

DOWNTOWN
REVITALIZATION &
ECONOMIC
ASSISTANCE FOR
MISSOURI



PGAV**PLANNERS**

MARKETING PLAN
OCTOBER 2010

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



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DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE FOR MISSOURI (DREAM)
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Downtown Caruthersville is an important gathering area for the city and region. Downtown has many institutions which attract citizens, such as the city hall, police station, post office, churches and parks. Attractions such as the Lady Luck Casino and direct access to the Mississippi River draw residents and visitors. Some retail shops, professional and service offices, and restaurants, complete the shopping and entertainment inventory for Downtown Caruthersville.

Downtown Caruthersville has many assets to offer its residents and visitors. However, community and consumer surveys conducted as part of the Downtown Revitalization and Economic Assistance for Missouri (DREAM) Initiative indicate residents and visitors are dissatisfied with the direction of the City and Downtown. But Downtown Caruthersville is awash with potential. Available land and labor abound and the perseverance of City leaders are attractive elements for potential developers and businesses.

Previous DREAM reports have included suggestions for façade enhancement, destination improvement, residential development, organizational structure, and developing financial mechanisms. This report outlines how the City of Caruthersville should use marketing to communicate key recommendations and strategic plan initiatives. The methods included are designed to help residents adjust their thinking about Caruthersville and Downtown, with the ultimate goal of the creation of an identity for Downtown that will make residents proud, encourage prospective businesses to locate here, and motivate potential tourists to visit.

To augment previous structural and organizational DREAM recommendations, and to engage the community in Downtown revitalization, Caruthersville leaders should focus on five primary objectives:

OBJECTIVE 1: Develop the Caruthersville Brand

Create an identity for the City through a process that includes existing residents and encourages visitors and potential business relocations.

OBJECTIVE 2: Support the Downtown Events Committee

Develop funding, staffing, contacts, and communications for this important committee to establish events and serve as the marketing arm of Downtown.

OBJECTIVE 3: Communicate the Benefits of Incentive Mechanisms

Efforts to establish important incentives will require open communications with the business leaders and residents to ensure a positive vote and support.

OBJECTIVE 4: Advertise Downtown to Potential Developers and Retailers

The City should seek to attract private development Downtown with current data, fact sheets, presentations, and potentially a regional coalition.

OBJECTIVE 5: Promote Infrastructure Improvements to the Region

As Downtown revitalization efforts take hold and are completed, communication with businesses and residents will sustain the momentum developed.



Pemiscot County Courthouse in Downtown Caruthersville.

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SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

Caruthersville is nestled in the bootheel of Missouri along the Mississippi River. The City is within easy driving distance to Memphis and Jackson, Tennessee, and about 200 miles South of St. Louis, Missouri. The county seat of Pemiscot County, Caruthersville is located 5 miles east of Interstate 55, along State Route 84. The City also has the only bridge that crosses the Mississippi River between Cairo, Illinois and Memphis, Tennessee.

Incorporated in 1874, Caruthersville has an agricultural heritage still evident today with the presence of the Bunge grain elevator in the middle of Downtown. The Missouri bootheel is also a rich cotton-producing area and Caruthersville enjoys a strong relationship with nearby Pemiscot Port Authority along the Mississippi River. Today, Caruthersville consists of about 6,000 people, many of whom commute to nearby employment. The City's largest employers include Trinity Marine and the Lady Luck Casino.

Identified as the DREAM boundary, Downtown consists of about 33 blocks in the eastern section of town, along the river. Wayfinding to Downtown is available due to the casino, but public signage is limited. 3rd Street and Ward Avenue is the main intersection, with views of the river, casino, and main commercial strip, visible from this location. An attractive streetscape extends to the casino along 3rd and 4th Streets and Ward Avenue.

A devastating tornado ripped through Caruthersville in April of 2006, damaging over 900 housing units, the high school, and many Downtown commercial buildings. The City has made great strides to recover, implementing



Caruthersville DREAM Boundary shown in red.

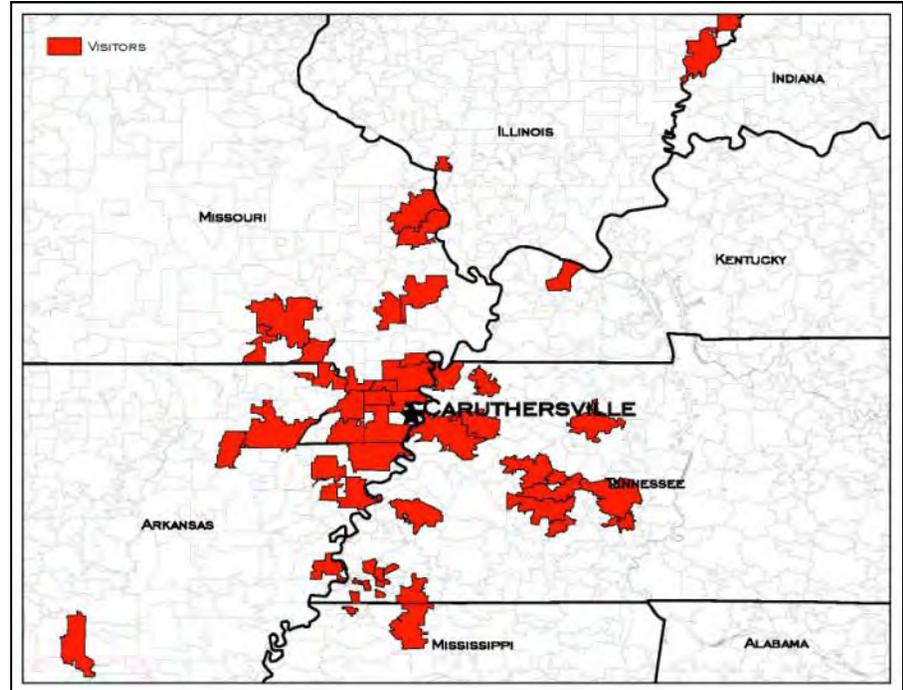
recommendations from the July 2006 FEMA Long-Term Recovery Plan. Residents rallied together to help their neighbors, the high school has recently been rebuilt and many buildings repaired. Although this disaster was tragic, many of the issues regarding building conditions are the result of years of deferred maintenance and were only compounded by the storm. The DREAM Building Design Guidelines report recommends that the City of Caruthersville adopt building guidelines and intensify code enforcement and inspection procedures to help reverse these conditions.

Information gathered during the DREAM Community and Consumer Survey indicates that many residents and visitors feel the City is moving in the wrong direction and that Downtown is not offering enough to provide an attractive gathering place. Respondents to the visitor's survey indicated they mainly visit Downtown for special events or the casino, but more amenities and options would encourage them to visit more frequently.

There is a limited variety of businesses and restaurants located in Downtown. Most businesses inhabit buildings that show evidence of storm damage and, often, years of disrepair. These elements combine to create an atmosphere that is not conducive to attracting visitors and disheartening to residents.

There are a few events that draw crowds to Downtown Caruthersville, although most events only attract the local leisure tourism market and do not have a very wide draw. The "Meat on the Mississippi" BBQ festival attracts a variety of visitors from a large Midwest market and could serve as a base upon which to build more events.

Caruthersville is marketed in a few ways, but primarily benefits from the casino advertising efforts. Billboards that indicate the Caruthersville exit for the casino along Interstate 55 work well to raise the City's visibility. The City also has a website, but very few brochures or other marketing pieces are available. The City also maintains a calendar of events on its website. The Chamber of Commerce does not have a separate website and is included in the City's site. The Downtown Caruthersville Association (DCA) is staffed by volunteers and, as such, does not provide a Downtown-specific website.



DREAM Visitor Survey Respondents' Zip Codes.

Downtown Caruthersville has many assets and great potential, but also numerous challenges that need to be addressed for it to fully capitalize on existing visitors and develop a strong draw for new visitors. Effective marketing of Downtown will create an identity and message and develop the staffing and tools necessary for communication of the message. This marketing plan, in the context of the five objectives identified, will help Downtown Caruthersville increase its relevance to the bootheel region and its draw as a visitor destination.

EVALUATION OF EXISTING MARKETING EFFORTS

MEDIA LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

A review of the existing media which reports, promotes and advertises the Caruthersville market was conducted. A brief summary of the reviews of various existing media sources is listed below:

City of Caruthersville Website

www.caruthersvillecity.com

- Professional front page with good rotating banner.
- Quick to load; easy to maneuver.
- Clear, concise, and easy to comprehend.
- Somewhat lacking in images and some feel canned.
- Calendar must be kept up to date.
- Presents good civic image.
- Content is lacking on some pages.
 - More detail needed on City services, for example Code Enforcement page is just a complaint form.
 - Contact information for Aldermen should be on City Council page.
 - Demographic information is from the year 2000. Current estimates are needed.
 - No unemployment information; this is critical for potential businesses.
 - Should have a list of restaurants.
- There should be a separate Chamber of Commerce page, ideally a separate website, to provide for information such as regular meeting notices and minutes, special event photos, and member referrals and other benefits.
- Links to Library and Recreation Center should be hyperlinks. Check others.

...We're just a
STROLL
away...

Caruthersville EST. 1857

Welcome Home To Caruthersville, Missouri

Located in Pemiscot County on the banks of the Mississippi River, Caruthersville is a small community with a big heart. We take great pride in tradition, community and family. We believe in looking toward the future but also in maintaining the past. Our rich history as the county seat and our river heritage combine to offer the best in a small town, rural lifestyle.

Small enough to provide families with a safe environment for our children, but large enough to offer plenty to do, from sports to theater, there is something for everyone in Caruthersville. We hope that you will enjoy your visit with us and that you will consider making Caruthersville your home. Find out more about Caruthersville by contacting us or touring the website. We think you'll find out what everyone else already knows; one visit to Caruthersville is never enough.

City of Caruthersville •• 200 West Third Street •• Caruthersville, MO 63830
Phone (573) 333-2142 •• Fax (573) 333-4247 •• info@caruthersvillecity.com
Webmaster Email: techadmin@caruthersvillecity.com

City of Caruthersville Website Homepage.

The Lady Luck Casino

Owned by Isle of Capri, the Casino is one of the largest employers in Caruthersville. A nearby hotel and the restaurants inside the casino combine to create a traveler destination in close proximity to Ward Avenue in Downtown.

Billboards:

- Excellent marketing media for Caruthersville.
- Signs urge travelers to eat, sleep and play in Caruthersville and are easy to follow.

Website:

<http://caruthersville.isleofcapricasinos.com/index.aspx>

- Simple, easy to navigate layout. Links to hotels.
- Information regarding restaurants, games, entertainment, and events for the attraction only.
- No information or links about Caruthersville.

Printed Media:

- Brochures are printed periodically and distributed by direct mail or in the casino.

Pemiscot County Port Authority

Dedicated to promoting general welfare, private capital investment, job creation, increased commerce, and economic development in Pemiscot County. The Pemiscot County Port Authority provides Economic Development services to the City of Caruthersville.

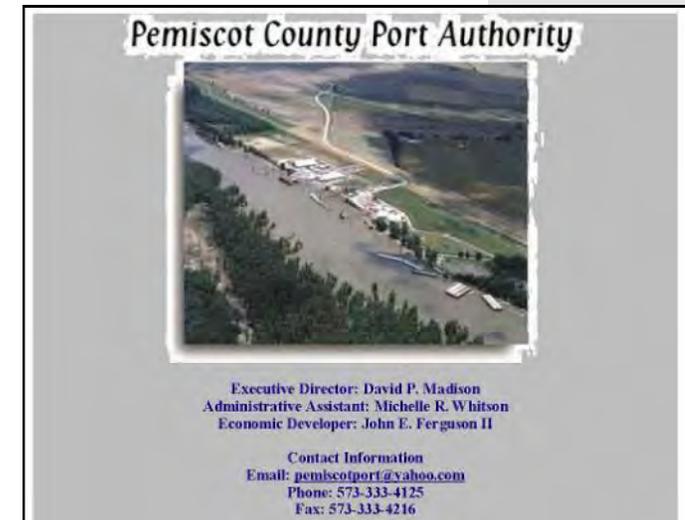
Website:

www.pemiscotport.com

- Simple design.
- Provides information regarding port services and the County in aggregate only.



Lady Luck Casino Website Homepage.



Pemiscot County Port Authority Website Homepage.

OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIES:

The objectives in this section were chosen after consideration of the marketing Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis as found in the **Appendix on page 19**. Each objective includes one or more strategies to encourage Downtown Caruthersville leadership as they seek to implement marketing. The objectives are in priority order to ensure that important elements are in place that will support later initiatives and recommendations from other DREAM tasks and reports.

OBJECTIVE 1: DEVELOP THE CARUTHERSVILLE BRAND

The existing Caruthersville brand garners little support from marketing materials, residents, or businesses. The “agricultural town with a strong sense of community” image is not evident in building conditions, residential pride or enthusiasm, or events. To energize City residents and businesses, a clearer, more positive image must be shaped and projected. Branding the City is an important step to increase visibility to draw visitors and potential businesses. The brand should also speak to residents so it is important to engage residents in redefining their hometown’s image.

Strategy 1.1 - Establish Branding Efforts. Caruthersville volunteers can initiate brand development through existing City and Chamber staff and the Downtown Caruthersville Association volunteers. The brand should capitalize on unique features of the community. Local residents and businesses can provide insight regarding the words and images that resonate with people when they think of Caruthersville. Methods to promote the brand include:

- Develop a slogan or tagline: The suggested positioning statement from the DREAM Destination Assessment is “Heart of the Bootheel”. The flash banner on the City website rotates through messages that include:
 - “Country roots with modern charm”
 - “Arts, history, and all that jazz”
 - “You’re just a stroll away”
 - “Where education is valued as much as friendship”
 - “When you catch us, you won’t throw us back”

While these are all relevant messages, no one of them stands out as an overarching theme and each seems to speak to a different audience. Several potential themes should be developed that apply across residents, businesses, retailers, and visitors. Potential slogans can then be reviewed by City leaders and volunteers to determine if the message being promoted is accurate and indicative of what Caruthersville wants to be.

- Develop key messages: Identifying key messages that state various elements of Caruthersville’s message is an important part of brand construction. Messages that provide key demographic statistics as well as sentiment convey personality with information. For example, a statement such as “15 restaurants ready to serve you” conveys a specific message with quantifiable data. Key messages can be used in advertising, news media outreach, social media, visitor materials, promotional events, and through volunteers via word-of-mouth. Key messages must be aligned with Downtown revitalization goals and the new Caruthersville brand.

Target Markets:

- ALL

- Consider a new logo: The City should consider adopting a new logo. The current logo, featuring the wave as the “C” in Caruthersville, speaks to the influence of the Mississippi River, however, the river is not mentioned in any of the current community taglines or messages.

A logo should be simple, unique, and convey the desired message. Flexibility is required so the logo can be used in a variety of advertising media and maintain graphic integrity in color or black and white. The logo, slogan, and key messages should coordinate with, and compliment, each other to help build a unified community brand identity for use in all communications.

Strategy 1.2 - Keep Branding Volunteers Engaged.

Once the community brand, slogan, key messages, and logo are determined, the volunteers involved should be kept organized and focus on future marketing efforts. This group may possibly become the Downtown Events Committee discussed in the DREAM Organizational Structure Review. Objective 2 provides more detail and strategies regarding the Downtown Events Committee, but important activities for the volunteers before the committee is fully formed include:

- Brand testing: Ongoing market research by the volunteers should continually test the slogans, messages, and logos for effectiveness among key audiences. This can be accomplished with phone calls and focus groups with residents and businesses.
- Brand Integration: Key Downtown stakeholders will require encouragement to use the various brand elements. Ultimately a well-funded Downtown organization will emerge that sponsors cooperative

advertising, but until then merchants will require education regarding the benefits of adopting the brand and help in advertising media design. Once the City and Chamber fully adjust their materials, the volunteers should begin routinely meeting with Downtown businesses to encourage prominent and wide-spread use of branding ideas.

Strategy 1.3 - Develop Brand-Supporting Events. As volunteer efforts coalesce into a committee structure, events should be developed, or existing events adjusted, to support the chosen brand. Events may be entertainment or promotionally oriented, but consideration must be given as to how well the event coordinates with the community brand. Poorly coordinated branding ideas send conflicting messages to potential attendees. For example, a formal art showing held at a community beer and chicken dance leaves the potential attendee in confusion regarding the events. Both could be good events; both have merit and can build a particular brand, but together they conflict.

- Suggestion for “Meat on the Mississippi” BBQ Festival: This existing festival draws from a wide Midwest audience of barbecue lovers. At times the festival has been nationally sanctioned, but is not currently. The City, Chamber, and DCA should work to develop this event into a permanent, well-funded, and fully-sanctioned event and consider adjusting the name to reflect a more professional and culinary nature of this fun contest.

Target Markets:

- Local residents
- Businesses
- DCA members
- Chamber staff
- City staff
- Local newspapers and radio stations



Sidewalk Checkers Tournament in Shelbyville, Tennessee.

OBJECTIVE 2: SUPPORT THE DOWNTOWN EVENTS COMMITTEE

The existing organizations involved in the revitalization of Downtown Caruthersville include the City, Chamber of Commerce, and Downtown Caruthersville Association (DCA). The Pemiscot County Port Authority is also a major contributor of personnel and resources. As noted in the DREAM Organizational Structure Review, currently there are ambiguous organizational responsibilities, lack of engagement from members, and lack of interest from the community. These factors indicate that the current organizational structure is not working efficiently to drive the Downtown revitalization forward. The DREAM recommendations for enhancing existing, and forming new organizations should be implemented as soon as practical. The establishment of a dedicated Downtown Events Committee as a part of the DCA will allow for marketing strategies to be executed in an efficient manner. This critical committee will develop new events and promotions, enhance existing events, encourage brand building, guide cooperative marketing efforts, conduct research relating to market segments, and develop other tools and programs for promoting Downtown Caruthersville.

A dedicated Downtown Events Committee will help elevate the profile of Downtown to Caruthersville residents, businesses, other organizations, the City Council, and the region. With involved volunteers and improved City and regional communication, events such as "Meat on the Mississippi", "Enchanted Evening Out", and the Christmas Parade will begin to draw larger crowds from the surrounding region. Strategies to support, and enhance, this vital committee include:

Strategy 2.1 - Enhanced Staffing. Identification of funding sources for Downtown organizational structure improvements is difficult. The DCA should encourage local businesses and qualified individuals to serve on the committee, but eventually Downtown leaders will need to hire a staff person for the group. Even a part-time or commission-paid individual can provide the required focus on Downtown work.

The DREAM Financial Assistance Review includes suggestions on funding mechanisms such as a Community Improvement District (CID), Tax Increment Financing (TIF), Federal grants, and State of Missouri grants and tax credit programs. These sources should be pursued but initially the City, Chamber, residents, and local businesses will need to increase their investment to push Downtown efforts forward. Attractions such as the casino may be able to provide some marketing expertise and funding if the benefit can be demonstrated to their bottom line. Some other sources for initial staff funding may include:

- Fee income from cooperative advertising
- DCA dues
- Contracted service payments for City or Port Authority
- Dedicated stream from gaming revenues
- Events
- Fundraisers

These methods will require great involvement and support from everyone. Downtown Caruthersville needs to rally together to raise awareness and increase the visitor draw of the City. As revenues sources improve, more sustainable and conventional funding sources will become available.

Target Markets:

- Existing volunteers
- Businesses
- DCA members
- Chamber staff
- City officials
- City staff
- Regional organizations
- Local newspapers and radio stations

Strategy 2.2 - Improve Communication. By developing a database and mailing list of Downtown contacts, the Committee can efficiently communicate and promote upcoming events and Downtown news. The Event Committee should also work with local merchants to expand this distribution list. Regular updates should include information regarding Downtown infrastructure improvements, new or expanding businesses, façade work, incentive programs, and promotions and events.

Strategy 2.3 - Focus Attention on Downtown. The Event Committee can become the public relations and outreach arm for Downtown. By networking with other cities in the bootheel region, Downtown Caruthersville can better determine types and timing of events, cross-promote regional activities, and expand audience potential and distribution lists.

The Events Committee should also keep local residents and volunteer groups engaged with events. Events should be structured so local organizations can attend and provide a service, food, or beverage as a fundraiser for their group. This activity will keep the local and unique feel in Downtown events and helps ensure good attendance from residents.

Other potential outreach activities include:

- Conduct radio interviews
- Develop a Bootheel-wide event, such as an “Outdoorsman Expo” that becomes a signature event for Downtown Caruthersville
- Generate press releases for articles in local papers as well as regional magazines such as AAA’s *Midwest Traveler* and *Midwest Living*.

The Downtown Events Committee should prepare articles that highlight unique aspects of Caruthersville that fit into the brand. For example, outdoor recreation articles can be prepared as a one-page flyer and distributed as a website page or blog, as well as traditional print media. These articles can also be cross-promoted on pages with similar interests, such as the recreational vehicle market.

Other magazine outreach efforts should include publications focused on nearby Midwest destinations or residents and travelers themselves.

Target Markets:

- Midwest Travelers
- Outdoorsmen
- RV Travelers
- Gaming Enthusiasts
- Retirees
- Memphis Market
- St. Louis Market
- Little Rock Market
- Local Residents
- Missouri Tourism



Strategy 2.4 - Collaborative Advertising. The existing advertising by the casino is limited to the name of the City. With better communication and potentially a cooperatively shared advertising arrangement, particularly regarding the I-55 billboards, the Downtown Caruthersville Association can promote Downtown events and activities along with the casino. The casino will benefit by demonstrating a greater variety of things to do in Downtown Caruthersville. This strategy will also work with other large attractions.



Strategy 2.5 - Use Social Media. The use of social media sites can be consuming in regards to time, personnel, and budget. However, the costs to set up social media connections are minimal and offer direct communication with select markets. Once established and running smoothly, the Downtown Events Committee should be active on social media platforms to increase attendance at events and elevate the overall profile of Downtown Caruthersville.

Social media allows the individuals interested in the City to obtain regular updates on activities, as well as provide immediate feedback on their experiences. For these reasons, the DCA should be prepared to fully launch this effort and dedicate the proper amount of resources for regular updates and the creation of professional pages.

A newly created Downtown Events Committee blog will become a virtual meeting place where residents, businesses, and visitors can go to find information on the City's activities as well as to post their own comments. Some national sites such as www.topix.net currently have Caruthersville forums, but are not moderated by someone from Caruthersville and demonstrate nothing more than anonymous chatter.

A Facebook page will allow a more dynamic level of connection with individuals interested in Downtown. This is a more active form of social media whereby the DCA can encourage community members and businesses to follow the group for updates on a very frequent basis, usually several times a week. A Twitter account provides real-time following of activity and can be linked to the Facebook page so they are updated simultaneously.

Target Markets:

- I-55 Travelers
- Gaming Enthusiasts
- Potential Visitors
Conducting Internet Research
- Local Residents
- Local Businesses

Strategy 2.6 - Update Existing Website. Ongoing improvements to the Caruthersville City website are necessary. As noted, the City site also includes pages for the Chamber of Commerce. Ideally the two would be separated at some point, but the suggestions below apply to the existing conditions observed as of the date of this report. Many of these suggestions will also tie in directly with the DCA Facebook page and Twitter account for updating. All of the following must include accurate and current information:

- Announcements regarding events and promotions
- Photo gallery
- Rotating local business feature on the front page that includes small briefs about the merchant
- Additional links. Internet search engines optimize searches for websites based on the amount of interconnectivity with other websites. The other sites serve as a form of validation, letting the search engine know that it is more likely to be an “official” website. Links to be added should include:
 - DREAM website (www.modream.org)
 - Local Press and Radio stations
 - Pemiscot County Government
 - Pemiscot Port Authority
 - Lady Luck Casino
 - Caruthersville High School
 - DCA Facebook and Twitter pages as they are developed

OBJECTIVE 3: COMMUNICATE THE BENEFITS OF INCENTIVE MECHANISMS

As the DCA moves forward with the City in establishing sustainable funding mechanisms for Downtown

revitalization, involvement and support from influential business leaders, property owners, and the general public is essential.

Mechanisms such as a Community Improvement District (CID), a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district, a Transportation Development District (TDD), or Chapter 353 Redevelopment all require positive promotion to allow for easier pursuit by the City Council and/or voter approval. Any financial mechanism should be promoted with the benefits weighed against any real or perceived costs. Downtown leaders must show significant buy-in, not just to be successful, but to garner support for Downtown initiatives well into the future. Strategies to develop this support include:

Strategy 3.1 - Targeted Outreach. The DCA should begin identifying key business leaders from the City to discuss the advantages and planned uses of the mechanisms under consideration. It will be important to involve citizens who will not be seen as benefitting from the incentive district. If too many benefactors or “elite” level people are involved, the average voter will not connect with the project.

This group should meet regularly and periodically allow for public involvement. The DCA, with help from the City, should lead this effort and hold meetings at various Downtown locations, such as in vacant buildings representing development potential.

Strategy 3.2 - Develop Financing Mechanism Print Materials. To help promote and discuss the incentives being considered, the DCA should develop brochures or fact sheets. These materials should concisely present the facts of the incentive program and any new tax amount

Target Markets:

- Potential Visitors
- Conducting Internet Research
- Downtown civic and business leaders
- City staff
- City officials
- Residents
- All state agencies

involved. It is critical that information on how the incentive will be used and what the real benefits are to the Caruthersville community be communicated in such a brochure. Clear communication regarding specific benefits over a general timeline will increase voter support. This information should be well distributed throughout Downtown Caruthersville.

OBJECTIVE 4: ADVERTISE DOWNTOWN TO POTENTIAL DEVELOPERS AND RETAILERS

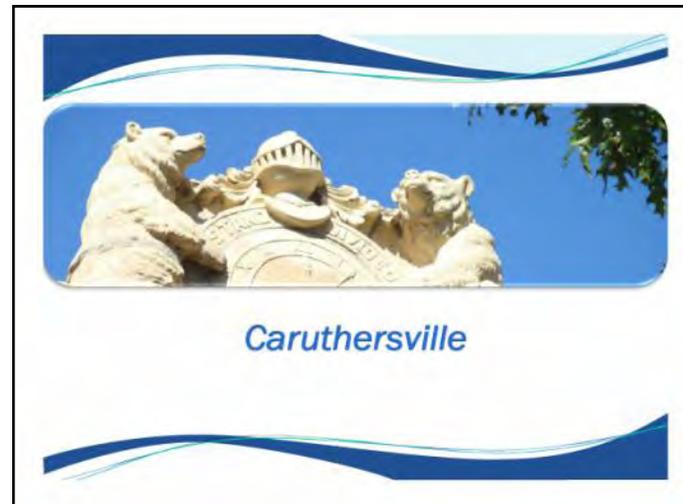
As Downtown improves with the implementation of other DREAM recommendations, the DCA will need to work with the City to help existing businesses expand and attract new businesses. Currently, the City contracts with the Pemiscot Port District for a professional Economic Developer. The DCA should work closely with the Economic Developer to initiate strategies including:

Strategy 4.1 - Maintain Accurate and Current Information. It is imperative to have the required data readily available for an incoming developer or business to make a swift site location decision. Time and uncertainty are the enemies of a development project, as both equate to decreased profitability. Through the existing website, the City can maintain current demographic data and contact information. Data sources must always be cited, as well. If possible, encourage regional organizations, employers, and agencies to link their sites to Caruthersville’s data.

Strategy 4.2 - Develop A Business Attraction Presentation. The DCA and City Economic Development Department should develop a presentation designed to deliver important demographic information to potential retail businesses. A sample

presentation is included in the **Appendix on page 23**. This presentation should be adjusted as Caruthersville decides on a brand, tagline, and logo and annually updated with current demographic data. Additionally, fact sheets regarding specific buildings or development opportunities can be appended to the presentation.

In the DREAM Retail Market Analysis, targeted businesses for attraction or expansion will be identified in areas of unmet retail demand. These types of businesses should be primary candidates for attraction as they can serve a need or provide a product that residents of the market area are obtaining elsewhere. However, given the limited amount of existing retail businesses in Caruthersville, the Retail Market Analysis is likely to show that most business types are demonstrating unmet demand.



Cover slide from sample retail presentation found in the Appendix on page 25.

Target Markets:

- Downtown property and business owners
- Downtown civic and business leaders
- Residents
- Potential businesses
- Potential developers
- Regional organizations
- Missouri Department of Economic Development
- Missouri Development Finance Board
- Other state agencies

Strategy 4.3 - Create A Regional Coalition to Attract a Large Retailer. Through the DCA’s outreach work, a group of communities, chambers, and counties in the bootheel region should begin working together to solicit a large destination-type retailer. There is development potential in Downtown Caruthersville represented by vacant property, therefore the City should lead the charge to land such a significant attraction. Many large sporting goods chains seek open land and would fit in well with the outdoor recreation aspect of the bootheel region.

This strategy represents a significant project for the region and can have great impact. All regional development parties and attractions should be involved and ultimately the State of Missouri development agencies consulted.

Strategy 4.4 - Develop Business Retention Strategies to Assist Existing Businesses to Relocate to Downtown or Expand. The DCA and City should assist existing businesses as they seek to grow. There is a very limited number of existing retail locations. The DCA should be able to do a thorough job of visiting and addressing issues for these merchants. As other businesses in the community see the attention and benefits to locating Downtown, the DCA will become the primary advocate for Downtown retailers.

A retention strategy is potentially more important than an attraction strategy, however existing businesses in Caruthersville are few. As attraction efforts develop more businesses, it is important that the City leaders also increase their retention efforts.

Strategy 4.5 - Collaborate with Local, Regional, and National Commerce Organizations. Similar to the DCA outreach effort, the City should capitalize on relationships, memberships, and support of local organizations to help sustain existing businesses and attract new business Downtown. In addition to existing organizations, some other organizations which could provide support and marketing opportunities include:

- Missouri Travel Council
- The 3/50 Project
- Missouri Retailers Association
- IndieBound
- Missouri Writers Guild
- Missouri Community Betterment
- Southern Foodways Alliance

OBJECTIVE 5: PROMOTE INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS TO THE REGION

As Downtown leaders implement DREAM recommendations, promotion of public improvements is necessary to pique curiosity and encourage residents and visitors to come and see Downtown for themselves. Communication and advertising of the new Downtown Caruthersville’s brand will raise interest throughout the City and region.

Target Markets:

- Regional or national developers
- City businesses
- Regional businesses
- Local and regional newspapers
- Regional organizations
- State development agencies



Downtown Caruthersville Streetscape Lighting in Veteran’s Park.

Strategy 5.1 - Promote Successes. All successes, no matter how small, must be promoted using the media available and previously mentioned. The Downtown Events Committee of the DCA should routinely be updating, sending out press releases, and tweeting all the good news regarding Downtown Caruthersville. An email list should also be developed and feature newspaper stories and radio interviews obtained whenever possible. “No News” is not good news, it is a symptom of stagnancy.

Strategy 5.2 - Include Businesses. As Downtown improves, existing businesses need to know that they are part of the successes occurring, and that they have a responsibility to help keep the revitalization moving forward. Businesses can put signs in their windows to help promote improvements and encourage each other to take advantage of any financing mechanisms created.

Additionally, incoming investors will be very interested in public investments as this represents a decreased risk for any potential project. Businesses and developers need to know the City will be their partner, not an obstacle.

Strategy 5.3 - Continue Streetscape and Wayfinding Improvements. As recommended in other DREAM reports, the existing streetscape improvements have established a new standard for the design of public space in Downtown Caruthersville. The improvements should be implemented in the future as resources allow. Future design should have an emphasis on park property as gathering spaces, parking lot pedestrian improvements, benches, and attractive wayfinding to, from, and around Downtown.

Strategy 5.4 - Tell the story of The Tornado. The City has purchased a property at the corner of 3rd Street and Ward Avenue. Discussions regarding the use of this property have included a heritage museum. Such a museum is a good attraction for Downtown and should include indoor and outdoor exhibits. The story of the community, including the 2006 storm devastation, can be a unifying and inspiring centerpiece in this museum.

The project property includes land near the Mississippi River that could be suitable for a small amphitheatre among outdoor, interactive, exhibits. Such a setting could easily become the location for Downtown festivals and introduce visitors to Caruthersville’s heritage and tell the story of a City that returned from ruins.

Target Markets:

- Regional or national developers and engineering firms
- City businesses
- Regional businesses
- Local and regional newspapers
- Regional organizations
- State development agencies



Potential Heritage Museum at 3rd Street and Ward Avenue in Downtown Caruthersville.

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APPENDIX

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APPENDIX A:

SWOT Analysis

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SWOT Analysis

A SWOT (Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities, and Threats) Analysis is a helpful way of guiding strategic actions within the context of this marketing plan. Through the SWOT Analysis, Caruthersville can better understand its internal existing conditions (Strengths and Weaknesses), capitalize on positive external events (Opportunities), and prepare for negative external forces (Threats) that face Downtown. Any, or all, of these elements may be present in Caruthersville and through thoughtful analysis the community will be able to focus needed attention on areas requiring improvement that have the most potential positive impact.

The sponsors of the DREAM Initiative have long recognized the benefits that can be derived from a community's willingness to identify and address features, both physical and psychological, that may hinder its progress. As part of the analysis process that was conducted for Downtown Caruthersville, the consultants and local leaders facilitated a series of Focus Group Meetings with representative groups from the Downtown community; interviews with Downtown Caruthersville business owners; user surveys of area residents and out-of-town visitors; and conducted on-site visits of Downtown. All of these tasks resulted in information that was applied to the SWOT Analysis.

The summary of the SWOT Analysis is listed on the following pages.

Strengths

- Downtown Caruthersville enjoys visitor traffic, and marketing benefits, from the Lady Luck Casino.
- Downtown also attracts outdoor sportsmen due to surrounding recreational opportunities and Mississippi River access.
- Concentration of civic institutions brings people to Downtown (City Hall, Courthouse, Post Office, churches, etc...).
- Downtown has a hotel.
- Streetscape on 3rd and 4th Streets and Ward Avenue.
- Two parks (Reynold's and Veteran's) and a walking trail connecting them.
- Scenic views of the Mississippi River.
- City government is located in Downtown and committed to a successful Downtown Caruthersville.
- Proximity to I-55, a well traveled route from the upper Midwest to the Gulf of Mexico.
- Resiliency of Caruthersville residents.
- Tenacity of City officials has allowed them to leverage the storm recovery efforts with State programs.
- Many buildings have architectural detail.
- Support of regional agencies such as the Pemiscot County Port Authority.
- Sizeable agricultural employers.

Weaknesses

- Downtown Caruthersville lacks a compelling identity.
- Many buildings lack, or have covered or altered, architectural details.
- Many buildings demonstrate severe deferred maintenance or storm damage.
- Surrounding residential suffers from severe deferred maintenance and damage as well.
- Official wayfinding for Downtown Caruthersville, from I-55 is minimal.
- Very few retail shops, several of the existing shops are low-quality thrift stores.
- There is a perception of Caruthersville as being unsafe at night.
- The Downtown hotel has no recognized flag and is low-quality.
- There are no higher-scale shopping or dining options that are creating significant sales tax revenue.
- Property values and income levels in the region are depressed, unemployment is high.
- There are few economic development incentives in place.
- There are many vacant buildings and lots, which combine with poorly maintained structures to add to the unsafe feeling.
- Reliance on agricultural industry, need to diversify the local economy.

Opportunities

- Vacant buildings and lots represent development potential. The vacant parcels by the river, between Ward Avenue and the casino are significant.
- Continued beautification of Downtown Caruthersville will address many issues.
- Integration of the areas scenic views and elements such as the flood wall and grain elevator will provide unique experiences.
- Commerce should increase dramatically with increased community advertising and marketing.
- Caruthersville can be known as a Championship BBQ center and should capitalize on the already large draw of the “Meat on the Mississippi” festival.
- Other Mississippi events can be developed should the City choose to accentuate the River as a branding element. (“Metal on the Mississippi” - iron works, “Mud on the Mississippi” - pottery, etc.)
- There is scheduling room for many more Downtown events, as there are few held currently.
- Restoration and use of the City-owned Exchange Building at 3rd Street and Ward Avenue has the potential to provide another draw to Downtown that is significantly different from existing attractions.
- Other unique features related to the River, such as access and the only nearby bridge, can be built upon.

Threats

- Difficulty redeveloping Downtown buildings will persist until investors are more secure.
- Lack of capital in the region for rehabilitation of Downtown buildings.
- Concentration of low-rent and poor-quality housing surrounding Downtown.
- Perception of security problem.
- Property owners who neglect to, or do not have the means to, maintain their properties.
- Economic downturns are difficult on the gaming industry. The City must diversify its economic base to guard against a drop in casino traffic. Casino’s also can be relocated and the City must continue to improve and demonstrate its support of this important Downtown business.
- Often there is a sense of complacency in economically depressed areas. People typically just “get by” and do not invest in their properties or businesses and may not feel the area is worth investing in. They are stuck. This attitude must be fought constantly if Caruthersville is to attract visitors and meet its full potential.
- Although the river provides a natural setting, it also poses a flooding risk. Being in the Midwest also carries storm and earthquake risks. The conditions of many properties in Caruthersville are such that natural disasters, while unpredictable, are likely more damaging than they would be with aggressive inspections and code enforcement.

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APPENDIX B:

Sample Retail Presentation

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Caruthersville



Caruthersville is...

- A strong community centered on its river and agricultural roots
- Progressive in focus on the future, but reflective of past
- Small-town in feeling, yet offers plenty of big-town activities

History

- Established in 1857 by John Hardeman Walker and George W. Bushey
- Incorporated on May 18, 1874
- Named to honor Sam Caruthers, who first represented the area in Congress



2009 Selected Demographics

City of Caruthersville

- Population: 6,141
- Households: 3,031
- Median Age: 33
- Average Household Income: \$36,730

Downtown

- Population: 416
- Households: 211
- Median Age: 29.5
- Average Household Income: \$30,812

2009 Existing Business Information

City of Caruthersville

- Employees: 2,756
- Businesses: 305

Downtown

- Employees: 1,049
- Businesses: 102
- Existing 1st Floor Vacant Space: 48,000 s.f.
- Retail Sales per Square Foot*: \$33
- Restaurant Sales per Square Foot: \$301

*Retail analysis does not include automobiles, gasoline stations, or non-store retailers

2009 Largest Caruthersville Employers

Company Name	Industry	Employment
Lady Luck Casino	Gambling Industries	500
Trinity Marine Products	Ship Building and Repairing	500
American Legion	Civic and Social Organizations	100
Caruthersville Nursing Center	Nursing Care Facilities	100
Caruthersville Pre-School Center	Elementary and Secondary Schools	97
Caruthersville Elementary School	Elementary and Secondary Schools	96
Walmart	Department Stores (except Discount Department Stores)	76
Cotton Easter Inc	Home Health Care Services	50
Hays Store Inc	Supermarkets and Other Grocery (except Convenience) Stores	50

Community Surveys Reveal

Survey Respondents Want ...

- A unique Downtown experience.
- A variety of retail and dining options.
- Casino visitors to come to Downtown for the gaming, but stay for the shops.
- More entertainment options for visiting friends and relatives.
- Longer business hours.

<i>Main Requests:</i>		
<i>Shopping Options</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clothing and Accessory Stores• Shoe Stores• Book Stores	<i>Dining Options</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• More Variety• Family and Casual Dining (Breakfast, Coffee Shops, Outdoor Cafés, Riverfront View)• Fine Dining (Steakhouse)• Specialty Food Shops (Wine & Cheese Stores, Ice Cream, Bakery)	<i>Entertainment Options</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teen Attraction (Skating Rink)• Bar/Nightclub• Beer Garden• Movie Theatre

Additional attractions in the Downtown area would greatly benefit not only the other businesses in the area, but the visitors and residents of Caruthersville.

Future Public Improvements

Signage and Wayfinding

Enhance / Expand Streetscape

Improve Building Conditions

*Establish Connection Between Ward Avenue
and Casino*

Expand Reynolds Park

Improve Attractions for Outdoor Sportsmen

Current Caruthersville Calendar of Events

Meat On The Mississippi

Spring Tackle Show

Enchanted Evening

Halloween Carnival

Hunting Seasons

Christmas Parade

- All of these Downtown events bring community members' and visitors' purchasing power to the Downtown area.
- In a recent survey of visitors, the casino ranked second to these special events for a reason to visit Downtown.

Area Attractions & Destinations



Outdoor

- Waterfowl Hunting
- Fishing
 - Mississippi River
 - Reelfoot Lake
- Parks
 - Veterans Park Memorial
 - Reynolds Park
 - Riverwalk
 - French Park
 - England Park



Indoor

- Caruthersville Recreation Center
- Historic Sites
- Lady Luck Casino
 - Only Casino between St. Louis and Tunica



Downtown

- Grizzly Jig Sporting Goods store
- Law and insurance Offices
- Churches
- Banks
- Post Office
- Antique & Craft Shops
- Knox's Drive Inn Restaurant

Greatest Demand for Goods and Services

Retail Sales Potential

Bldg. Material and
Supplies
(\$2.1 million)

Electronics &
Appliances
(\$1.4 million)

Groceries
(\$1 million)

Clothing, Shoes, and
Accessories
(\$900,000)

Health & Personal Care
(\$900,000)

Furniture
(\$600,000)

Office Supplies,
Stationary, & Gifts
(\$200,000)

Specialty Foods
(\$200,000)

Restaurant Sales Potential

Full-Service
(\$3.0 million)

Limited-Service
(\$2.1 million)

Special Food Services
(\$700,000)

Why Downtown Caruthersville?

- Your business could **meet a specific, unmet need** for our community.
- Local patrons and visitors are already looking to Downtown as an area for entertainment and business, so you would be able to quickly establish a **solid customer base** to ensure success.
- Public improvements represent the City's commitment to **Downtown**. Your business can be an important partner in the growth of Caruthersville.
- Low start-up and property costs.

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