A significant number of organizations in the city work to promote these events.

As noted in the DREAM Organizational Structure review, Downtown West Plains, Inc. was formed to work toward the revitalization of the downtown district. A master plan for physical improvements is in place.

There is no single promotional piece for the city's downtown being distributed. The *West Plains Visitor's Guide* refers to the city's historic downtown, but does not include a map. The Civic Center receives thousands of visitors, but as of this report, there is not a brochure for downtown being distributed to those visitors. Currently, there is no promotion of a unified slogan or logo.



West Plains is not geographically located in proximity to an interstate highway, making it difficult to attract impromptu visits from motorists. There are few billboards or signs on Highways 63 and 160 to help promote downtown to visitors and tourists. Wayfinding mechanisms to direct visitors to the downtown, as well as to the various attractions within the downtown, are also inadequate.

The entrance to the north end of downtown, at the intersection of Broadway and Washington Avenue, is the first impression most visitors have of downtown. Although areas of this entrance have been recently landscaped, unsightly elements remain. The former Butler Building nearby is in the process of being remodeled and transformed into a business incubator. This building will make a very nice improvement to the intersection.

The west side of Washington Ave contains a vacant service station and a pile of debris.



## **TARGET MARKET ANALYSIS**

The Target Markets identified in this plan have been identified to assist West Plains in efficiently influencing attitudes and behaviors. As the marketing campaign and the strategies are implemented, it is important to understand how each initiative is affecting and reaching the targeted markets. Regular communication with these markets is crucial to maintain visibility, integrity, and trust. Care must be taken that this communication channel is not used for political purposes.

### **Primary Market-**

An effective marketing plan for a community is in part targeted at its residents and local businesses. By recruiting these markets as 'salespeople' all downtown marketing plan objectives will be more readily accepted. The tools and messages sent to residents and local businesses are similar to those meant for visitors already in town; ease of downtown navigation, special events, general 'feel good' messages about the towns dynamic activity. Success in the influencing of this market will build a base of activity that will provide a level of stable support and allow future marketing to the secondary and tertiary markets.

### **Secondary Market-**

As the marketing and branding message spreads and the Primary Market is saturated, it will be important to expand campaign efforts to reach more people. The typical definition of a 'tourist' is a visitor from at least 50 miles away. This visitor is more likely to be generating an overnight stay and therefore more likely to spend

more money in the community. Rising fuel costs underscore how important it is that the chosen marketing message to visit West Plains is as compelling as possible. Local entrepreneurs are also included in this market, much like a resident that has a needs to develop pride in the community where there business is located.

### **Tertiary Market-**

Expansion and growing excitement of the Key Message of West Plains should ultimately reach potential tourists looking to escape for longer vacations, potential residents, and potential development investors.

**KEY MESSAGE:**

WEST PLAINS OFFERS A UNIQUE, FUN PLACE TO SHOP OR VISIT

**PRIMARY TARGET MARKETS:**

Local Residents (living within the West Plains zip code)  
Area Residents (living outside the zip, but within 50 miles)  
Visitors already in West Plains or Downtown  
Downtown business owners

**SECONDARY TARGET MARKETS:**

Regional Residents (living 50—100 miles away)  
Local and Area Entrepreneurs

**TERTIARY TARGET MARKETS:**

Tourists from metro areas within a 350 mile radius  
Retirees and Boomers Nearing Retirement  
Real Estate Investors

To maximize use of limited resources, the Key Message should be most aggressively conveyed to the Primary Target Markets. A successful campaign to this market, should bolster resources and allow deeper penetration into the Secondary and Tertiary markets while maintaining effective communication with the Primary Market.

**COMMUNICATION CHANNELS**

	Target Markets	Communication Channels
Primary	Local Residents	website Newsletter Ads Primary promotional brochure Special event brochure Special interest brochures Cable channel Top 10/50 Things to Do brochure/booklet Discount coupon booklet/brochure Downtown Shoppers Guide News articles resulting from releases Radio/TV interviews resulting from releases Signs and flyers in downtown Community meetings
	Area Residents	website Primary promotional brochure Special event brochure Special interest brochures Ads Cable channel Downtown Shoppers Guide News articles resulting from releases Signs and flyers in downtown Radio/TV interviews resulting from releases
	Visitors in West Plains or downtown	Visitor information Centers Primary promotional brochure Special event brochure Special interest brochures Directional signs in downtown Downtown Shoppers Guide Signs and flyers in downtown
	Downtown Business Owners	website Special Downtown Business Newsletter News articles resulting from releases Community meetings

**COMMUNICATION CHANNELS (CONTINUED)**

Target Markets		Communication Channels
Secondary	Regional Residents	website Ads Primary promotional brochure Special event brochure News articles resulting from releases
	Local and Area Entrepreneurs	website Ads Cable channel News articles resulting from releases Radio/TV interviews resulting from releases Community meetings
Tertiary	Tourists	website Ads Primary promotional brochure Special event brochure News articles resulting from releases
	Retirees	website News articles resulting from releases
	Real Estate Investors	website News articles resulting from releases

## OBJECTIVES, GOALS, & STRATEGIES

### OBJECTIVE 1: Baseline and Assessment

Through the use of surveys and focus group study results, establish baselines for resident and visitor attitudes and habits relating to downtown. Once baselines are established, develop periodic and ongoing procedures that enable regular assessment of gains made in these areas.

**GOAL:** Develop a bi-annual community attitude survey that builds on the DREAM Community Telephone Survey results and continues to measure changing attitudes and habits of local residents (living within West Plains zip code) in relation to downtown West Plains. **Target Markets: PRIMARY (Local residents)**

*Strategy:* Every two years conduct, tabulate and evaluate a community-attitude survey that will measure local residents' perceptions and behaviors.

*To avoid survey bias that can sometimes be created when a single survey method is used, it would be advisable to alternate between phone and mailed questionnaire surveys.*

*An online survey could also be made available on a Downtown West Plains website, but the results of it should be kept separate from the other data since there's no practical way to determine that the participant is actually from the specified area or that he/she hasn't filled out multiple surveys.*

**GOAL:** Develop a bi-annual visitor survey that builds on the DREAM Visitor Survey results and will continue to measure changing attitudes and habits of visitors (not having a West Plains zip code) in relation to downtown West Plains. **Target Markets: ALL (Visitors; any non-residents)**

*Strategy:* Similar to the community survey noted above, every two years conduct, tabulate and evaluate a visitors survey to measure ongoing visitors perceptions and behaviors.

*Visitor surveys can be handled as interview-style or questionnaires distributed at several special events. They could also be mailed questionnaires to the addresses of visitors who register for a drawing or provide their address in some other consensual way.*

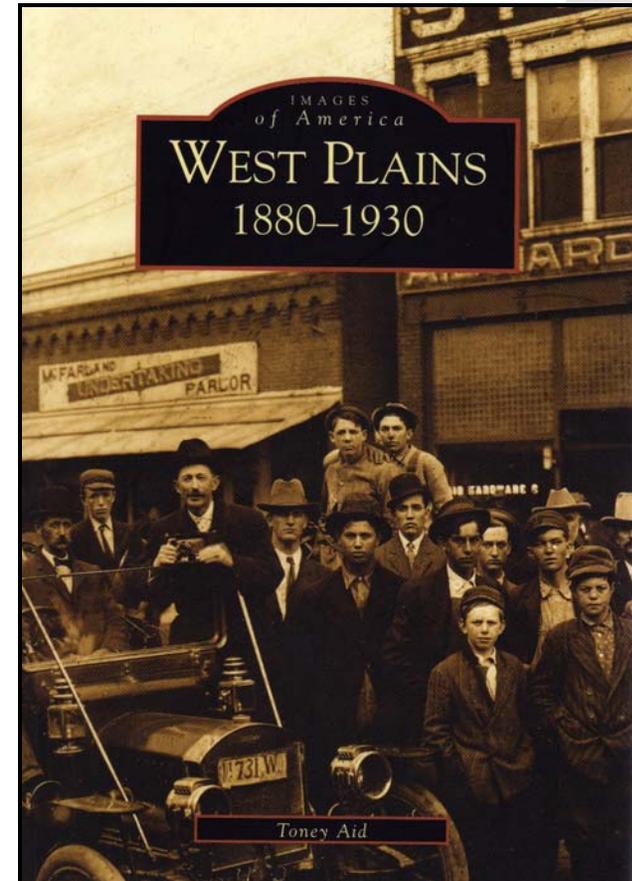
*Merchants might be willing to help compile lists of out-of-town shoppers addresses or emails, but privacy issues must be considered. An invitation to participate in a online survey can be an effective way to gather utilize this contact information without intruding on important downtown visitors.*

*Enticements to encourage more people to fill out surveys might include discount coupons to downtown merchants.*

**GOAL:** Develop a Downtown West Plains website with database functionality to provide multiple online surveys as well as the ability to track the following: visits to the site; pages visited; dates, times and length of visits; downloads from site; bookmarked pages; and links to the site from external pages. Use the functionality of the site to chart information of primary interest to target markets as well as changes in attitudes and habits of target markets. **Target Markets:** ALL

**Key Strategy:** *Provide ongoing surveys on a Downtown West Plains website to obtain information about visitors and area residents' opinions and suggestions. While online surveys aren't as statistically reliable as other survey formats, they would provide an inexpensive way to gain ongoing feedback. They can also provide an attraction to the site and act as a source of information. Some surveys could be on the site all or most of the time, such as surveys asking for feedback on what types of information visitors would find most useful. Other surveys could focus on providing feedback on resident attitudes and habits concerning downtown. Polls could be placed on the website following special events to garner feedback on the events as well as visitor observations and perceptions of downtown.*

**Strategy:** *Track the number of hits on the pages of the Downtown West Plains website to determine what aspects receive the most interest. In response to the information obtained, make adjustments to the site to better promote important information not being accessed and expand most popular aspects to better serve users needs. Capture contact information of target markets.*



**OBJECTIVE 2: Influencing Visitors**

Increase sales tax revenue in downtown by increasing the volume of visitors and shoppers, their spending habits, and length of stay of their visit to downtown West Plains.

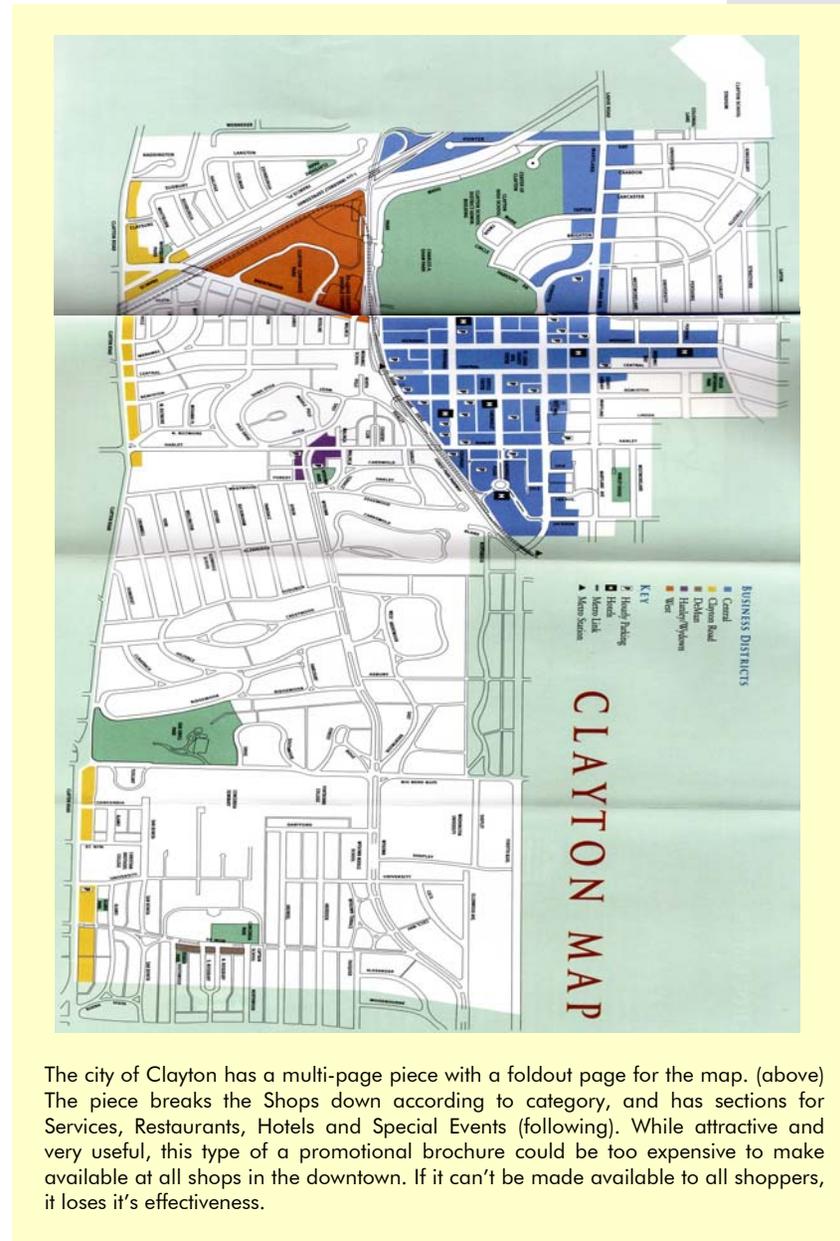
**GOAL:** Increase the number of ways shoppers and visitors in West Plains can conveniently obtain information about what shops and attractions are in downtown that would be of particular interest to them, and thereby prolong their stay. **Target Markets: shoppers and visitors already in West Plains**

**Key Strategy:**

Create a promotional brochure that lists shops and services by categories, points of interest, and include a map that shows their locations. The brochure can include a list of regular events with a sentence or two describing each. This piece should be Downtown West Plains specific, not regional. If a separate special events brochure is created, it should also be prominently displayed and made available in the same locations as well as the aforementioned brochure.

The brochure should be displayed and made available at business locations in the downtown and at locations throughout West Plains that receive a considerable amount of visitor activity. Locations for distribution should include the Chamber of Commerce, City Hall, Civic Center, Welcome Center, hospital, university, racetrack, and hotels. Ideally outside racks will be available as well as indoor distribution.

**Strategy:** Install a Visitor Information kiosk with maps and informational brochures in the downtown



The city of Clayton has a multi-page piece with a foldout page for the map. (above) The piece breaks the Shops down according to category, and has sections for Services, Restaurants, Hotels and Special Events (following). While attractive and very useful, this type of a promotional brochure could be too expensive to make available at all shops in the downtown. If it can't be made available to all shoppers, it loses it's effectiveness.



**Experience these Souldard Establishments**

RESTAURANTS/BARS		
1. 1860 Hard Shell Cafe	1860 S. 9 <sup>th</sup> St.	231-1860
2. 9 <sup>th</sup> Street Abbey	1808 S. 9 <sup>th</sup> St.	621-9598
3. Big Daddy's	1000 Sidney	771-3066
4. Carnegie Cafe	1705 7 <sup>th</sup> St.	436-9106
5. Carson's	1712 S. 9 <sup>th</sup> St.	436-2707
6. Cat's Meow, Inc.	2600 S. 11 <sup>th</sup> St.	776-8617
7. Clementine's	2001 Menard	664-7869
8. D.B.'s Sports Bar	1615 S. Broadway	588-2141
9. Gladstone's	1800 S. 10 <sup>th</sup> St.	231-6339
10. Great Grizzly Bear	1027 S. Geyer	231-0444
11. Griffin's	728 Lafayette	436-7705
12. Hammerstone's	2028 S. 9 <sup>th</sup> St.	773-5565
13. Joanie's Pizzeria	2101 Menard	865-1994
14. John D. McGurks Pub	1200 Russell	776-8309
15. Johnny's	1017 Russell	865-0900
16. Lagniappe's	2501 S. 9 <sup>th</sup> St.	771-2090
17. LiFiNikki's	1551 S. 7 <sup>th</sup> St.	621-2181
18. Lynch Street Bistro	1031 Lynch St.	772-5777
19. Mike & Min's	925 Geyer	421-1655
20. Molly's	816 Geyer	436-0921
21. Nadine's	1931 S. 12 <sup>th</sup> St.	436-3045
22. Norton's Cafe	808 Geyer	436-0828
23. Phelan's	1730 S. 8 <sup>th</sup> St.	241-8282
24. S. Broadway Athletic Club	2301 S. 7 <sup>th</sup> St.	776-4833
25. Souldard Ale House	1731 S. 9 <sup>th</sup> St.	436-7849
26. Souldard Bastille	1027 Russell	664-4408
27. Souldard Coffee Garden	910 Geyer	241-1464
28. Souldard's Restaurant	1731 S. 7 <sup>th</sup> St.	241-7956
29. The Shant	825 Allen Ave.	241-4772
30. Tucker's Place	2117 S. 12 <sup>th</sup> St.	772-5977
SHOPPING		
31. Farmer's Market	7 <sup>th</sup> & Lafayette	622-4180
32. La Belle Histoire	2501 S. 12 <sup>th</sup> St.	865-4590
33. Remember Me Costume	1021 Russell	773-1930
34. The Framery	2027 S. 11 <sup>th</sup> St.	436-8889
35. The Porch	1700 S. 9 <sup>th</sup> St.	436-0282
36. Vincent's Market	2402 S. 12th St.	772-4710

The Souldard Market promotional brochure (above and right) is only 8.5" x 11" and doesn't include a listing for special events. By increasing the size to 8.5" x 14" it might be possible to have room for a list of special events.

**Visit Historic Souldard**

The spirited neighborhood known as Souldard is a must experience for St. Louis visitors and residents alike.

**History**  
Named after Antoine Souldard, a native of France who surveyed the colonial St. Louis area for the King of Spain, Mr. Souldard was the original owner of this small tract of land located just minutes south of the Gateway Arch landmark.

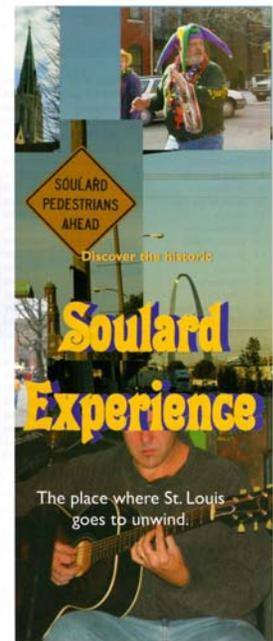
The historic neighborhood of Souldard features unique 19th century architecture found in Souldard's residences, businesses and many beautiful churches.

**Shopping**  
The cornerstone of this neighborhood is the oldest Farmers Market west of the Mississippi. The historic Souldard Market keeps St. Louisans supplied with fresh produce, baked goods, exotic spices, fresh flowers, handmade soaps, and more. Visit Souldard's other distinctive specialty shops for a great shopping experience.

**Breakfast, Lunch or Dinner**  
Numerous award-winning restaurants providing a wide-range of cuisine are located within this mainly residential neighborhood. Many restaurants offer charming outdoor courtyard dining.

**Party Time**  
Souldard comes alive at it's many pubs and clubs. Music lovers can enjoy some of the best blues, jazz and folk music the city has to offer.

In celebration of its French heritage, the Souldard neighborhood plays host for its annual festivities such as Bastille Day in July and Mardi Gras carnival week in February. These popular events bring thousands of people into this lively diverse community for the unique Souldard Experience!



### General Information

Police/Fire/Medical Emergencies ..... 911  
 Disabled Accessibility Information  
 (Voice) ..... (314) 422-3686  
 (TDD) ..... (314) 422-3683  
 Foreign Currency Exchange  
 US Bank ..... (314) 418-2033  
 UMB Bank ..... (314) 612-8170  
 Highway Conditions  
 (800) 222-6400  
 Time, Temperature and  
 Weather Line by KMOX ..... (314) 331-2222  
 Western Union ..... (800) 325-6000

### Train Stations

Amtrak ..... (800) 672-7345  
 Downtown ..... (314) 331-3309

### Airport & Airlines

#### Airport

Lambert-St. Louis International Airport ..... (314) 426-8000  
 MidAmerica St. Louis Airport ..... (618) 366-5000  
 St. Louis Downtown Airport ..... (618) 337-6060  
 Spirit of St. Louis Airport ..... (636) 832-2222

#### Airlines Serving St. Louis

Air Canada Jazz ..... (888) 247-2262  
 American ..... (800) 432-7500  
 America West ..... (800) 225-9292  
 Comair ..... (800) 354-9822  
 Continental ..... (800) 525-0290  
 Delta ..... (800) 221-1212  
 Frontier ..... (800) 422-3559  
 Midwest Connect ..... (800) 452-2022  
 Northwest ..... (800) 225-2525  
 Southwest ..... (800) 435-7972  
 United ..... (800) 241-5522  
 USA3000 ..... (877) USA-3000  
 USAirways ..... (800) 428-4322

### Relocation Services

Berry Upholstery Service ..... (314) 878-1900  
 Caldwell Banker Gundaker ..... (800) 328-1978  
 CW ..... (314) 296-9030

### Visitor Services

#### St. Louis Visitor Information

- 7th and Washington Ave. • 3038 Washington Ave.
- Lambert Airport (Main B East Terminal) • Geneer Plaza
- Fairfax Park
- St. Louis Convention & Visitors Commission  
 One Metropolitan Sq., Ste. 1100, 63102

Special Events Fun Phases Recording ..... (314) 421-1023 or (800) 911-0072  
 Action Regional Convention & Visitors Bureau ..... (618) 465-6676  
 Chesler-Lemp Historic District ..... (314) 776-4410  
 Chesterfield Chamber of Commerce ..... (636) 532-3399  
 Downtown St. Louis Partnership ..... (314) 772-4232  
 Eureka Tourism Commission ..... (314) 438-6500  
 South Grand Commercial Improvement District ..... (314) 772-5750  
 Greater St. Charles Convention & Visitors Bureau ..... (636) 946-7776  
 The Hill Business Association ..... (314) 647-2222  
 International Institute ..... (314) 773-9090  
 Kennecott Merchants Association ..... (636) 464-6464  
 Kirkwood-Des Peres Area Chamber of Commerce ..... (314) 821-4161  
 Laclede's Landing ..... (314) 781-8568  
 Historic Maplewood ..... (618) 458-6600  
 Maplewood Chamber of Commerce ..... (314) 781-8568  
 Maryland Heights Convention & Visitors Bureau ..... (314) 273-9984  
 or (888) 808E-2000

#### Metrolink Service Center - buses and light rail

7th and Washington ..... (314) 982-1495  
 Museum Division of Tourism Information Center ..... (314) 868-7900  
 N-20 and Riverview ..... (314) 773-6700  
 Mt. Vernon Convention & Visitors Bureau ..... (800) 252-5464  
 St. Louis Center for International Relations ..... (314) 862-6777  
 St. Louis Visitors Center ..... (314) 241-1764  
 308 Washington Ave. ..... (314) 773-6767  
 Sifters to the Rescue ..... (314) 862-9800  
 Southeast Business Association ..... (314) 773-6700  
 The Tourism Bureau Southwest Illinois ..... (618) 397-1488  
 Transfers Aid Society ..... (314) 241-5820  
 Washington Area Chamber of Commerce ..... (888) 732-7446  
 Webster Groves Area Chamber of Commerce ..... (314) 962-4142

### Map 3: Central Corridor

#### Accommodations

1. Chase Park Plaza Hotel, 3-5
2. Chester Lodge, 7-8
3. The Flor-de-la-Maison, 1-9
4. Holiday Inn Express, 9-8
5. Holiday Inn Resort Park, 3-8
6. LeMans House Bed & Breakfast, 8-8
7. Napoleon's Retreat, 0-9
8. The Park Hotel Mansion, 9-9
9. The Parkway Hotel, 3-8
10. Red Roof Inn, 9-8
11. St. Louis Four Oaks, 1-8
12. The St. Louis Hotel, 1-8

#### Attractions

12. Anheuser-Busch Brewery Tours and 6th Step, 0-12
13. Art Saint Louis, 0-7
14. The Bank World History Museum, 0-3
15. Cathedral Basilica of Saint Louis (New Cathedral), 8-4
16. Center of Contemporary Arts (COCA), 8-1
17. Chailion-DeMunnin Mansion in Museum, 8-12
18. Chesler-Lemp Historic District, 8-12
19. Circus Rios, 8-5
20. Compagnon Gallery of Art & Fashion, 7-8
21. Contemporary Art Museum, 7-8
22. Contemporary Art Museum, 7-8
23. Contemporary Art Museum, 7-8
24. The Sheldon Concert Hall, Baltimore St. Art Galleries, 8-5
25. Suedler Farmers Market, 7-8
26. St. Louis Art Museum, 8-12
27. St. Louis Botanical Garden, 8-12
28. St. Louis Zoo, 8-12
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#### Map Legend

- Accommodations
- Attractions
- Day Trips
- Shopping Centers
- MetroLink Station
- Riverboat Casino
- Visitor Center
- Parks

### Map 4: Lambert-St. Louis

#### Accommodations

1. Courtyard by Marriott Downtown, 8-1
2. Hampton Inn Downtown, 8-1
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#### Shopping

#### Series

Series 1: 1212 Lincoln St. • (314) 241-8818 • www.metrolink.com

Series 2: 1212 Lincoln St. • (314) 241-8818 • www.metrolink.com

Series 3: 1212 Lincoln St. • (314) 241-8818 • www.metrolink.com

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Map 2: 1212 Lincoln St. • (314) 241-8818 • www.metrolink.com

Map 3: 1212 Lincoln St. • (314) 241-8818 • www.metrolink.com

#### Shopping Centers

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Shopping Center 2: 1212 Lincoln St. • (314) 241-8818 • www.metrolink.com

Shopping Center 3: 1212 Lincoln St. • (314) 241-8818 • www.metrolink.com

#### City Shops

City Shop 1: 1212 Lincoln St. • (314) 241-8818 • www.metrolink.com

City Shop 2: 1212 Lincoln St. • (314) 241-8818 • www.metrolink.com

City Shop 3: 1212 Lincoln St. • (314) 241-8818 • www.metrolink.com

### Metro

## Connecting people on the move!

Customer Service  
 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. weekdays  
 314-231-2345 Illinois  
 TTY assistance  
 314-982-1555 Missouri  
 314-875-1200 Missouri

- Park-Ride Lot
- Free-Fee Zone
- Ride-Free Zone

### Map 5: Forest Park

#### Accommodations

1. Hampton Inn Downtown, 8-1
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#### Attractions

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#### Map 6: Clayton

#### Accommodations

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#### Attractions

1. Chesler-Lemp Historic District, 8-12
2. Chesler-Lemp Historic District, 8-12
3. Chesler-Lemp Historic District, 8-12
4. Chesler-Lemp Historic District, 8-12
5. Chesler-Lemp Historic District, 8-12
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21. Chesler-Lemp Historic District, 8-12
22. Chesler-L

While the full foldout is more encompassing than what is needed for downtown West Plains, the Downtown St. Louis portion of the St. Louis brochure (right) offers a good example of how a downtown map and listing can be handled.

**Map 4: Downtown St. Louis**

**1 Accommodations**

1. Adam's Mark Hotel, D-10
2. Courtyard by Marriott Downtown, C-1
3. Drury Inn & Suites St. Louis Convention Center, F-9
4. Drury Inn Union Station, C-3
5. Drury Plaza Hotel, C-10
6. Embassy Suites Hotel St. Louis Downtown, F-10
7. The Gentry's Landing, E-10
8. Hampton Inn St. Louis Downtown (at the Gateway Arch), E-10
9. Hampton Inn Union Station, D-2
10. Hilton St. Louis Downtown (open early 2005), D-9
11. Holiday Inn Select/Downtown Convention Center, F-7
12. Hyatt Regency St. Louis, C-3
13. Mansion House Furnished Suites, D-10
14. Millennium Hotel St. Louis, B-10
15. The Omni Majestic Hotel, D-7
16. Radisson Hotel and Suites St. Louis Downtown, D-10
- 17a. Renaissance Grand Hotel St. Louis, E-8
- 17b. Renaissance St. Louis Suites Hotel, E-8
18. The Roberts Mayfair, A Wyndham Historic Hotel, E-8
19. St. Louis Marriott Downtown, C-9
20. St. Louis RV Park, F-1
21. Sheraton St. Louis City Center Hotel and Suites, B-5
22. The Westin St. Louis, B-8
23. WS Hotel and Spa, E-9

**Attractions**

24. America's Center®, F-8
25. Busch Stadium (Cardinals Baseball), C-8
26. Campbell House, E-5
27. Casino Queen, E-12
28. Christ Church Cathedral, E-6
29. City Museum, F-4
30. Eads Bridge, E-12
31. everydaycircus, F-4
32. Ferrara Theatre at America's Center®, F-8
33. The Eugene Field House and St. Louis Toy Museum, A-9
34. Gateway Arch/Museum of Westward Expansion, D-11
35. Gateway Arch Riverboats, D-11
36. International Bowling Museum and Hall of Fame, Home of the St. Louis Cardinals Hall of Fame Museum, C-8
37. Edward Jones Dome (Rams Football), G-8
38. Laclede's Landing, F-10
39. Des Lee Gallery, E-4
40. Old Cathedral (Basilica of St. Louis), C-10
41. Old Courthouse, D-9
42. The Roberts Orpheum Theater, E-8
43. President Casino, F-11
44. RiverBarge Excursions, C-11
45. St. Louis Public Library, E-5
46. St. Louis Union Station, C-3
47. Savvis Center (Blues Hockey, Billikens Basketball, Missouri Valley Conference Basketball), C-5
48. Shrine of St. Joseph, G-7
49. Soldiers Memorial Military Museum, D-5
50. Upper Limits Rock Climbing Gym, B-2
51. World Aquarium at City Museum, F-4

[www.explorestlouis.com](http://www.explorestlouis.com)

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square. The kiosk should have a stationary “you-are-here” style map on it and weather-proof racks to hold the above-mentioned brochures. An important part of the kiosk will be wayfinding signage that directs visitors to its location that are visible from any of the main entry routes.

Strategy: Downtown West Plains, Inc. should develop a newsletter specifically for the Downtown. The newsletter should be mailed to a visitor mailing list and emailed to merchants. Merchants should email this newsletter to their email lists and have copies available in their shops.

Strategy: Give more prominence to the city’s downtown in the West Plains Visitor’s Guide. The Guide should include a detailed map of the downtown with key landmarks and points of interest clearly identified. In addition, the city map should identify and label the historic downtown district.

Strategy: Create a “Top 10 Things to Do in West Plains” brochure. The brochure should include a map that shows the locations of the points of interest listed, pictures of the suggested places to visit, and several sentences about each place. Distribution should coincide with the above noted pieces and this brochure can expand as other events or attractions are developed.

Strategy: At the Welcome Center, group the information on West Plains together in one place to make it easy for visitors to gather information on the city. The information can also be mixed in according to interest areas with information about other parts of the region and state, but there should be one area dedicated to only West Plains.

Strategy: Create a coupon book for participating downtown shops and restaurants.

Strategy: Improve public parking lots to enhance wayfinding, access, safety, and beautification so the visitor has an outstanding first impression and is motivated to get out of their vehicle and explore.

Strategy: Require businesses and property owners to maintain rear and side facades that are seen from public parking lots. These entrances can be vital to the businesses, but must appear safe and easy to reach.

Strategy: Designate the Chamber of Commerce and the Civic Center as “Visitor Information Centers,” and install identification signs to assist visitors. These Information Centers don’t need to take up much space or be staffed. Literature racks with the aforementioned brochures and West Plains specific promotional flyers will be adequate.

**GOAL:** Direct more visitors and shoppers into downtown from other areas within West Plains.

**Target Markets: ALL**

Strategy: Create advertising campaigns promoting downtown with a theme that visitors have “missed it” if they didn’t visit West Plains historic downtown. This promotion can develop a sense of urgency and interest both locals and visitors.

Strategy: Develop a campaign centered around promoting the Downtown to the visitors of the racetrack during race weekends.

*Strategy:* Research and Improve wayfinding methods at key Intersections and approaches to West Plains, as well as the entrances into the downtown. A wayfinding plan should also account for navigation among the attraction within the downtown and include a maintenance procedure for ongoing upkeep. Similarly themed signage will help establish the downtown 'place'.

*Strategy:* Consider the use of billboards promoting West Plains' historic downtown along the routes leading into West Plains.

**GOAL:** Create an online presence for Downtown West Plains to promote Downtown as a lifestyle center.

**Target Markets: ALL**

**Key Strategy:**

*Develop a well-designed, dynamic Downtown West Plains website to include various levels of detail that will appeal to the needs of the viewer. Each target market should be considered and information developed to assist with their specific needs. An up-to-date comprehensive calendar of events, links to the Chamber and City, business listings with website addresses, and current contact information of area attractions are essential components.*

*Maintenance and trained staff are required to keep the site current. This investment can be a very powerful tool, but only if it is maintained correctly and cross promoted with other city information. The site hits and usage data should be regularly reviewed to determine improvement strategies.*

**GOAL:** Increase the percentage of local and area residents who come to or make frequent return trips to

downtown for shopping or special events. **Target Markets: PRIMARY (Local residents and area residents)**

**Key Strategy:**

*Create a brochure that lists the regular annual events. It should not only list the event, but also include a couple sentences describing each event, the month or particular weekend/week of the year when the event is held, and contact information.*

*This brochure should be distributed at the same locations as the main promotional piece and may originally be combined.*

**Strategy:** *Through Downtown West Plains, Inc. provide the downtown merchants with business procedure educational programs concerning retail promotion development such as discount cards, surveys, small gifts, special events, and group promotions with merchants packaged together.*

**GOAL:** Increase the percentage of downtown businesses that are open in the evenings and on weekends, especially during special events. **Target Markets: PRIMARY (Downtown Business Owners)**

**Strategy:** *Develop an incentive for shop owners to extend their hours, such as cooperative advertising or a special event. Seminars hosted by Downtown West Plains, Inc. concerning the value of extending business hours could be helpful.*

**GOAL:** Increase the percentage of local residents who are aware of products and services available to them in downtown **Target Markets: PRIMARY (Local residents)**

Key Strategy:

*Adapt the current newsletter, "Open Line" so that it serves to notify all residents of downtown events through a downtown-oriented column or page. Currently the newsletter only covers city business and what is happening at City Hall.*

*To promote downtown, newsletter topics should focus on new dining and shopping opportunities, upcoming special events, feature stories on redevelopment projects taking place, and plans for the downtown.*

*The newsletter should also be used to direct people to the downtown West Plains website. The website would then provide more dynamic information. The current and past newsletters should also be available for downloading.*

Strategy:

*Create a downtown-oriented cable program to run on the city's cable channel. Currently the City videotapes and broadcasts on cable every city council meeting, which helps keep the community informed on what the City's plans are for downtown. An additional "News Brief" or "Downtown Highlights" show following the broadcast of the city council meeting could highlight things that are going on in downtown, including upcoming events, rehabbing of some of the historic buildings, and new shops and services locating in downtown. It can also highlight some of the entrepreneur opportunities and business advantages of downtown. A show of this type would be a tremendous asset to promoting the downtown to area residents.*

Strategy:

*Develop a steady, ongoing advertising campaign for downtown as a whole. Because*

*different target markets are reached more effectively through different communication channels, the advertising mix should include direct mail, print media, websites, radio, cable, and broadcast ads. Not all of these advertising media may be used, and some, such as broadcast television, should be used sparingly.*

*To be effective in changing the behaviors, attitudes and buying habits of target markets, advertising must be consistent and each ad build on impressions made by previous ads. Some studies have indicated that it takes an average of seven exposures to a message before the consumer fully internalizes the message. When too much time lapses between messages, the build is lost and you essentially start over with each message. One possible approach to obtain more product recognition for fewer dollars would be to implement several advertising blitzes during the year, rather than trying to maintain a constant, high level of advertising. A campaign of this type will necessitate a steady, reliable funding source. Without that, advertising becomes spotty, resulting in lost momentum and effectiveness.*

**GOAL:** Decrease the percentage of local residents who make trips to other communities for products and services they can get in downtown **Target Markets: PRIMARY (Local residents)**

Strategy:

*Launch a "Shop West Plains First" campaign. The campaign should use newsletter articles, posters, ads, website, and cable programming. One point that should be stressed is the actual cost of purchases made in other towns. Travel expenses add a significant amount to any trip.*

*Shoppers often neglect to include this amount when traveling for sales. If they are regularly reminded to and also made aware of shopping, dining, and entertainment options available in West Plains, they may decide to forego some out-of-town trips. Residents should also be reminded that taxes collected in other cities benefits that city and not West Plains.*

**GOAL:** Increase the percentage of local and residents who see downtown West Plains as a good choice of a place to go for fun and a desirable shopping experience.

**Target Markets: PRIMARY (Local and Area residents)**

Strategy: *Highlight the fun and uniqueness of visiting Downtown. The message will be that shopping in downtown West Plains isn't a boring, impersonal shopping trip, but a unique, rich experience.*

*West Plains will need to expand on the positioning statement noted in the DREAM Destination Assessment as "The Center of Ozark Heritage and Culture" and convey this to visitors to help add to the unique aspect of Downtown.*

Strategy: *Develop more entertainment in downtown. Music was a noted draw in the DREAM Community and Consumer Survey and will always complement an event.*

Strategy: *Allow activities on public property on a regular basis downtown such as licensed street vendors/performers and outdoor seating for restaurants.*

Strategy: *Encourage retailers to have special sales and events on the special entertainment days on their own and the value of greeting every*

*customer. Downtown merchants can be the best ambassadors for the entire city. These can also be topics for the Downtown West Plains, Inc. retail education initiative noted earlier.*

Strategy: *Designate evenings when local talent can come and perform in the downtown square. The square can be opened at specified times and days for independent concerts. Local musicians could set up at designated spots in the downtown, far enough away from each other so that the music from one musician won't significantly interfere with another musician.*

**GOAL:** Increase the percentage local and area residents who incorporate shopping, dining or leisure time into their trips downtown when they come for business purposes. **Target Markets: PRIMARY (Local and Area Residents)**

Strategy: *Encourage downtown shops and restaurants to target and offer downtown workers special discounts. Merchants should work with the major employers to develop downtown-wide promotions and worker specific events, promotions, or hours of operation.*

# festivals and events 2007 CALENDAR

Visit [www.historicstcharles.com](http://www.historicstcharles.com) for up-to-date information.



## APRIL

- 14 : HISTORICAL CHILDREN'S FESTIVAL  
First MO State Capitol, call 636-940-3322
- 27-29 : SPRING ARTWALK  
Downtown Saint Charles - Over 75 artists exhibiting on Main & in the Foundry Art Centre, enjoy music & flowers.  
[www.saintcharlesriverfrontarts.com](http://www.saintcharlesriverfrontarts.com)

## MAY

- 13 : FRENCHTOWN HOUSE TOUR  
Frenchtown - Tickets at Frenchtown Museum or Vivian's Vineyard
- 19 : ST. CHARLES IN BLOOM  
Local garden center booths and shops featuring their plant and garden related merchandise. Come enjoy the colorful spring flowers.

- 19-20 : LEWIS & CLARK HERITAGE DAYS  
Frontier Park - Authentic reenactment of Lewis & Clark's encampment in 1804, including a parade with the Fifé & Drum Corps. Walk through encampments, demonstrations of weapons, boat replicas, museum tours and 19th century crafts.  
[www.lewisandclark.net](http://www.lewisandclark.net)



## JUNE

- 9 : FLEUR-DE-LIS FRENCH MARKET  
North Second St. - Local artisans, food & drinks, bands and car show.  
[www.HistoricFrenchtown.com](http://www.HistoricFrenchtown.com)
- 16 : DOG DAYS OF SUMMER  
North Main - Vendors, contests, prizes and other events for you & your 4-legged friend.
- 18-22 : KATY TRAIL RIDE  
Route runs from Clinton to Saint Charles.  
[www.mostatereparks.com](http://www.mostatereparks.com)

## JULY

- 3-4 : RIVERFEST 2007  
Frontier Park - This Independence Day celebration includes fireworks, food & beverage booths, beer garden, live music, a parade, carnival rides & more.  
[www.stcharlescity.com](http://www.stcharlescity.com)

## AUGUST

- 17-19 : FESTIVAL OF THE LITTLE HILLS  
Frontier Park & Main Street - Friday 4pm-10pm, Saturday 9:30am-10pm, Sunday 9:30am-5pm. Largest festival of the year, draws over 300,000 visitors and includes over 300+ craft booths; also food and beverage booths, live music & other entertainment.  
[www.festivalofthelittlehills.com](http://www.festivalofthelittlehills.com)

## RECURRING EVENTS

**GREATER ST. LOUIS RENAISSANCE FAIRE**  
mid-May - mid-June (Saturdays, Sundays, & Memorial Day) Wentzville, MO - Rotary Park  
Be swept into the 16th century with knights, village shops, and villagers, nobles & peasants, from 10-6pm daily. \$12 [www.atlenfaire.com](http://www.atlenfaire.com)

**FRIDAY NIGHT FLICKS**  
May - August (4th Friday of Month)  
1800 Block of N. 2nd - Family movie shown outdoors at 8pm. [www.HistoricFrenchtown.com](http://www.HistoricFrenchtown.com)

**MUSIC ON MAIN**  
May - September (3rd Wednesday of Month)  
North Main - Join us from 5-7:30pm for food, drink & a different band each month, bring lawn chairs - It's a party!

**SAINT CHARLES MUNICIPAL BAND CONCERTS**  
June - August (Every Thursday at 8pm)  
Frontier Park - 636-949-2590

**SAINT CHARLES COMMUNITY BIG (JAZZ) BAND**  
June - September (2nd Sunday of Month)  
Frontier Park - Music begins at 7:30pm.  
314-878-5296

**HOT SUMMER NIGHTS**  
May - September (4th Saturday of Month) & October 13, North Main - Each month a band is featured & restaurants serve menu & featured cuisine at tables along sidewalks & street from 5-11pm. Music begins at 7pm.  
[www.stcharlescity.com](http://www.stcharlescity.com)

**FRIDAYS IN FRONTIER PARK**  
June - August (First Friday of Month)

**FOURTH FRIDAY ARTWALK**  
September - November (4th Friday of Month)  
North Main - Meet the artists and view art on display at businesses along Main.  
[www.saintcharlesriverfrontarts.com](http://www.saintcharlesriverfrontarts.com)

The special events pages in St. Charles, Missouri's Visitors Guide include good descriptions of events along with other important information. (to left and below) The presentation would hold more appeal if more pictures of the events listed could be included next to the event information.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS CONTINUED...

## SEPTEMBER

8-9 : CIVIL WAR LIVING HISTORY REENACTMENT  
Frontier Park - Step back to 1860 with encampments of drill & camp life and battle reenactments, with over 400 re-enactors, and drilling demonstrations.

8 : BLUEGRASS FESTIVAL  
Frontier Park - Bluegrass, folk & bluegrass music is the focus for this evening event. [www.BluegrassAmerica.com](http://www.BluegrassAmerica.com)

8 : QUILTS ON MAIN  
Main Street - Hundreds of quilts displayed in businesses along Main.

11-16 : TOUR OF MISSOURI  
600 miles, 120 world-class sites, 6 days, 1 State. [www.tourofmissouri.com](http://www.tourofmissouri.com)

14-16 : MOSAICS - FESTIVAL FOR THE ARTS  
North Main - Artists from across the state sell & display art which include painting, sculpture, clay & jewelry; also food, music, kids village & Mouse Mia.  
[www.stcharlesmosaics.org](http://www.stcharlesmosaics.org)

16 : LEWIS & CLARK MARATHON AND HALF MARATHON  
[www.freedental.com/lewisandclark.htm](http://www.freedental.com/lewisandclark.htm)

19 : BLUES FESTIVAL  
North Main - Local musicians/pubs will feature various blues bands after 8pm; visit different locations all evening long.

22-23 : IRISH HERITAGE DAYS  
Main Street/Frontier Park - Come enjoy our Irish heritage celebration with music, storytelling, athletics, food, traditional crafts, and live Irish music in the evening.  
[www.irishstcharles.com](http://www.irishstcharles.com)

28-30 : OKTOBERFEST  
Frontier Park - Celebration of our German heritage includes a parade, German bands, food, beer, car show, & crafts.  
[www.stcharlesoktoberfest.com](http://www.stcharlesoktoberfest.com)



## OCTOBER

19-20 : STORYTELLING & GHOST STORIES  
For children of all ages - 2 days of storytelling including children & ghost stories at the Katy Depot.

31 : TRICK OR TREAT ON MAIN  
Enjoy a safe afternoon of trick or treating at various businesses for costumed children 12 yrs & younger, from 3-5pm.

## NOVEMBER/DECEMBER

3-4 : 3RD ANNUAL MISSOURI WILDLIFE ART FESTIVAL  
Foundry Arts Center - Includes indoor and outdoor activities such as a children's art exhibit, display carvings & wood carvings, a duck blind decorating competition and other outdoor sporting events. 11am-7pm on Saturday and 10am-5pm on Sunday. For more information call 1-800-975-2322 or email [conf@wildlifeart.com](mailto:conf@wildlifeart.com)

NOV. 23 - DEC. 23 : CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS  
Festivities include carolers, costumed Santas from around the world, choirs and more. Old-fashioned holiday shopping on Wednesday, Friday & Saturday until 5pm.  
[www.historicstcharles.com](http://www.historicstcharles.com)

NOV. 23 - DEC. 23 : CHRISTMAS & MORE  
Holiday happenings include holiday lights along Main Street and Frontier Park, concerts/venues at the Foundry Art Center, Frenchtown activities, dinner & events in the surrounding area, and more.  
[www.historicstcharles.com](http://www.historicstcharles.com)

NOV. 23 - DEC. 23 : TRAINS ON MAIN  
100-200 block of N. Main - Interactive 0-27 model train display with animatronic figures (weekends).

DECEMBER 1 : LAS POSADAS  
Mary & Joseph seeking shelter at the "inn" starts 5pm at Boone's Lick & Main and ends in Frontier Park with over lighting & carols.

Check online at [www.historicstcharles.com](http://www.historicstcharles.com) in early 2008 for dates for our annual events like *Fest de la Glace Ice Festival*, the family friendly *Maell-Casa Parade*, and the annual heritage festival, *Minuteman Tercentary*.



**OBJECTIVE 3: Identity Enhancement**

Develop a positive identity for downtown West Plains in the minds of local and regional residents.

**GOAL:** Brand downtown West Plains' identity through the development of a slogan/tagline/logo based on West Plain's primary positive, unique attributes.  
**Target Markets: ALL**

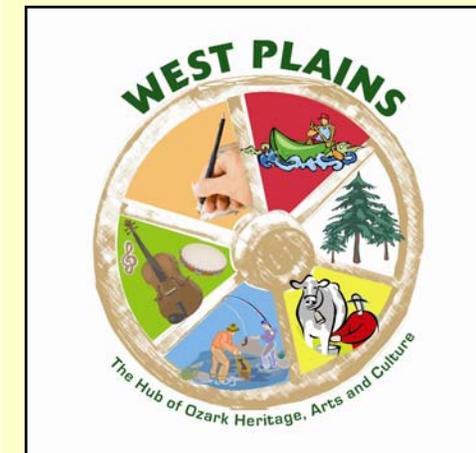
Strategy: *West Plains' most distinctive aspects are its Ozark heritage combined with its connection to the arts and Ozark folklore. West Plains is the location of the Harlin Museum in downtown, which houses not only a significant collection of area artifacts, but also the entire Lennis Broadfoot collection highlighting early-20<sup>th</sup>-century life in the Ozarks. West Plains also offers performing arts programs at the Civic Center and Missouri State University. Ozark Preservation, Inc., located in West Plains, recently hired a folklorist to help collect and preserve Ozark heritage in the area. These multiple aspects make it reasonable for downtown West Plains to position itself as "The Center of Ozark Heritage and Culture" as noted in the DREAM Destination Assessment. A potential slogan might be: The Hub of Ozark Heritage, Arts and Culture*

*A logo to support the slogan should suggest at least two of the three elements mentioned in the slogan. The logo should also be simplistic enough that it can be reproduced*

*on shirts and lapel pins without losing the essence of the logo.*

Strategy: *Reinforce the brand by making some aspect of Ozark heritage and culture ALWAYS evident when someone visits downtown. Reinforcement of the brand can be done through special events, banners, signage themes, or street furnishings.*

Strategy: *Develop a Visitors Center downtown that includes displays from the Harlin Museum and a gift shop featuring the work of local artists, musicians, and craftspeople. Books and other collectibles about the area of the Ozarks surrounding West Plains would also be appropriate for the gift shop.*



Potential West Plains logo.

**GOAL:** Increase the percentage of residents who feel downtown West Plains is moving in the right direction.  
**Target Markets: PRIMARY (Local and Area Residents)**

**Strategy:** *Maintain an aggressive, ongoing communication campaign to inform area residents about ALL the positive developments in Downtown West Plains. This should include city and state legislation that will help promote further improvements, new businesses, beautification efforts, infrastructure enhancements, special focus on individual renovation projects, etc.*

**Strategy:** *Draw comparisons between the progress West Plains is making and similar efforts that have met with success in other communities. These comparisons should be included in newsletter articles, in news releases, and articles posted on the Downtown West Plains website. The parallels between what West Plains is doing and what another successful community did need to be clearly communicated.*

**GOAL:** Decrease the negative perception created by vacant storefronts in downtown. **Target Markets: Local Residents, Downtown Business Owners**

**Strategy:** *Fill vacant store windows with large, colorful posters promoting the downtown or rent the window space in vacant stores as ad space for other downtown businesses. This would make the area seem more vibrant, even if there are several vacant.*

#### OBJECTIVE 4: Capitalize on Features

Increase West Plain's capitalization on several of its unique-appeal features.

**GOAL:** Achieve better capitalization on the tour groups that come to West Plains. *(Currently there are a number of tour buses that stop in West Plains to eat along the way, but they do not stay long enough to shop.)*  
**Target Markets: TERTIARY (Tourists)**

**Strategy:** *Create a list of the tour companies that come through West Plains on their way to Branson. Research the typical demographics of the people on the tour groups and the attractions the groups visit when they get to Branson. This information will provide an indication of the types of things and events that West Plains might develop to be of interest to these groups.*

**GOAL:** Increase the number of tourists and area visitors to the Harlin Museum. **Target Markets: PRIMARY & TERTIARY (Tourists, Local and Area Residents)**

**Strategy:** *Encourage expansion of the hours the museum is open and the development of a location on the Courthouse Square. In addition, ensure that at least portions of the Broadfoot collection is always on display at the museum.*

*A DVD concerning Broadfoot already exists. This DVD should be on a continual loop and played alongside the collection. The DVD should also be offered for sale with local merchants and periodically shown to schools and civic groups.*

*The museum has had school children come through in the past and there were people at the museum to act out the characters in the Broadfoot collection and lessons in charcoal drawing. These activities could expand as activity at the museum increases.*

*The museum should be promoted on the Downtown West Plains website, and it should be listed in the downtown promotional brochure (mentioned earlier) with its location noted on the map. The signs downtown for the museum should be more prominent. It should also be listed in the Things-to-Do brochure/booklet suggested earlier.*

*To interest more people in coming to the museum, it should be the venue for some portions of various special events the city hosts.*

**GOAL:** Increase West Plains' tourist appeal and regional draw of visitors by expanding current events and adding one new event annually that centers on West Plains' unique attributes. **Target Markets: PRIMARY & TERTIARY (Local and Area residents; Tourists )**

Strategy: *Revamp the efforts for the West Plains "Art on the Square" event. The idea was to get 100 local artists to display their work for a weekend. In order to get quality artists, high goals were set for entry into the event, and only about six artists applied for the event. While the first attempt to hold the event wasn't successful, it would be worth refining and trying again.*

*Until the event develops momentum and a reputation, it is advisable to lower the standards the first few years. Highly-established artists aren't*

*interested in a fledgling event, but less-established artists would probably welcome a chance for the exposure. To ensure a certain level of professionalism while not narrowing the resource pool too much, the exhibits for the show can be juried, but leave the qualifications for artist submission much broader. It's also important to allow for various genres and remember that art is highly subjective.*

*This event can be combined with a display of the Broadfoot collection. Maybe include character actors to represent some of the people Broadfoot sketched in his collection.*

Strategy: *Currently the Farmer's Market is held at the edge of downtown from April through December, and is a members-only market. It has a lot of potential, but seems to be falling short. Expand the Farmers Market into downtown and open it up to more vendors. Also, if other entertainment venues could be added they would make a visit to the Market fun, even if visitors don't go to buy produce. Entertainment that could be added would be music, a petting zoo, caricature sketches, street skits, etc.*

Strategy: *Create a fun, family-entertainment option for shopping downtown around Christmas time. The development of "living windows" in the shops around the square on specified weekend nights would include people posed in various Christmas scenes. Christmas music, either performed live or recorded and carolers dressed in old-fashioned garments would set the atmosphere. To set the downtown Christmas festivities apart from what shoppers would find*

at the malls, everything should tie to the historic nature and ambience of downtown. For that reason, it would be good to have an old-fashioned Santa there, rather than one dressed in a modern Santa Suit.

Visitors could also be given a card that must be stamped at different shops or locations around the square. Once shoppers have collected all the stamps, they would be eligible to drop the card into a drawing for a prize.

Limit the activities to Saturday evenings between Thanksgiving and Christmas. Once the event catches on in popularity with shoppers and participants, it could be expanded to possibly Fridays or other evenings in the week.

**GOAL:** Increase the number of visitors to West Plains' historic sites. **Target Markets: PRIMARY & TERTIARY (Tourists, Local and Area Residents)**

Strategy: Develop a self-guided tour pamphlet/booklet of downtown West Plains. Each historic building should be represented with a picture and a paragraph about it. The pamphlet might also have a suggested day's itinerary with things to do and places to eat. The information in this piece should include more than just when the buildings were erected, especially if a booklet version is created. It should include a bit about the people who built and have occupied the buildings. Any past pictures of the buildings and the people connected with them would

be interesting to add. While a pamphlet version should be available for free at Visitor Centers in the downtown, a small fee could be charged for the booklet. The pamphlet should be available for download on the downtown West Plains' website.

Strategy: Have a special section on the downtown website for historic points of interest. Also put the GPS coordinates of the locations on the website. Maintain some geo-caches at the locations for added interest. Also promote these geo-caches and GPS positions on the website.

**GOAL:** Increase the number of visitors at the Civic Center who go into downtown for shopping or dining. **Target Markets: PRIMARY & TERTIARY (All visitors to the Civic Center)**

Strategy: In addition to distributing the downtown promotional pieces as noted earlier, improved wayfinding should direct Civic Center visitors quickly to the heart of downtown. If a well-marked pedestrian pathway between the downtown square and the Civic Center can be developed, that would encourage visitors to the Civic Center to explore more of what downtown West Plains offers.

**GOAL:** Capitalize on the student population attending Missouri State University and their parents and alumni. **Target Markets: PRIMARY (Students attending MSU)**

Strategy: Improved wayfinding will assist university visitors similarly to the Civic Center and a similar pedestrian path could be developed.

Strategy: Students should be viewed as a downtown market, similar to the downtown workers. Merchants should be educated to provide special discounts and other promotions as already noted. In addition, there are outlets such as the college newspaper that a downtown business should use.

Strategy: A Downtown West Plains Ambassadors group could be formed to connect students into the businesses and activities downtown. The brochures, website, and other important campaigns that interface between activities at the university and the downtown businesses should become this groups responsibility.

**GOAL:** Actively promote downtown West Plains as an ideal retirement location. **Target Markets: Retirees, Baby Boomers nearing retirement**

Strategy: Conduct cost-of-living research and have this information readily available for promotion to tour groups and interested residents.

Once this information is in the hands of the public, they will be instrumental in disseminating it to friends and family members living in other states.

Strategy: Advertise the retirement advantages of West Plains in publications that appeal to the 50-

plus age group and encourage the development of living opportunities for this age group.

Strategy: Advertise to seniors who live within a 100-mile radius of West Plains, but in communities that don't have nearby hospital facilities. These people may already be coming to West Plains for medical services and shopping, and would be receptive to relocating to West Plains since it is familiar to them.

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# APPENDIX SWOT Analysis

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## West Plains Strengths

*According to focus group comments*, West Plains is described as a friendly small town where people feel safe, even in the downtown. West Plains also has a lot of natural beauty, with rolling hills, pastureland and cattle, lakes and streams, a strong regional medical center, and strong shopping district.

*West Plains can be promoted for its Ozarks beauty, small-town friendliness, and large-town health and shopping opportunities. These points should be used with the promotion of the city in general, and especially in the promotion of downtown when trying to attract businesses and residents. If community attitude surveys have been conducted that support the safety and friendliness statements, those statistics should be referred to in the promotions.*

According to the Chamber of Commerce, West Plains is the largest city in 100 miles. The estimated retail trade area is about 135,000 to 150,000 people. People come from surrounding towns for employment, entertainment and shopping. The main shopping areas in West Plains are downtown and the Southern Hills Shopping Center, which has Wal-Mart, J.C. Penney's and other chain stores. A new Goody's complex is going in near the Southern Hills Shopping Center and Porter Wagoner Blvd. also has larger stores.

*This provides a lot of potential visitors to downtown. The issue is making sure the visitors who come to West Plains from outlying areas know what is available to see and do downtown. Promotion and advertising of the downtown should be done around the medical center, Wal-Mart, the strip malls, and other shopping areas that attract a lot of visitors. These promotions can be through billboards, ads placed in grocery shopping carts (if grocery stores have that opportunity in that area), ads in restaurants and fast food establishments, etc. The point is, you're trying to steer into your downtown visitors who have already come to West Plains. If possible in those areas, it would be good to have kiosks that would have information about the downtown and direct visitors to it.*

*The ads should imply that visitors have "missed it" if they don't visit West Plains historic downtown. Visitors are more likely to respond if they feel like they may have missed an opportunity than if they are simply urged to do something. Possibly, there could be an ongoing theme to the promotion of "Don't miss it" and "Have you missed it?"*

*A promotion of this nature in the areas that already have a heavy draw could be a way to interest both locals and visitors to come to the downtown. It would also be a good way to create a buzz among locals and help them see downtown through new eyes.*

*It will also be important that a simple route to downtown be given in these promotions. Probably, the simplest thing would be to refer to it as being "a few blocks south of Bus Route 63, in the heart of historic West Plains." Once motorists get to Washington Ave., there should be a distinctive sign directing them to the downtown. It will also be imperative that this entryway into the downtown be made as appealing as possible. If visitors approach downtown from this promoted route and encounter rundown buildings and an uninviting area, they might decide to forgo the detour into downtown. At the very least, it will negatively color their perception of downtown.*

*Critical to the success of this campaign would be ensuring that the downtown is ready to be promoted as something people wouldn't want to miss. This means, the downtown must be an appealing place to not only shop, but also visit and experience. You don't want to promise more than you can deliver, otherwise people won't believe you with following promotions.*

Younger people are coming back to the area. People feel they can make a living in West Plains because of the many employment opportunities in and near it. The Medical Center employs over 1,500 people, Marathon Electric employs over 700 people, Bruce Hardwood flooring has more than 400 employees, and a truck manufacturing plant in the area employs more than 200 people.

*According to focus group comments*, West Plains is described as a progressive place with strong cooperation between city government and other entities, which makes development and change possible and positive. Groups felt a reason West Plains is moving in the right direction is the master plan and the cooperation between government and private entities. Very strong competitors have been willing to put competition aside to work together to really establish and accomplish goals. *The importance of this cooperative spirit can't be overemphasized. It will be equally important to guard it and ensure it isn't undermined by territorialism.*

*According to focus group comments,* West Plains is a very participatory community – a lot of people are really engaged personally with community activities.

*According to focus group comments,* the city has been able to do a lot with all the support of the people, especially in passing a tax increase or a bond issue. Officials have learned that if they go out ahead of time and show people what the tax extensions or increases will do for them, voters will generally support them. Groups commented that people must feel like the city's going in the right direction and they're satisfied with the leadership.

West Plains has a senior citizens center downtown and a high-rise senior facility across from the Civic Center. The residents of these facilities have become more a part of the community than they had been in the past, and as a result they are more supportive of tax issues. If the senior citizens perceive something is a good project, they're willing to support it.

Groups unanimously felt that West Plains is moving in the right direction, particularly in regard to downtown development. Specific things mentioned were the Civic Center, street repairs, building repairs, new streetlights, incoming sidewalks, the number of thriving businesses in the downtown Square, the cooperation of voters in tax increases to help downtown, and the willingness of City government to work with other organizations. There is a spirit of change, and people are interested in making West Plains a better place.

During the visit to West Plains, the overall friendliness of merchants was fair. None of the merchants were unfriendly, but most were not overly friendly either. Some visitors could consider the behavior bordering on aloof. Once engaged in conversation, however, all of the merchants became more friendly and quick to offer help.

*It might be a good idea to work with merchants to help them realize the value of making the first move to treat each customer in a welcoming, friendly manner. Many customers may be somewhat shy, and so won't make the extra effort to talk to the merchants and discover how friendly they really are. This doesn't mean, however, that they don't appreciate a warm, friendly greeting when they walk in the door and a pleasant goodbye when they leave. People do business with people they like. Sometimes customers will make small purchases just because they like the merchant. Since West Plains draws from such a large geographic area, there will undoubtedly be*

*people from outside the area who visit downtown shops, especially as more visitors are sent downtown from other shopping areas in town. Strangers to the area who are treated with a special kindness and appreciation when they visit West Plains' downtown will be much more likely to make return trips and to recommend to their friends that they visit downtown.*

West Plains' downtown is the home of the County Courthouse, which means it draws visitors from throughout the county. Focus group participants said reasons they visit downtown included going to the courthouse, the title company, shopping, restaurants, and visiting the Civic Center. According to the community survey conducted, nearly 50% of the participants said they visited downtown more than five times a month, and another 36% said they visited downtown between one and five times per month. That's over 80% of the population that is in the downtown at least once a month.

*It will be important to add amenities and opportunities that encourage people to linger in the downtown, rather than just run in and out for errands. Since many people run errands downtown on their lunch break, outdoor dining opportunities might be one good way to entice people to stay longer. There are already several types of shops that invite impromptu lingering of visitors, which include dining establishments, coffee bars, café, sandwich shop, and a bookstore just off the square. The more inviting the downtown becomes, the more likely it is these visitors will extend their business trips to downtown to include some leisure time spent there.*

East of the downtown square is the 300,000 square-foot West Plains Civic Center. With an exhibit hall, theater, meeting rooms, arena, aquatic center, and fitness center, it draws thousands of visitors every year. The Civic Center has a theater and is a giant entertainment option, with rodeos, monthly gospel concerts, and performances through MSU-WP performing arts grants.

*It is important to capitalize on the number of visitors the Civic Center brings into West Plains' downtown. Although the Civic Center is technically in West Plains' downtown, it faces the backs of most of the downtown buildings and visitors who are unfamiliar with the area would never know that only a thousand or so feet away is a charming historic downtown. Unfortunately, at this time there is nothing at the Civic Center visitors can pick up that would inform them on where the downtown is and what it has to offer. This is a serious missed opportunity. A kiosk with visitor information about*

*West Plains and its downtown would be good to place at the Civic Center. Its extended hours and proximity to downtown makes it an ideal place to provide information for visitors.*

SMSU has a campus complex on the western edge of downtown. The college has a 50-year plan and has developed everything west of the square. The fact that downtown is between the Civic Center on the east and the University on the west, and all three are within walking distance of each other, opens tremendous opportunities for West Plains' downtown. At this time, a walkway lit with old-fashioned lights is planned to extend from the campus to the Civic Center.

***According to focus group comments***, with all of the parking lots and public parking in the downtown area, there is probably room to park couple thousand cars pretty close to downtown. They are also expanding parking at the Civic Center and the Senior Center.

*If arrangements can be worked out between the city, SMSU and the senior center to allow at least portions of their parking area to be used during a special event, this would allow a sizable event to be held in the downtown square and still accommodate the parking needs. Also, if it is a very large event, it would be worth exploring the possibilities of running a shuttle between the downtown and one of the shopping areas in downtown. If the event is likely to attract quite a few visitors, shopping malls sometimes are very willing to supply some of their parking area for shuttle service, since that means visitors will definitely be coming to their mall.*

There are three churches just off the Square, which means there are a lot of people in downtown on a Sunday.

*To take advantage of these regular Sunday visitors to downtown, one Sunday afternoon a month the shops could be open from noon until 5 p.m. A possible promotional tool shops could use on these Sundays would be an extra discount for people who present their church bulletin at the time of the purchase. This would help motivate people who are already in or near the downtown to stay and shop for a while. Gospel music concerts held in the downtown on these Sundays would provide a good draw on these days.*

The genealogy library is located six blocks from downtown.

*This would tie well with a Founders' Day celebration, the Harlin Museum, and the Broadfoot collection. Also, since a folklorist has been hired to work with Ozark Preservation, Inc., the genealogy library would provide a good tie in with that. West Plains is in a good position to become a showcase and preservation hub for Ozark art, folklore, etc. It's possible that MSU-WP would want to become involved with this type of approach. The Ozark angle would provide West Plains a distinction from other small towns that are using the arts to help revitalize their downtowns.*

The Harlin Art Museum is located in downtown and holds six art shows per year. In addition to Native American artifacts and items of historic significance from area residents, the museum houses the Lennis Broadfoot collection of charcoal drawings and biographies of the oldest residents of surrounding counties. The museum is owned and operated by a private foundation. In connection with the Broadfoot collection, it has had school children come to the museum for demonstrations in charcoal drawings.

There are benches in front of shops around the square. The square is attractive, which provides nice places for visitors to relax. Without green space or shade, however, it's questionable how well utilized the benches are.

There is already a full-time employee in place to manage the Welcome Center—the Welcome Center Director. The Director is also in charge of grant writing. This is a key position in the promotion of West Plains.

*To ensure optimum results and avoid duplication of efforts, it will be imperative that there is collaboration between the Welcome Center Director, the Chamber of Commerce, and Downtown West Plains, Inc. Among other things, the collaboration could include grant opportunities and application, cooperative advertising, promotional brochure development, etc.*

The Ozark Heritage Welcome Center is located at the northern edge of town and provides a good distribution center for information about West Plains. The Center is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, and from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturdays. Unfortunately, it is closed on Sundays, but it does have an outside location where after hours people can obtain a map, *Visitor's Guide*

and day-tours brochure. Information is also distributed to local hotels, but it's not always put where it is readily noticed.

There are a significant number of organizations in the city that work to promote various aspects. These organizations include: Ozark Heritage Welcome Center, Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development Corporation, Missouri State University, West Plains Civic Center (managed by the city), Ozarks Radio Network, KHOM and the Point Radio, West Plains Daily Quill, Optimists Club, Southern Missouri Home Builders, and the Local Arts Council.

*These organizations can be a tremendous asset to marketing West Plains' downtown, but it will be important to supply them quality and timely information on a regular basis in order to maximize their potential benefit. A marketing plan that recognizes these organizations' role is needed to ensure the best advantage is taken of the opportunities these organizations offer.*

There is WiFi at the Downtown Antique Mall and through the whole downtown square. People need an account to hook into it, however.

*It would be nice if the WiFi could be set up so that anyone dining or relaxing in the downtown square could access it, similar to what is offered in most coffee shops. Some cities (the city of St. Peters, MO is one) have begun offering free WiFi in their parks. This amenity would provide a good incentive for people to come downtown during long lunches, breaks from seminars at the Civic Center, etc. They could relax downtown and still access important e-mail messages or even work from their laptops.*

There are a lot of outdoor recreational opportunities in West Plains. The outlying areas have good hunting grounds, the lakes and the rivers provide fishing and canoeing recreation. The natural beauty of the area also provides prime camping opportunities.

*Many of these types of outdoor recreational opportunities makes West Plains an ideal retirement community, which works well with the idea of putting loft apartments in the downtown. These will be good amenities to promote when marketing to potential retirees.*

West Plains is home to the second largest dirt racetrack in the country and attracts about 10,000 people on its biggest weekends.

*This is a lot of visitors coming to West Plains. It's important to ensure*

*there are good promotional materials, ads, etc. for the downtown in the places these visitors typically frequent on their visits.*

The Opera House has banquets and some performances. It is nicely restored upstairs and down. It contains a large banquet room with a balcony and also offers small office spaces.

The Avenue Theater is located downtown. It is an old theater that has been restored and turned into a performing arts theater.

There are numerous restaurants in West Plains, many in Downtown. Options include fine dining, casual dining, chain restaurants, Mexican restaurants, Chinese restaurants, and a coffee shop.

Business owners cited the low cost as a major reason they chose to locate their businesses downtown.

*The beauty and affordability of downtown provide good incentives to entrepreneurs. This is especially true if business owners can live above their businesses. This needs to be included in promotions to bring more businesses into downtown.*

Business owners indicated that they might support a "special business district" tax, although they felt that property owners would likely support a sales tax while shop owners would tend to support a property tax.

There is a good mix of shops and services downtown, with things that would appeal to locals as well as tourists. One thing missing, however, is a grocery store. (addressed in the "Weaknesses" section of this SWOT analysis)

The downtown is fairly well filled in, without a concentration of vacant storefronts in any particular area. This gives the downtown a broader feeling of viability. In addition, the downtown shopping area is fairly compact and can be navigated on foot.

A business incubator is planned for the Butler Building, which will encourage new businesses to located downtown. The incubator will also bring more people into downtown to work on a daily basis. Phase 1 will open in the spring of 2008, and will be for education and training. Its classes will also be open to other businesses in the downtown. Fiber optic cable is available at the incubator, and an entrepreneurial suite for online business ventures will also be

included. (MSU-WP offers an Associate degree in Entrepreneurship and classes from that will be part of the business education offered at the incubator) The first floor will have office and retail, also light manufacturing. Grants and an architect have already been acquired. Promoters are putting together funding for about \$1.5 million and will need to put together additional funding for the remainder – about ¾ million. NAP credits are expected to pay for it.

*With the classes in entrepreneurship, this business incubator presents a unique opportunity to people wanting to start a small business. Since businesses today must also compete with online businesses, it would be good to offer downtown businesses training in online marketing and how to expand their businesses to include online sales. Although entrepreneurship courses from MSU-WP are going to be part of the requirements for businesses locating in the Butler building, a review of the course listings for the college's AS in Entrepreneurship didn't readily identify classes that would help in this area. (it's possible it would be covered in Marketing & Sales)*

West Plains has already developed several strong special events. The second Saturday of every month, a Second Saturday Stroll event is held downtown. The event includes musicians, people making balloon animals, etc. It has a good draw for crowds, with about 90% of the visitors from the local area.

*Events with a strong local draw are highly desirable because they make area residents more aware of what is in their own backyard and encourage them to think of shopping downtown more often. Locals can provide a steadier flow for retail. Tourism is good, but it has more fluctuations as an income source.*

Another event is the Old Time Music Festival, which features old-time music exclusively. This event has an attendance of about 3,000 to 4,000, but the last time it was held, estimates were over 10,000. This event attracts an older crowd with nothing for the children and generally not interesting for people under age 30.

*It might be good to incorporate the Harlin Museum and Broadfoot collection into this event. Since the event attracts a lot of visitors, it is an opportunity to expose and interest visitors in the museum and the collection, and possibly generate later visits to West Plains. One way to broaden the appeal of the event would be to include folktales and old-time crafts and games with the event. This would bring young families to the event and help expose them to the roots of life in the*

*Ozarks. This would be an especially good fit if West Plains develops a position as a regional center for Ozark art and folklore.*

West Plains' annual Home and Garden show hosts approximately 120 booths, and is the largest home and garden show in southern Missouri with about 3,000 to 4,000 visitors attending.

A Farmers' Market is held every week on Saturday morning.

In July the Colgate Country Showdown Regional Competition is held in West Plains. Another music-based event is the Heart of the Ozarks Bluegrass Festival. Although this is a popular annual event for West Plains, it is held two miles from downtown.

*It would be good to try and tie some venues with the Bluegrass event to the downtown. Also, it is important that information promoting the downtown is on display and readily available in the area where visitors attend this event.*

An annual Car show is held downtown. Approximately 1,000 people attend this event.

The area around the downtown square is in good condition and investments have already been made in both the infrastructure and buildings. The city put \$800,000 of TIF money downtown, which went to lighting, benches, planters, and sidewalks. In addition, there are quite a few business owners who already have or are in the process of making renovations to their buildings.

*This is a great start and will help encourage further progress in the downtown. It will be important to make sure all downtown business owners feel like they are part of a team that will lead the downtown in a different direction for the benefit of everyone. There is a danger that some of the business owners who led the effort in revitalizing downtown and possibly didn't get as much outside financial assistance to make the improvements will begrudge special assistance to downtown business owners wanting to make improvements now. They might feel like, "I didn't get any help with my improvements, why should they get help?" A special newsletter for downtown business owners might help everyone understand and stay focused on the importance of continuing the revitalization, even if it means some businesses receive more assistance than others.*

The window displays of most shops are attractive and most upper-

story windows are covered with either blinds or curtains. These factors make the area more appealing and appear more vital.

Sidewalks around the courthouse square are in good repair. As one goes out immediately from the square, there are no noticeable problems with sidewalks that would cause difficulty for pedestrians.

The City videotapes and broadcasts on cable city council meetings, which helps keep the community informed on what the City's plans are for downtown. Copies of the tapes are also available.

*It would be good if a brief program that summarizes the downtown plans and progress could be produced and aired on the cable channel also. It wouldn't need to be long or produced more often than every couple months, but it would provide a concise focus on the downtown. It's possible students at the college would be interested in working on a program such as this as part of their class work. Also, it would be good to make both these program tapes and the council meeting tapes available for checkout through the public library so people without cable service have access to them. Doing this would also allow people who don't know how to set a VCR to tape at certain times the convenience of watching the programs at times convenient to them.*

Downtown proponents use different media avenues to let people know what is going on. There is a weekly radio show and they have liberal access to the local newspaper, which is astoundingly well read. News releases are sent on a regular basis and the local papers are good at picking up the releases. In addition, the Chamber provides a good information outlet. Its Web site has weekly information about downtown and what is going on there.

The city prints a quarterly newsletter called *Open Line*, which goes to anyone who gets a utility bill. Currently, however, it mainly covers city business and what is happening at City Hall. It doesn't carry much about events.

*This is an established communication avenue that can be better utilized to help revitalize downtown. Since the DREAM community survey indicated more than 50% of residents didn't feel revitalizing downtown was a priority, a city newsletter that goes to all residents can be an extremely valuable tool in changing residents' attitudes and habits. Also, focus group comments indicated that people*

*currently give city government high approval ratings; consequently, articles concerning downtown in a city newsletter would carry a lot of influence.*

The *Visitor's Guide* has listing of restaurants, antique shops, and map of city with points of interest identified.

## West Plains Weaknesses

There is a lack of grocery shopping near downtown, which is a slight drawback for people considering downtown loft apartments. Most of the grocery shopping is in the southern portion of town. At this time, however, it's doubtful that the population surrounding Downtown could support a traditional grocery store.

*A mini grocery could be located Downtown if not a traditional store.*

**According to focus group comments**, on Monday nights there is nowhere to eat downtown. This is a drawback for not only people visiting downtown, but also for people who would consider moving into downtown. The Civic Center is located at the edge of downtown and the events held there continually bring people into downtown, potentially restaurant customers.

**According to focus group comments**, one problem with downtown is that there are no high-volume retailers, such as a grocery store, to generate significant sales tax revenues.

*At this time, a special sales tax would supply a steady supplement to help market the downtown. In addition, as the commerce in the downtown grows, the sales-tax revenue will increase.*

**According to focus group comments**, right now a lot of the space in the downtown square is taken up by offices, leaving less room for retail facilities that might attract shoppers.

*While offices occupy buildings and place workers in downtown, they do not encourage visitors to linger and shop. A well-balanced mix of retail and services is important.*

**According to focus group comments**, there is no ATM in Downtown. Some people will decide against making some types of purchases if they aren't able to readily get cash when they are downtown.

*A bank should be encouraged to place an ATM in downtown near the Civic Center.*

The business hours of many Downtown shops are extremely inconvenient to today's typical shoppers. In addition to closing early Monday through Saturday, many of the shops are closed on

Sundays. This means during prime hours and days when people are more likely to shop, there's very little open downtown.

**According to focus group comments**, improved business hours are a priority in improving the user-friendliness of downtown.

*While it is difficult for a small shop to stay open long hours, flexible business hours could help the situation. It would be good if one night of the week at least the majority of the businesses could agree to stay open until 8 p.m. If mornings seem to be a busy time for some shops, they could be open a few hours in the morning and then close until about 3 p.m. in the afternoon. Then they could be open from 3 p.m. until 8 p.m. or later. The important thing would be that if shoppers come to the downtown on one of these designated evenings, there will a variety of shops open to them.*

*These evenings could be promoted as "Downtown Nights." It would be good if retailers could offer special sales or promotions on those evenings to further lure shoppers into downtown and away from the chain stores. Also, during the summer months, if there could be music in the downtown or other entertainment options on these nights, it would make a trip downtown more of an entertainment activity and draw more people. Friday evenings might be a good evening to start this practice, especially if there will be entertainment options included. Later, once shoppers begin to catch onto visiting downtown in the evening, the evening hours could be expanded to a second evening of the week.*

*For Sundays, a good start would be if one Sunday afternoon a month the shops could be open in the afternoon, possibly from noon until 5 p.m. With several churches located in and near the downtown, there are a number of people in the downtown area on any given Sunday. Afternoon Southern Gospel concerts in the downtown would provide a good draw on these days. A possible promotional tool shops could use on these Sundays would be an extra discount for people who present their church bulletin at the time of the purchase. This would help motivate people who are already in or near the downtown to stay and shop for a while.*

Many of the merchants are comfortable with the amount of retail they have and don't care to grow. This attitude is reflected in their lack of willingness to stay open later, even when large events are held downtown. Some festivals held downtown have caused a backlash from some merchants because they didn't know how to

deal with large numbers of people who might just be looking and not spending money.

*Business owners need to be educated on the value of people looking even when they don't buy, and how that can later translate into sales. Also they need to understand that stagnation eventually leads to the death of a business. Some business owners may be afraid of growth because they don't know how they would handle it. This will be something that can be addressed by the educational component of the small business incubator.*

There are complaints about lack of parking in downtown, especially on court days. Business owners, store employees, and courthouse employees sometimes take all the spaces on the street. It is likely, however, that much of this problem is perception. There are multiple parking lots behind buildings in downtown. Many people, however, don't know about the lots, or don't know if they are for public or private parking. Many of these lots are also in poor condition, with little or no lighting, full of potholes, and in some cases unpaved. People feel like they are parking closer if they can see the front of the store from their parking space. Often they will have to walk just as far when they park at Wal-Mart, but because they can see the front of the store, they think they are closer.

*Signs are needed in the downtown that will direct people to additional public parking spaces.*

*The condition of the parking lots should also be addressed. If they are made attractive, people would mind less about parking in them. In addition to paving them and making sure the surface is in good repair, it would be good to add trees, flower boxes, and other beautification factors to the parking lots.*

*Since the parking lots are in the back of many of the downtown businesses, it would be advisable to encourage these businesses to dress up their back doors and allow shoppers to enter their shops from the back as well as from the front. If people can see an attractive entrance to a shop from where they are parked, they might not perceive the distance as being quite as far. Shopping malls are set up this way so that people can come in multiple doors, but never feel like they had to park too far away.*

*All improvements to parking should be well publicized.*

**According to focus group comments**, parking in the Square is dangerous. It's hard to back out of a parking spot because people treat it as a thoroughfare, when it's really a parking lot.

*If people are worried they will get hit backing out of a parking space on the square, they might be less likely to come downtown for leisure shopping. If the parking lots in downtown are well marked and made attractive, people might prefer that alternative to parking directly on the square.*

**According to focus group comments**, in addition to not being open in the evenings, some businesses put up signs such as "Be back in 15 minutes" during normal business hours. This inconsistency causes people to not want to waste their lunch hour going downtown, only to find out the shop isn't open.

*Business owners need to be made aware of how damaging these types of actions are for downtown. One way to educate business owners on these types of things is through a newsletter specifically for downtown businesses. The newsletter can address not only poor business practices, but also provide special event dates and business opportunities with them, positive business suggestions, information about funding opportunities for façade refurbishing, legislation that concerns downtown business owners, and other matters of interest.*

**According to focus group comments**, restaurant hours downtown are inconvenient. Some restaurants close fairly early—around 8:00 or 9:00 pm. After many Civic Center shows, there is no place to eat downtown. Coffee shops or bakeries often open at 10:00 or 11:00 a.m., making it hard for people to stop for a cup of coffee.

*These are a lot of missed opportunities to bring or keep visitors downtown, where they will spend money. Possibly one or two of the downtown restaurants could work with the Civic Center and stay open later on evenings when there are later productions. In addition, if in the program these restaurants could put a coupon offering a percentage off an order on the evening of the production, it would not only let the patrons know that there is an open restaurant nearby, but it could also encourage impromptu visits. This would make it more worth the restaurant's time to stay open late.*

Signage directing visitors to the downtown from the main routes into West Plains is poor. Motorists have to be close to downtown before they begin seeing any signs. Also, there is nothing around the

medical center and hospital directing visitors to downtown. The medical center draws people from all around the region and has a Hospitality House where out-of-town patients and their spouses can stay during radiation and chemo treatments. Many of these patients and/or their families might enjoy visiting downtown for an hour or so during their stay.

**According to focus group comments**, it's hard to get around West Plains or to give directions because nothing is straight or square – the roads change names four or five times, and sometimes you don't know they've changed.

*Signs directing visitors into downtown are needed along every major entrance to West Plains, especially entrances that lead into the current primary shopping areas. Since West Plains is a retail center, it draws many shoppers from outlying areas. If they were made aware of West Plains downtown and how to get to it, these shoppers might be encouraged to shop downtown.*

*In addition, it is important to work with the hospital to get information into the hands of patients' families. Printed brochures with a list of shops and a map showing how to get from the hospital to downtown could be placed at the hospital's information desk and/or with the hospital's concierge.*

It's very hard to see the signs directing visitors to the Harlin Museum.

*If West Plains develops more identification with the arts, the museum will play an increasingly important role in attracting visitors to the downtown area since it houses the Broadfoot collection. The signs for the museum should be more prominent and more numerous.*

**According to focus group comments**, it's been difficult to get downtown merchants to cooperate on advertising. An example of this is the Second Saturday Stroll. Some merchants have started staying open later, but refuse to contribute to the advertising costs.

*One of the things that draw businesses to locate near busy retail centers, such as Wal-Mart, is that they can cash in on the foot traffic these retail giants bring in through their huge advertising budgets. Small, individual retailers downtown, however, are very limited in the marketing dollars they can afford. This means they are usually unable to afford the frequency of ad placement needed to change the shopping habits of a target market. If an advertising co-op that*

*promotes all of downtown is created, it can give downtown merchants a better return for their advertising dollars.*

There is no single promotional piece for the downtown at the Welcome Center or located at any of the shops downtown.

*It would be good to have a printed piece that specifically promoted downtown. Such a piece should be easy to scan, include a map and a list of shops with their location, and be organized by interest areas. (i.e. antiques, clothing, etc.) —very similar to the types of maps you see at large shopping centers/complexes. If there is room, it would be good to also include a list of special events and at least a couple sentences about each event, in order to encourage return trips by visitors. That type of a brochure should be displayed and available at all of the shops in the downtown and at other locations throughout town. It should especially be at the Civic Center. That way, even if a visitor didn't stop by the Welcome Center, they would have an easy-to-use piece acquainting them what downtown has to offer.*

Although the *West Plains Visitor's Guide* refers to the city's historic downtown, it does not have a map of the downtown, nor does it show the location of the historic downtown on the city map included in the *Visitor's Guide*. Also, quite a bit of the *Visitor's Guide* is dedicated to information about mills, springs, rivers, and other points of interest that are located across a fairly wide region. Some of the points mentioned are even located in Arkansas. Since visits to these different attractions would undoubtedly send people away from West Plains, it's inadvisable to give them such prominence and so much space in the *West Plains Visitor's Guide*. Also, while many events are listed under the Calendar of Events, there are no descriptions with those listings. This is a missed opportunity to interest visitors in upcoming events and bring them back to the city. There are descriptions of several events in other locations of the *Guide*. Since the events are not grouped as events, however, it makes it difficult for someone to peruse the *Guide* and quickly comprehend the full scope of what special events are held in West Plains, when they are held, and what they are.

*It would be good to give more prominence to the city's downtown in the Visitor's Guide. The Guide should include a detailed map of the downtown with key landmarks and points of interest clearly identified. The city map should identify and label the historic downtown area and include one or two-sentence descriptions of*

*each of the primary special events.*

If visitors enter West Plains from the north on Hwy 63, the Welcome Center is at the outer edge of town. If visitors enter West Plains from the east or west along Hwy 160, or from the south on Hwy 63, there are no signs directing them to the Center.

*Visitors should be informed of where they can get information as they enter the city from any of the main routes. Because the information center is not centrally located, people entering from the south would have to travel all the way through town to reach it, which would be a deterrent. It would be good if visitors who enter the city from the south, east and west could be directed into the downtown for visitor information. Possibly a kiosk with maps and informational brochures could be placed in the downtown, or a satellite information center could be placed at the Civic Center.*

At City Hall, there are maps, a list of day tours, and other visitors-information pieces on display. This information, however, is mixed in with resident information on city services. This practice makes it more difficult for both visitors and residents to find the information they want. Also, the information at City Hall is only available Monday through Friday, during regular business hours.

*It would be more useful for visitors and residents alike if promotional and tourism pieces were separated from information on city services. Just putting them in different racks with signs on the top of the racks would be sufficient. It would also be useful to have a weather-proof information rack outside City Hall so people can pick up information after office hours or on weekends.*

When the consultant visited the Welcome Center, the information on West Plains was not concentrated in one place, but was scattered about the Center in different locations and mixed in with information about other areas. This makes it harder for visitors to comprehend what West Plains has to offer. The staff at the Welcome Center primarily promoted visiting the mills around the region, which sends visitors away from West Plains. When asked specifically about downtown, the staff said they didn't have anything on downtown. They also said they couldn't think of anything of historic interest when the consultant said she was particularly interested in history. (this is particularly disturbing since the Harlin Museum is located in downtown West Plains and it houses the Broadfoot collection, some Native American artifacts, and other items of historic significance)

*All of the West Plains information should be grouped together in one place to make it easy for visitors to gather information on the city. The information can also be mixed in according to interest areas with information about other parts of the region and state, but there should be one area dedicated to West Plains.*

*Also, while the staff at the Center worked hard to assist with suggesting activities, they clearly lacked important information about West Plains that would help them direct visitors into the city's downtown and to some of important places of interest. It would help if the Welcome Center staff members were provided a written list of talk points that were broken into interest categories. (i.e. arts, history, etc.) That way, anyone working there would be able to direct visitors to things in town that would be of interest. Without a written list, suggestions for what to see and do in West Plains are only as good as the worker's memory at that time.*

In the 2007 Community Survey conducted by the DREAM Initiative, only 42,3% of the participants placed a priority on revitalizing downtown. This means the majority of West Plains residents at this time don't view revitalizing the downtown as a priority and probably would be less likely to support publicly-funded expenditures on it.

*A multi-faceted education campaign is needed to help locals understand how a healthy downtown helps everyone, not just downtown business owners. In addition to news releases, a Web site and information in the city newsletter that highlights downtown will be important components of this type of campaign.*

The Civic Center receives lots of visitors, but at this time, there is nothing there to hand out that will steer these visitors into downtown.

*A kiosk with visitor information about West Plains and its downtown would be good to place at the Civic Center. Not only is the Civic Center located at the edge of the downtown, but it also has extended hours, which makes it more convenient for visitors.*

Although there are benches around the Square, there is no green space that would invite visitors to linger in the area. Without inviting areas in downtown, people are more likely to stay only as long as it takes them to conduct their business. At the time of the consultant's visit there were not outdoor cafes that would invite dining and extended lingering. The more time people spend in downtown, the

more likely they are to spend their discretionary dollars there.

*Even just a few small tables set outside of sandwich and coffee shops provide strong invitations for visitors to relax and linger in the downtown on nice afternoons. Add to that a little green space, flowers/plants and some shade, and you have turned downtown into a fun place to visit, not just a place where you quickly run in and out to attend to necessary business.*

West Plains has a beautiful Civic Center that attracts thousands of visitors for meetings, conferences, conventions, and special events. However, when visitors come out of the Civic Center, they are greeted with a view of the backs of unattractive buildings and a lot filled with semi-trailers. These factors give visitors a poor impression.

*Since so many visitors come to the Civic Center, more needs to be done to make the downtown's view from it appealing.*

Although downtown has been significantly improved, many of the areas leading into downtown appear rundown and are uninviting. This can turn visitors off from wanting to continue into the downtown and shop there. The area along the railroad track on the opposite side from downtown looks bad and needs to be cleaned up.

*It will be important to pay attention to the primary entrances to downtown, and areas immediately adjacent to downtown. When people consider investments in real estate, they pay almost as much attention to the appearance of the approaches to the property as they do to what immediately surrounds the property. It will be difficult to successfully market the downtown if the approaches and nearby surrounding areas are deteriorating.*

Although the facades of most buildings around the square are attractive and well maintained, the shops located along little side wings on square look a little more neglected.

*It is important to ensure façade improvements extend into those areas also. These little side arcades offer good opportunities for setting up outdoor dining, and interesting spots for visitors to relax.*

Windows of vacant buildings aren't well utilized. Some are just empty, others are covered with yellowed newspapers.

*Vacant store windows could be filled with large, colorful posters*

*promoting downtown. This would make the area seem more vital, even if there are several vacant stores.*

The current downtown logo is the turret on the Zorn building. Unfortunately, the Zorn building appears vacant and is falling into disrepair. This makes a bad impression when the city is using the most recognizable part of the building as its logo.

*Because of the historic significance of the Zorn building, an ideal solution would be for the city to acquire the building and maybe turn it into a museum or something else where the city is in control of the condition of the building. If the city cannot gain control of the building or convince the owner to clean it up, it might be advisable to change the downtown logo to something else.*

The Yellow House Community Arts Center is listed in the *Visitor's Guide* as a point of interest. The house, however, is somewhat in disrepair with paint peeling in places and the windows on the second story in disrepair and missing a screen.

*It is important that the facades of the buildings specifically listed in the Visitor's Guide are in good condition. You don't want to draw special attention to buildings that are in disrepair.*

Although its multilane highway access is improving, West Plains is quite a distance from an interstate highway. This makes it harder for West Plains to attract impromptu visits from motorists.

*West Plains will need to work more on becoming a destination and building its strength as a regional center.*

Although the Heart of the Ozarks Bluegrass Festival is growing and becoming more popular, it is held two miles from downtown. It likely has a limited impact on downtown.

*Since so many visitors come to this event, it will be important to leverage its popularity to encourage visits to the downtown and stimulate awareness of the downtown. It would be good if complimentary venues in the downtown could be added during the Festival. Also, promotional information about the downtown should be on display at the Festival location.*

## West Plains Opportunities

People travel through West Plains on their way from Springfield, MO to Memphis, TN or Tunica, MS. Hwy 63 is also a direct route between Branson, MO and Memphis, TN. There are already a number of tour busses along these routes stopping in West Plains to eat, but they don't stay long enough to shop. It would be good if the tour directors responsible for setting the itinerary of these tour groups could be provided information about particular events and points of interest in town that might appeal to these groups.

*The first step would be to create a list of the tour companies that come through West Plains. . . If there is a way to obtain from these tour groups the typical demographics of the people who go on the tours, and the types of things that the tour groups visit when they get to Branson, that would provide a good indication of the types of things and events that would interest these groups .Both printed information and personal contact will be needed to optimize the potential of convincing tour directors that West Plains is worth an extra couple hours of time along the tour route.*

*Since many of these tours will be going to Branson for Country Western music shows, events that feature that type of music or even the Old Time Music Festival are good events to promote to these tour directors. Elsewhere in the "Opportunities" section of this SWOT analysis, the possibility of allowing independent concerts around the square on specified days by local musicians is discussed. If that is done and catches on to the point that you can always depend on musicians entertaining on those days, this would be something good to promote to the tour directors.*

*Other events to promote to these tours would be events where local artists or craftsmen have displays set up in the square. This is especially true if the Broadfoot collection is on display at the Harlin Museum or in downtown.*

A downtown business incubator project can help move both more businesses and specifically-desired businesses downtown. A business incubator is already planned for the Butler Building (see "Strength" portion of this SWOT analysis).

*There may be ways to also create a virtual business incubator downtown in order to allow a better distribution of desired businesses. Some assistance and support could be given to preferred businesses, only the businesses would be in different buildings rather than in one building. One form of assistance would be to partially subsidize the rent for the first year, with the monthly rent based on a percentage of the business's gross receipts. The rental assistance could be done with an option to buy the building. The virtual incubator could also be set up so that local investors can buy shares in different businesses.*

*One suggestion focus group participants made was to put something of a food mall in the old Richard's food store downtown. The mall would include things like a bakery, candy shop, flower shop, etc. Another good fit in an establishment like this is a place where people can come to a location, pre-prepare several meals in one session, then take the packaged meals home with them. (see [www.letsdish.com](http://www.letsdish.com)) This is a new concept that has been growing in popularity. Putting in restaurants, coffee and sandwich shops, and gift shops across from the Civic Center might be another good option for making the downtown more appealing to visitors.*

**According to focus group comments,** participants felt strongly that small businesses should be encouraged and the City should inform potential business owners of loans, grants, and other possible funding for businesses. Another function of a business incubator, whether virtual or actual, could be to help prospective business owners find funding sources.

**According to focus group comments,** participants felt more downtown dining options would draw people.

*While expanded options can provide a draw to the downtown, it will be essential that the hours restaurants and shops are open are expanded also. This is important on nights when there are performances and evening events held at the Civic Center. Possible options for keeping specified restaurants open on these evenings and ways to direct Civic Center attendees to these restaurants are discussed in the "Weakness" section of this SWOT analysis.*

A lot of business comes to West Plains from northern Arkansas. According to the Chamber, West Plains is the largest city in 100

miles and has an estimated retail trade area of about 135,000 to 150,000 people.

*When special events are being held in downtown, it might be good to put up a marker board in these highly-visited areas with the announcement, "This week in downtown West Plains." That way when visitors and residents are doing their regular shopping, they will know if there is something special going on downtown.*

When the consultant visited downtown, one coffee shop had a promotional card that offered free coffee after a number of purchases. Other merchants may have had similar offers, but the consultant didn't encounter any other of these on her visit.

*It would be good to encourage more merchants to utilize these types of promotional tools. These are good tools to promote return visits to the downtown area. Another possible promotional tool would be to create a brochure with discount coupons in it for the different merchants, similar to what one generally finds at outlet malls. Representation in the brochure could be tied to membership in a downtown merchants' promotions group. The brochure would then be made available at the participating merchants in the downtown, at the Welcome Center, the Civic Center, and other locations around West Plains where the downtown is to be promoted.*

The Civic Center hosts a variety of events, including Grizzlies games, school plays and shows, and music shows. Thousands of visitors come to the Civic Center annually.

*With thousands of visitors already coming to the Civic Center, it's important to capitalize on this advantage and attempt to move them into the downtown. Promotional information on downtown should be prominently displayed at the Civic Center. A kiosk might be a good option to accomplish that. To keep the area from becoming cluttered with too much information, the printed pieces should be held to a minimum. Recommended pieces would include a downtown map with a list of shops and restaurants, a brochure with promotional coupons/ads for downtown businesses, and an informational piece that includes special events planned for downtown. (Promotions at the Civic Center is discussed further in the "Strengths" section of this SWOT analysis)*

Some cities hold noontime brown bag concerts by local talent to encourage people to come to the downtown for lunch. This would

also work if there were designated evenings when local talent can come and perform in the downtown square.

*The square can be opened at specified times and days for independent concerts. (possibly from noon until 2:00 p.m., and then again from 5:00-8:00 p.m.) Local musicians could set up at designated spots in the downtown to perform. These spots could be on a first-come, first-served basis, or booked ahead of time. Also, they should be far enough away from each other so that the music from one musician won't significantly interfere with another musician. (decibel limits might have to be set to avoid problems with some musicians wanting to blast their music out too loud.) It's okay and actually desirable to be able to faintly hear music from other areas of downtown. Dress and acceptable-behavior standards might also have to be established to avoid problems arising later with musicians that might be offensive to visitors.*

*Since there is a lot of local music talent, and if it is free for the musicians to perform, it's reasonable to believe that with time and some promotion this could become an ongoing feature of downtown. Music filling the downtown would attract people to downtown on those days and would also provide an incentive for tour buses to make longer stops in downtown. While this is something that might take a while to catch on with both musicians and visitors, with proper promotion it could provide a good draw.*

*While live performances are preferable and provide a better draw for visitors, playing music through speakers placed around the square could also help give the downtown more of a special feel.*

Downtown is associated with the Old Time Music Festival, which attracts large crowds. More activities are being added, including mule jumping and vendors selling home-made craft-type items on the square. This year they also had bigger-name groups playing. This event generally is not interesting for people under age 30.

*Since this event is already growing, it would be good to keep investing in the momentum of the event through broadening the appeal. One way to broaden the appeal would be to include folktales and old-time crafts and games with the event. This would bring young families to the event and help expose them to the roots of life in the Ozarks. This would be an especially good fit if West Plains develops a position as a regional center for Ozark art and folklore. Tying in the Harlin Museum and Broadfoot collection could*

*also provide a good fit. (the Old Time Music Festival is also discussed in the "Strengths" section of this SWOT analysis)*

West Plains recently attempted to hold a boat show, but attendance was not up to what was needed. If not too much time has gone by since it was held, it might be worth trying again. You need to figure on the first year not being very big, and give the event more time to catch on. You don't want to throw away a good idea prematurely.

*Look at how the event was promoted. Was there adequate lead time to identify the appropriate target markets and then get the message out? Was it promoted sufficiently, or in communication avenues that the target market was likely to use? Then look at when it was held. Was it in direct competition with larger or more established events that draw on the same target audience? Also, look at the target markets that would most likely be attracted to this type of event. What is its size and proximity to where the event was held?*

*After this analysis, determine if adjustments can be made that would give the event a better chance of success.*

*One issue could be West Plains' proximity to large lakes. The nearest large lake is Norfolk Lake, which is about 50 miles away. That could be a too far to attract boating vendors and enthusiasts. It might be a good idea to try to have a more inclusive sport show that would include river recreational boating and fishing. Hunting equipment would provide another good addition. With the amount of outdoor sporting opportunities in West Plains, broadening the event might be the key to drawing larger numbers.*

West Plains also tried to have an "Art on the Square" event. The idea was to get 100 local artists to display their work for a weekend. In order to get quality artists, high goals were set for entry into the event, and only about six artists applied for the event. While the first attempt to hold the event wasn't successful, it would be a good fit with positioning West Plains as a cultural arts hub for the Ozarks and is worth refining and trying again.

*In addition to going through the analysis outlined above, it would also be a good idea to lower the standards the first few years. The event needs to build momentum and a reputation before it can hold to high standards for entry. In addition, it would be good to combine this event with a display of the Broadfoot collection. Maybe include character actors to represent some of the people Broadfoot sketched*

*in his collection. Another addition would be charcoal line drawing demonstrations and classes, similar to what was done for school children at the museum.*

Another event that offers potential, but seems to be falling short, is the Farmers Market that is held at the edge of downtown from April through December. In its current location and under the current governing rules, the Market is dwindling.

*If the Market could be expanded and held downtown it might flourish. Vendor spaces can be identified and given on a first-come-first-served basis, reserved, or a combination of the two. (The Wentzville Community Club runs a flea market in this fashion, and then someone in a golf cart goes around the area about 8 a.m. and collects the booth rental from the vendors.) Also, if other entertainment venues could be added that would make a visit to the Market fun, even if you don't go to buy produce. Entertainment that could be added would be music, making balloon animals, caricature sketches, street skits, etc.*

With its historic buildings and atmosphere, downtown West Plains can provide fun, family-entertainment options for Christmas shopping and excursions that shoppers can't get at the malls.

*Creating "living windows" in the shops around the square on specified weekend nights would be good. The window displays would include people posed in various Christmas scenes.*

*Another thing that can be done at Christmas is to set a theme that tells a story, and then position character actors from the story at different locations around the downtown square and arcades. Create a flyer with a map to show where the different characters are located. Have the characters each tell their part of the story through interaction with visitors. Visitors can collect "trading cards" from the characters at each location.*

*Visitors could also be given a card that must be stamped at different shops or locations around the square. Once shoppers have collected all the stamps, they would be eligible to drop the card into a drawing for a prize.*

*Of course, Christmas music, either performed live or piped in with speakers, would help set the tone. Carolers dressed in old-fashioned garments would be a good touch.*

*To set the downtown Christmas festivities apart from what shoppers would find at the malls, everything should tie to the historic nature and ambience of downtown. For that reason, it would be good to have an old-fashioned Santa there, rather than one dressed in a modern Santa Suit.*

*Another option would be to work with churches in the downtown area to see if they would be interested in supplying the singers for a "living Christmas tree." With that, a platform structure is built in a pyramid, Christmas-tree shape and then covered with evergreen boughs and lights. During their performance, the singers stand on the platforms built into the tree.*

*It would probably be best to limit the activities to Saturday evenings between Thanksgiving and Christmas. Once the event catches on in popularity with shoppers and participants, it could be expanded to possibly Fridays or other evenings in the week.*

Hunting in the area is huge. Many people come to Central Missouri because the hunting is so good there. In addition, there are several rivers in the area for fishing and quite a few camp grounds.

*Events and contests built around these outdoor activities have a good chance of attracting crowds. These events can include fishing-lure, duck-call, and turkey-call, contests. Local craftsmen who carve or otherwise make these types of hunting and fishing aids would be good vendors to add to this kind of an event.*

The majority of the participants in the D.R.E.A.M. Initiative community survey gave a high-priority rating to improvements to make the downtown more pedestrian friendly. Consequently, it's highly likely that adding pedestrian trails and walkways through and connecting to downtown will have community support. The city already has walking trails along the railroad and Howell Creek, near the downtown. Connecting them to the downtown might encourage pedestrians to go into the downtown for refreshments.

Once the downtown is better connected with pedestrian paths, there will be natural places to add green spaces. Since the Harlin Museum is up the hill from the downtown square, a good feature to add would be a walkway and green space between the downtown square and the Museum. Focus group participants also suggested a waterfall in this area, which would make this an especially appealing area for visitors.

*Public information campaigns for these types of improvements will be important to show residents that improvements they have identified as important are being made. As residents see and are able to enjoy improvements in the downtown that they deem are important, they will be more likely to start understanding the importance of further revitalization in the downtown. They are also more likely to support funding initiatives when they know the money is going to something they feel is important. These types of campaigns need to be multifaceted and include newsletters, Web sites, news releases, ribbon cuttings, and other celebratory events. They should also be ongoing.*

There are plans to connect the university and the Civic Center to the Square with pedestrian paths, which will make it more convenient for visitors at the Civic Center to go downtown and students to go downtown between or after classes. Connecting the college to downtown via pedestrian paths will increase the opportunity to open and promote downtown businesses that appeal to students.

*One promotional option would be to offer students special discounts at downtown stores. Placing ads and promotional information in the college newspaper would be a good way to communicate with students. It's also possible that a student reporter for the college newspaper would be interested in covering the downtown happenings and developments as a regular beat.*

*Promotional information about the downtown should be placed at student-gathering places at the college, such as in the student center, cafeteria, lobbies, etc. Bulletin boards would also be good places to place promotional information. Since UM-WP is a two-year commuter college, it is highly likely the ages of its student population is widely diverse. (unlike four-year universities that primarily serve younger students who live on campus) While the above-mentioned promotional methods may be effective for students ages 30 and up, promoting downtown via interactive Web sites, blogs, and youtube.com would be good choices for younger students.*

*Suggestions on promoting the downtown at the Civic Center are address in the "Strengths" portion of this SWOT analysis.*

The West Plains' Genealogy Library is only six blocks from downtown. It would provide a good tie-in as part of a Founder's Day event, the Broadfoot collection, and any other event that focuses on Ozark history and folklore.

The old town spring is under the old Post Office, which is a church now. Currently there is clear Plexiglas over the spring, but it is still visible. There have been discussions on selling the church. If the church could be renovated to house a number of different types of shops that would appeal to tourists, it would be nice to open the spring more for viewing and turn it into a tourist attraction.

A lot of visitors who come to West Plains from neighboring areas go to gas stations, convenience stores, fast-food stores, and Wal-Mart, but they might also want to shop at some of the downtown specialty stores if they knew they existed. Workers at these places, however, often are unaware of the types of specialty shops that are located in downtown, and are unable to direct visitors there. Getting information to the frontline service workers in these locations could help direct visitors downtown specialty stores.

*Probably the most efficient way to do this will be through a printed piece that includes a map of how to get to downtown, a list of the shops in downtown along with their phone numbers, and a map of downtown. If room is available, a list of annual special events can be included. Frontline workers can be made aware of these brochures and direct customers on where they can find them. These brochures could be placed in racks at these stores and locations.*

The city prints a quarterly newsletter and sends it to all residents who received a utility bill; however, it is only used to inform residents on what is happening at city hall. It would be good to use it to promote events in downtown. Currently, local residents get their information about events and what is happening downtown via the radio, newspaper, Chamber of Commerce mailings, the Internet, and word-of-mouth. While these are all important communication avenues, they don't have the broad reach a city newsletter would provide.

*A city newsletter is an important tool that would be extremely beneficial for any communication/marketing campaign the city might undertake, because it will ensure residents get the information. In addition, to change attitudes and behaviors, the information needs to be more ongoing and consistent than can be accomplished when you are dependent on a news editor deciding whether and how to cover the information.*

With the number of historic buildings located in downtown, visitors might be interested in self-guided walking tours of the downtown.

*It would be nice if there was a printed, self-guided tour of downtown West Plains. Each historic building should have a picture in the tour pamphlet/booklet. The booklet might also have a suggested day's itinerary with things to do and places to eat.*

Both the Welcome Center and City Hall have information about West Plains, and are likely places people might seek information about the city. A little rearranging of the information available at both of these locations would make it more user friendly.

*At the Welcome Center, the information about West Plains was not concentrated in one place—it was scattered about with other information about other areas. It would be convenient for visitors to West Plains if there was a section devoted to West Plains. Duplications of the information could also be mixed with other areas according to interest.*

*At City Hall, maps, newsletter, a day-tours brochure, and the Visitors' Guide were on display, but mixed in with residential information on city services. This makes it a little more difficult for a visitor to find. Separating the visitor information from the resident information, and labeling the sections accordingly, would make it more user friendly for both visitors and residents.*

When the consultant visited West Plains, the volunteers staffing the Welcome Center were very friendly and tried to be helpful, but missed several important opportunities to promote the city.

*It would help if the Welcome Center staff members were provided a written list of talk points that were broken into interest categories (i.e. arts, history, etc.).*

When the consultant visited downtown, there were promotional brochures and information about West Plains available for visitors at the Downtown Antique Mall. The consultant, however, didn't notice any at other shops.

*It would be nice if the majority of the shops had a brochure that included a list of the shops in the downtown along with their addresses and phone numbers, and a map of the downtown. If room is available, a list of annual special events can be included. This could be the same brochure suggested earlier in this section for placement at Wal-Mart and other shops. Ensuring that most if not all downtown shops had the brochure prominently displayed and*

available would maximize the chance visitors will get the information they need to either make them want to stay longer or make a return visit. Although the Visitor's Guide has a lot of good information in it, it's not easy to scan and it takes a bit of time to go through all the information. A brochure, such as is described earlier, would provide a good supplement to the Visitor's Guide.

A Web site specific to downtown would provide good information about what is going on downtown and be a valuable promotional tool. In addition, it can be linked to the Civic Center and downtown businesses can link to the site.

With the Broadfoot collection, the Harlin Museum, the performing arts venues at the Civic Center and MU-WP, and the wealth of local musicians and artists in the area, West Plains is in a prime position to become a hub for cultural arts in the Ozarks. The Harlin Museum provides a lot of potential. It has significant collection of artifacts, especially relating to life in the Ozarks. It can provide a lynchpin in promoting West Plains as a cultural arts base for the Ozarks.

*Downtown sells locally-made traditional craft and artisan products, and the area has many artists who are maintaining studio space in their homes or don't have studio space. If an area in downtown can be provided where local artists can come and show their art, that might provided a good draw for visitors. A good example of that is the Foundry in St. Charles, Missouri, which has a number of studio spaces available for artists and also a large gallery where art shows can be held. (possibly the old Baptist church might be a good location for something like this) Some communities have added loft apartments and studio space for artists in their downtown as part of their effort to add residents and interest to their downtown. Spartanburg, South Carolina has an interesting program that brings beginning artists in and incorporates their help with promoting arts in the downtown. (see [www.hub-bub.com](http://www.hub-bub.com) –the A.I.R., artists in residency, program) Under a similar program in West Plains, possibly these artists could help with the Harlin Museum and a section of the gallery display would be for the current resident artist.*

Of special significance at the Harlin Museum is the Lennis Broadfoot charcoal drawings collection. The drawings, however, are not always on display and the the museum has short hours—Tuesday-Saturday, from noon to 4 p.m.

*It would be nice if the hours could be extended and if at least*

*portions of the Broadfoot collection could always be on display. Also, a DVD featuring the life and work of Broadfoot already exists. It would be nice if that could be on a continual loop and played alongside his collection, or even just a few portions of it played. Once the hours have been expanded, more promotions of the museum should be done. To date, it has not been promoted very much. The Museum can easily tie in with art events.*

*The museum has had school children come through in the past and there were people at the Museum to act out the characters in the Broadfoot collection. Then the children were given lessons in charcoal drawing and asked to copy Broadfoot's work. This would be a great thing to offer all visitors on Saturdays during the summer. Maybe start with only the first Saturday of the month, and then if it becomes popular, expand it. It would make downtown West Plains more of a tourist destination. On these Saturdays, there could also possibly be a play about life in the Ozarks held at the Avenue Theater. A single package price could be charged for admission to the museum, the lessons, and the play.*

A folklorist was recently hired by Ozark Preservation, Inc. to help collect and preserve some of the Ozark heritage in the area.

*It would be good to expand on arts, folklore, and Ozark craftspeople. It ties perfectly with the Broadfoot collection and thus sets West Plains apart from other cities in the Ozarks.*

Murals painted on the backs of buildings would be a way to make downtown more appealing, especially from the parking lots that are located behind many of the buildings. This is especially important with the backs of the buildings you see from the Civic Center. An attractive appearance from the backs that are visible from the Civic Center will invite visitors to the Center to explore the downtown further. Beautification of the backs of the buildings and parking lots could encourage people to feel safer parking there. In addition, the addition of murals throughout downtown would tie well with West Plains positioning itself as a cultural arts hub of the Ozarks.

Focus group participants indicated that the beautification efforts should focus on giving the downtown area a cohesive look and feel. Green space was a priority and suggestions included a small park downtown with benches and tables, more trees, planters, landscaping and some sort of stream or fountain.

*The survey indicated residents in general didn't give beautification of downtown high ratings of importance, it would be advisable to start the beautification efforts with something the general population can enjoy almost immediately. Park areas and places where families can enjoy the outdoors would be a good start and these types of improvements are usually favored by the population. It should be noted, however, that only 39% of survey participants rated green space in downtown as a high priority. Before significant city funds are spent on it, a public education campaign is strongly advised to ensure people understand the benefits of this.*

*Also, referring to these improvements as "increased recreational opportunities for residents" rather than "downtown beautification efforts" could help people accept the improvements more readily. It will be important to keep the public informed of these "increased recreational opportunities for families" so as to build momentum for other, more involved improvements, such as a fountain or waterfall. If the water features are privately funded, that should be emphasized to avoid public criticism over spending city funds on these types of improvements. The same is true if the improvements are financed by federal, state or private grant money.*

According to the community survey conducted, less than half of the participants rated the following downtown amenities as excellent/good: available green space, dining options, and entertainment options. This could indicate that residents would be more supportive of efforts to improve these aspects of downtown. (the exception could be with green space, since only 39% of the participants rated that as a high priority for the downtown) More than 60% of the participants rated casual dining as a high priority for the downtown. Other businesses that were rated as a high priority by 43-46% of participants were bookstores, upscale dining, clothing stores, and an ice cream/soda fountain.

*These numbers may indicate a high likelihood that the public would support these types of businesses. These statistics should be used in efforts to bring these types of businesses to downtown West Plains.*

## DEMOGRAPHICS

Real estate costs in West Plains are lower than both state and national averages. Based on a 2007 ESRI report the median home value in West Plains was \$107,813. In Missouri, the median home

value was approximately \$131,900 (2006 U.S. census data) and in the U.S it was \$185,200 (2006 U.S. census data). With lower housing costs and a regional medical center in town, West Plains is a good fit to be marketed as a good retirement area. Many people already have been drawn to West Plains from Mountain Home and the retirement community.

*It would be appropriate to advertise the retirement advantages of West Plains in publications that appeal to the 50-plus age group. This is especially true for the St. Louis and Kansas City metro areas. For the purposes of downtown, an emphasis on downtown apartment-living should be included. Building owners in West Plains are already seeing Baby Boomers becoming interested in downtown second-story apartments.*

*Another potential market would be seniors who live within a 100-mile radius of West Plains, but in communities that don't have nearby hospital facilities. These people may already be coming to West Plains for medical services and shopping, and would be receptive to relocating to West Plains since it is familiar to them. Good places to advertise to them would be around the medical center and at the shopping areas in West Plains. Ads placed in other community newspapers would also be a good way to reach them. This age group typically reads newspapers. Good selling points for them would be the ability to continue living in the Ozarks, still enjoy a friendly, small-town atmosphere, but at the same time live within minutes of excellent medical care.*

The campground just outside West Plains is 6,000 acres and can have up to 8,000-10,000 people staying at it. Huge influxes of them come into the Southern Hills area to shop. Steering even a fraction of them into the downtown holds tremendous potential.

*Placing billboards, ads, and promotional materials around the Southern Hills shopping area can help move some of these visitors into the downtown. This suggestion is discussed in more detail in the "Strengths" section of the SWOT analysis.*

The historic, Main-Street-America look of West Plains' downtown is what developers are spending millions of dollars to reproduce at shopping centers. It might be possible to interest shopping-center developers in purchasing and developing sections of downtown to lease out to retailers, similar to the way they would lease space at a shopping center.

## West Plains Threats

Chain stores on the south side of town are open in the evenings and on weekends, while downtown businesses close early Monday through Saturday, and most don't open at all on Sunday. Shoppers continue to be drawn shopping areas away from downtown, because they're assured of more shopping options at the times and on the days they want to shop. Downtown retailers will continue to have limited success until more business owners are willing to adopt user-friendly hours.

There has historically been a problem with achieving a consensus on steps that the downtown area as a whole can take to revitalize the area. A key sticking point seems to be the desire of individual business owners to do their own thing and an unwillingness to infringe on their autonomy. *According to focus group comments*, West Plains tried to create a special business district tax years ago, but the effort failed because an agreement on the logistics couldn't be reached. Many were cautiously in favor of trying to create a special business district, but only providing that the businesses involved were self-selected.

*Revitalization of the downtown will lag as long as business owners continue to act individually, rather than as part of a cohesive downtown group. Part of building cohesiveness will include educating business owners on the benefits of taking steps to spur revitalization, versus the consequences of continuing with the status quo.*

*It is important all business owners understand what is being attempted through revitalization. The "what" must be stated at its most basic level and be an objective nearly every business owner would agree with. For instance, almost all business owners would agree they want a downtown that offers long-term economic stability for both real estate investments and business viability. Once the objective is established, work can begin on how the objective can be achieved.*

In the 2007 DREAM Community/Consumer Survey, 42.3% of respondents placed a priority on revitalizing downtown. More people must see the importance of a healthy downtown for the revitalization to succeed. In fact, there could be a public backlash against spending money to revitalize downtown if people don't understand the importance of investing money there.

*A multi-faceted education campaign is needed to help locals*

*understand how a healthy downtown helps everyone, not just downtown business owners. In addition to news releases, articles in the city newsletter and a Web site that highlights downtown will be important components of this type of campaign.*

*According to focus group comments*, downtown stakeholders identified a number of specific businesses as important to the development of downtown. These businesses, however, were not given a high priority by the majority of the participants in the Community Survey. Since only a minority of residents gave these shops high priority, it's questionable how well they would patronize these types of businesses. It will also make it more difficult to sell to the public the importance of providing assistance to bring these types of businesses into the downtown. These businesses were: coffee shop (39.7%), upscale specialty shops (34%), antique shops (33%), and art galleries and shops (31%).

Potential downtown improvements that focus group participants considered important to revitalizing and increasing the attraction to downtown were considered a priority by less than half of the respondents in the community survey. Part of this could be because 76% of the survey participants had lived in West Plains for 11 or more years, and nearly 60% of the participants had lived there for more than 20 years. Long-time residents are less likely to see the need for change. Local residents, however, are the ones who are needed to support revitalization efforts, especially when these efforts include expenditures on beautification and infrastructure improvements in a specific area..

*A campaign is needed to make residents aware of changes and improvements in downtown. A good example where an education campaign could be beneficial in changing attitudes is with building code enforcement. According to the community survey results, only 32.7% of the participants considered stricter building code enforcement a priority. At the same time, 51% rated improving building facades a high priority. A public-education campaign could help people understand that without stricter code enforcement, façade improvements will be spotty because it will be based on building owners' willingness to spend the money on improvements.*

There are a few businesses that privately own their buildings, but they don't have the money needed to make essential improvements to them. At this time there seems to be an unwillingness to force these businesses to make the minimum necessary improvements to their buildings. Although their financial difficulties are understandable, if these businesses are allowed to let their buildings continue deteriorating,

they will remain a drag on the revitalization of the downtown.

*Development or enforcement of building maintenance codes is needed to ensure continued viability of the city's commercial/residential buildings. Solutions must be found to either help or force these building owners to bring their buildings up to acceptable standards. Possibly a downtown investment group could be created that would buy these buildings, make the necessary repairs/renovations to them, and then either sell or lease the buildings. The original business owner could be given first option on the sale or lease of the building.*

*A second option would be to help the business owner obtain financial assistance to fix up the building through either a special revolving fund for downtown revitalization, special low-interest loans, tax credits, etc. Most business owners are intimidated by working through the processes necessary to obtain these types of assistance, and often are unaware of what is available to them. It would be helpful to have someone associated with the downtown revitalization whose job is to help business owners find and obtain these types of financial assistance tools.*