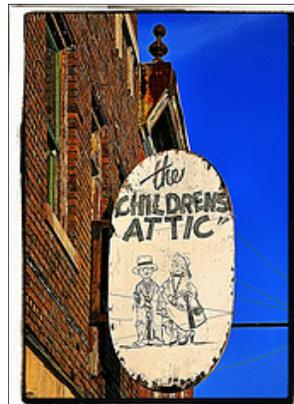


Excelsior Springs, Missouri

DOWNTOWN
REVITALIZATION &
ECONOMIC
ASSISTANCE FOR
MISSOURI

MARKETING PLAN
OCTOBER, 2009



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



DOWNTOWN
REVITALIZATION &
ECONOMIC
ASSISTANCE FOR
MISSOURI

DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE FOR
MISSOURI (DREAM) PROGRAM SPONSORS:



MARKETING PLAN

PLANNING CONSULTANT



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DOWNTOWN EXCELSIOR SPRINGS

MARKETING PLAN

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

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Excelsior Springs has a remarkable history steeped in Missouri folklore and the medical fads of the roaring 20s. It has connections to Jesse James and his family, but Excelsior Springs also lays claim to a history as a boom-bust resort and vacation town internationally renowned for its wealth of mineral springs. The City's popularity reached its zenith in the 1930's when President Franklin Delano Roosevelt popularized the healthful benefits of mineral spring spas. The mineral springs and waters of Excelsior Springs maintained their popularity through the 1960s.

It is important to note that what once was an asset for the City may be one yet again. The City's past popularity as a resort town presents it with opportunity—a story to tell, and glory to regain. The City still sits atop one of the largest collections of natural mineral springs in the world, which could someday be resurrected for regular use.

This marketing plan identifies multiple goals and strategies for accomplishing six objectives, which, taken together, promote Excelsior Springs as a unique, exciting place to shop, visit, live, or run a business. To put it succinctly, and as stated on the City's website, Excelsior Springs, "is a vision of opportunity for residents and visitors alike."

The six primary marketing objectives for Excelsior Springs are:

Objective 1: Rebrand Excelsior Springs

Rebrand Downtown Excelsior Springs to create a cohesive and exciting image that is both easily understood and captivating.

Objective 2: Monitor Residents and Market

Through the use of continued surveys and focus groups monitor resident and visitor attitudes about Excelsior Springs.

Objective 3: Increase Sales

Increase the number of shoppers, diners and visitors to Excelsior Springs.

Objective 4: Promote Positive Perceptions

Promote a positive perception of Excelsior Springs in the minds of local residents and visitors.

Objective 5: Strengthen Business Environment

Increase the business and retail development in Excelsior Springs and take appropriate steps to ensure longevity.

Objective 6: Increase Population

Increase the residential population in Downtown Excelsior Springs.

All six of the objectives are interrelated and should be addressed in some way from the beginning of the implementation of the marketing plan. More goals and strategies have been included than can be initially implemented to provide a plan that is both measurable and effective for a longer period. Therefore stakeholders should implement selected goals and strategies now and the rest as more resources become available. Implementation of every objective is essential to maximizing Downtown's potential. While each objective provides a benefit singularly, the synergy they create together produces the greatest return to the Downtown stakeholders – the residents of Excelsior Springs, businesses and property owners in the Downtown District, the City of Excelsior Springs, and the Downtown Excelsior Partnership.

The marketing plan addresses capitalizing on the residents in and near Excelsior Springs as well as attracting a new clientele to Downtown.

A regular, sustained advertising campaign is needed to build recognition and interest among target markets. A consistent advertising campaign builds product recognition momentum, resulting in greater impact. Without an ongoing, sustained advertising plan, promotions become disjointed, momentum is lost, and fewer results are achieved for the dollars spent.

Because it is unlikely that stakeholders will be able to implement everything in the marketing plan at one time, it is important to identify those goals and strategies that will be most beneficial to Downtown. It should be recognized that not all new initiatives will be highly successful the first time they are tried. Time is needed for the target market to discover and accept them. Time is also needed to refine and adjust them.



Aerial View of Downtown Excelsior Springs

MARKETING PRIMER FOR MUNICIPALITIES

In years past, consumers had fewer choices than they do today. Today, with the Internet, the whole world is literally at their fingertips. Today's consumers have been courted and wooed by corporate giants from infancy. They've had their wants, needs, habits, and interests analyzed by experts and then told exactly how product XYZ will make them happier, stronger, sexier, healthier, or any thing else they might desire. Everyday another opportunity or option presents itself. As a result, 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 following are some basic marketing concepts and rules. Understanding and applying these concepts can help Excelsior Springs achieve better success from their marketing efforts.

SIX CARDINAL RULES OF MARKETING:

- **Do an honest and accurate product (Downtown) assessment.**
This can be accomplished through a SWOT analysis, focus group studies, surveys, and other research methods. The assessment must be realistic, as it will become the foundation for the marketing plan. Often an outside consultant can be more effective to develop an unbiased assessment that will present viewpoints from various perspectives, exclusive of influence by community relationships and connections.

- **Define goals and state them clearly.**
Goals must be written and specific. For instance, a goal of "Improving Downtown" is too vague because its meaning is subjective. Define what improvements are to occur and how success is to be measured.
- **Identify target markets and connections between the target market needs with the product (Downtown).**
Identification of target markets will be based on marketing goals and information obtained from the product assessment. Target markets will then be identified and assessed for their ability to provide a return on marketing efforts and expenses. It is likely there will be aspects of the product that will appeal to other markets. These secondary and tertiary markets can become important as the market climate changes. Some of these markets may eventually develop into primary target markets.
- **Communicate marketing messages to the target market.**
Tailored marketing messages should be delivered through communication channels on a regular basis to keep the program cost effective. The campaign should constantly deliver the message of the product's benefits and the product should always live up to its marketing. If the product comes up short, trust and integrity will be lost with the target market. Communicate with the target market in ways that appeal to that market.

- **Get feedback from the plan and monitor its progress.**

Regular review and monitoring of marketing results is important. Monitoring the results of the campaign will also help identify changes, new opportunities, trends, or obstacles occurring in the marketplace.

- **Make adjustments.**

After proper consideration and planning, adjustments to marketing plans may be required. Strategic adjustments can help keep pace with the changes needed to keep the product viable and needed by the target market. Without monitoring and adjustments, marketing plans eventually become obsolete and ineffective.

BRANDING:

Below are points that attempt to provide a clearer understanding of branding and how it fits within a marketing plan.

- Branding originally related to burning a significant, identifying mark on something. In marketing, branding connotes burning an image into the minds of the target market. That image identifies the product with set qualities, characteristics, and emotions. Branding is based on the relationship with the 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 the brand, or the market's brand experience. The psychological, or brand image, is the sum of the expectations and information the target market associates with the product. The brand image sets the product apart and makes it unique in the minds of the target market. When the target market encounters the product or the name of the product, these characteristics and attributes immediately come to mind.

- Once a brand image has been established in the minds of the target market, promotions of the product can be launched. An established brand image provides a shortcut into the target market's emotions and experiences.
- To achieve brand image, an understanding of the target market wants, values, and needs is required. Then the determination of how the product connects with those wants, values and needs must be made obvious in every way possible to the target market.
- Consistency and frequency are key ingredients. Once the core marketing message is determined, it should be repeated regularly through preferred communication channels.
- Branding provides marketing momentum with accurately targeted markets.

BROCHURE DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATIONS

To maximize the effectiveness of a promotional piece the following aspects will need to be defined:

- Purpose:**
 What are the outcomes that the marketing piece should accomplish? A single promotional piece should have a basic focus. Pieces that attempt to be everything to everyone lose their effectiveness on all target markets.
- Target Market:**
 Based on the desired purpose, who is the target market for the piece? Secondary markets to which the piece may appeal can be useful, but the demographics of the target market should drive the development of the piece.
- Core Message:**
 What is the core message? Determine how the product can meet the target market's needs and clearly distill that benefit into a compelling message.
- Distribution Method/s:**
 How will the piece be distributed? Will the piece be part of a series? Based on information developed for purpose, target market, and core message, a decision can be made concerning effective method or methods of distribution. It is also important that the distribution method match the brand of the product.

SHOPS

ANTIQUES/COLLECTIBLES
 BRILLIANT ANTIQUES, 8107 Maryland, 723-2526, FAX 725-0818, www.brilliantantiques.com, Mon-Sat 10-5, Antique English/Continental accessories silver brass, copper, porcelain, blue and white, majolica, paints, picture frames.
 CLARK GRAVES ANTIQUES, 132 N. Menzies, 725-2695, Tues-Sat 10-5, Fine 18th and early 19th Century furniture and accessories, Garden antiques and decorations.
 DAVIS PLACE ANTIQUES & CONSIGNMENTS, 7731 Clayton Road, 727-9850, Mon-Sat 10:30-4:30, Antique furniture, porcelains, decorative estate accessories.
 FINCHES CONSIGNMENTS GIFT SHOPPE, 7729 Clayton Road, 725-2622, Mon-Sat 10-5, An ever-changing selection of antiques, furniture, home accessories and special gifts.
 IVY SELKIRK AUCTIONEERS, 7447 Forsyth, 726-5515, e-mail: ivyselkirk@ivyselkirk.com, Mon-Fri 9-5, International fine art auctioneers, appraisers, Quarterly gallery, specialty and monthly Jackson Room auctions.
 JOINT VENTURE ANTIQUES, 740 Delaware, 863-6344, Mon-Sat 10-5, Fine and unusual 17th-19th Century Continental, English and American furniture, paintings, bronzes, accessories, antiques; Asian and African items.
 REGENT PARADE CONSIGNMENT SHOP, 7721 Clayton Road, 727-4959, Mon-Sat 10-5, Tues-Sat 10-30-5, Vast array of collections, antiques, furniture at very attractive prices.
 TIMBERKERS IN CLAYTON, 177 N. Menzies, 721-4548, Tues-Fri 10-5, Sat 10-4, Specializing in repair and restoration, Buying, selling estate jewelry, vintage watches, clocks and music boxes.

APPAREL
 BYRD, 8117 Maryland, 721-0766, Mon-Fri 10-6, Sat 10-5, Classic clothing with a twist - for work and play for style-seekers.
 DICKER & DICKER OF BEVERLY HILLS FACTORY, 725-3877, Oct-Feb, Mon-Sat 11-5, Mar-Sep quality furs selling at a fraction of retail.
 LAURIE SOLIT, 8228 N. Forsyth, 725-7467, Mon-Sat 11-5, St. Louis' premier shopping destination for clothing and accessories from N.Y. and L.A.
 MARGARET'S LINGERIE & SWIMWEAR, 8103 Maryland, 725-4884, Tues-Sat 10-5-30, Featured in Travel & Leisure as a swimwear and cover-ups.
 QUINN BEE, 144 N. Menzies, 727-8484, Tues-Sat 10-5, Stylish and classy maternity wear. We offer gift items for babies that will be remembered.
 SCHOLARSHIP (Re-Sale Shop), 8211 Clayton, 10-7, Fri-Sat 10-5, Men's, women's and children's clothing. Benefits the Scholarship Foundation of St. Louis. Free loans to area students of higher education.

SPECIALTY
 ELEGANTIA, 7805 Clayton Road, 725-3406, Mon-Fri 9-5, Sat 9-2, Contemporary collection of exceptional announcements and invitations and unique gift items.
 GIBBONS, 6348 S. Rowbery, 795-0022, Mon-Sat 10-8, Specialty shop with urban apparel featuring unique apparel, jewelry and accessories by artists across the USA.
 EUGENE M. HUGHES/ANTIQUE/ARABIAN BOOKSELLER, 927 DeMat, 727-9777, Mon-Sat noon 5 or by apt. Rare books. Early printed, fine editions and fine bindings.
 KITCHEN CONSORTIARY, 8021 Clayco Road, 862-2663, www.kitchenconsortary.com, Mon-Sat 9:30-5:30, Sun noon-4, Complete kitchen ware. Looking classes for beginners to advanced journey. Kitchen tools, bakeware and accessories.
 LAKE FOREST CONFECTIONS, 7801 Clayton Road, 721-9997, Mon-Sat 7:30-5, Specialty candy shop. Handmade chocolates and candies made on premises, plus pastries, box chocolates and gift baskets.
 WILCOX & MOSS, 7715 Clayton Road, 484-0447, Tue-Sat 10-5, Botanical inspired accessories and gifts. Preserved, dried botanical arrangements, vases and containers.
 WINE & SPIRIT PARKER'S TABLE, 8137 Maryland, 863-4090, Tues-Sat 9-6, Chose from an extensive collection of fine wines and specialty gourmet foods, Fresh baked bread, roasted nuts, chocolates and cheeses. Personalized gift baskets, delivery.
 WINE & CHEESE PLACE, THE, 7441 Forsyth, 725-8788, Mon-Sat 9-7, One of the largest selections of fine wine, cheese, specialty beers and fine foods in the area.
 WINE MERCHANT, LTD., THE, 20 S. Handley, 863-6282, FAX 863-5678, (800) 779-8466, www.winemERCHANT.com, Mon-Fri 10-8, Sat 9-8, "Best Place to Buy Wine." Area's largest selection of wine, beer, cheese, liquor and cigars at competitive pricing. Wine classes, gift baskets and delivery available. Knowledgeable staff. Free parking.

STALLONE'S FORMAL WEAR, 922 S. Brentwood, 721-5750, FAX 725-6050, Mon-Fri 10-8, Sat 9-5, Sale and rental of men's formal wear and accessories. Entirely fitting since 1899. Stocked for same-day service or groups.
ST. LOUIS SUIT CO. INC., 7903 Forsyth, 725-2334, Mon-Fri 10-8, Sat 10-6, The one-stop suit shop! Fashionable designer suits and accessories at very affordable prices. Same-day alterations available.
SU-ELLEN, 8115 A Maryland, 862-5050, Mon-Sat 9:30-5, Classic women's clothing for day and evening. Sportswear to ballgowns, dresses, coats and accessories.
TAMIS TROUSSEAU, 8109 Maryland, 721-0444, Wed-Fri 10-5, Sat 10-4, A unique boutique featuring special occasion dressing, sportswear and accessories.

ART GALLERIES
BARUCCI GALLERY, 8101 Maryland, 727-2020, Mon-Sat 9:30-5:30, Original paintings and contemporary art, glass, framing and jewelry. Nationally recognized as a Top 100 Gallery in the United States. Consulting services.
CLAYTON GALLERY, 25 N. Central, 863-8868, Mon-Thurs 10-6, Fri 10-5, Sat 10-4, 19th and 20th Century American and European paintings, graphics and sculpture. Artists include: Thomas H. Benton, Grant Wood, Miro, etc.
GATWAY GALLERY, 7921 Forsyth, 503-3880, Sun-Wed 11-3pm, Tue, Thurs, Sat 11-6pm, Fri 11-7pm, Original paintings, photography, ceramics, mixed media and sculpture by local award winning artists.
R. DUANE REED GALLERY, 7513 Forsyth, 862-2333, Tues-Fri 10-5, Sat 12-4, Nationally recognized artists in all media: paintings, glass, fiber and ceramics including Dale Chihuly.
ST. LOUIS ARTISTS' GUILD, Two Oak Knoll, 727-9599, FAX 727-9190, Tues-Sun noon-4, In Oak Knoll Park in Clayton, this visual arts gallery features national and regional exhibitions, educational programs and art for sale.
STEIN GALLERY, 21 N. Menzies, 726-6616, Tues-Fri 10-4, Sat 11-4 or by appt. Exhibiting modern and contemporary art in all media. Offering the finest in conservation framing, restoration and appraisal.

ART/PICTURE FRAMING
ART & FRAME GALLERY, 8226 Forsyth, 862-4345, Mon-Fri 10-7, Sat 10-6, Sun 10-5, Custom framing for 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th grade students.

EVENTS
CLAYTON FARMERS MARKET
 - A delicious local farmers' market with live music, cooking demos and demonstrations in downtown Clayton.
 - Sundays, May-September, 8:00am-noon.
 - Call 290-8500 or visit www.excelsior.com
MUSICAL NIGHTS IN OAK KNOLL PARK
 - A concert series on the terrace in Oak Knoll Park.
 - Fourth Sunday, May-September, 4:00 - 6:00pm.
 - Call 290-8504 or visit www.claytonmo.com
PARTIES IN THE PARK
 - After-work party in Shaw Park with live music, food and refreshments.
 - Second Wednesday of the month, May-September, 5:00-8:00pm.
 - Call the Clayton Chamber of Commerce at 726-9033 for information.
 - Visit www.partiesinthepark.org
TASTE OF CLAYTON
 - A celebration of culinary arts featuring Clayton's top restaurants. TASTE is the "everything-but-the-kitchen-sink" dessert at TASTE too and a fireworks extravaganza in Shaw Park.
 - Sunday, June 4, 2006, 1:00 - 9:00pm.
 - Call 290-8508 or visit www.ci.clayton.mo.us
US BANK SAINT LOUIS JAZZ FESTIVAL
 - A festival of contemporary jazz music on three stages in Shaw Park produced by Cultural Festivals.
 - June 23 and 24, 2006.
 - Call 863-0278 or visit www.saintlouisjazzfest.com
SAINT LOUIS ART FAIR
 - Annual fine arts festival featuring 165 visual artists, culinary arts, live performances. Held in Clayton's central business district and produced by Cultural Festivals.
 - September 8, 9, and 10, 2006.
 - Call 863-0278 or visit www.saintlouisartfair.com
CLAYTON CANINE CLASSIC
 - An event in Shaw Park that features everything from a canine costume contest to pet photography and silhouette art.
 - Sunday, October 15, 2006, 11:00am - 2:00pm.
 - Call 290-8508 or visit www.claytonmo.com

ACTIVITIES
CLAYTON ART COMMISSION
 - Collaborating with the City of Clayton to establish public art throughout the community.
 - Call 290-8501 for more information about public art matters.
CLAYTON PARKS & RECREATION - THE CENTER OF CLAYTON
 - Call 290-8500 for current events and activities.

Pages from a Clayton, MO promotional piece

For example, a cheap postcard promoting a high-end luxury car dealership sends conflicting messages. Electronic methods must also be considered and may be redistributed by the target market.



Postcard depicting Excelsior Springs as a National Health and Pleasure Resort

- **Distribution Frequency and Timing:**
How often and when would be the optimum times to distribute the piece to the target market? Consideration should also be given for upcoming events and seasonal distribution.
- **Shelf Life:**
How long do is the piece expected to be effective? A generic piece will have a longer shelf life, but may not be as compelling to the target market. The shelf life of electronic pieces may be able to be extended at minimal cost with minor changes. Any obsolete pieces should be retired immediately.

- **Existing Text, Graphics, etc.:**
What other pieces, electronic content, etc., already exist? What photography and graphics exist? Using parts of existing pieces can be cost effective and maintain continuity of past marketing plans.
- **Budget:**
Budget should include the graphic design, concept and content development, printing, and distribution costs.

COMMON MARKETING MISTAKES:

- Using a “Shotgun approach” or trying to be everything to all people
- Relying on an unrealistic assessment of the product and what it offers the target market
- Developing vague, unrealistic, or unwritten goals
- Incorrect identification of primary target market and missed opportunities with potential target markets
- No understanding of the consumer’s wants and needs
- Failure to monitor and adjust the marketing plan

SITUATION ANALYSIS

Excelsior Springs is located in the scenic countryside, northeast of Kansas City, Missouri, and is convenient to both rural and metropolitan areas. Its residents have a strong sense of community and consider it friendly and safe - a great place to raise a family.

Excelsior Springs is proud of its legacy as the place to visit for its natural springs and the reputed therapeutic nature they provide. In addition, Excelsior Springs promotes its proximity to Kansas City and the advantage that visitors can easily enjoy a “big city” and a “small town” within one half hour of each other.

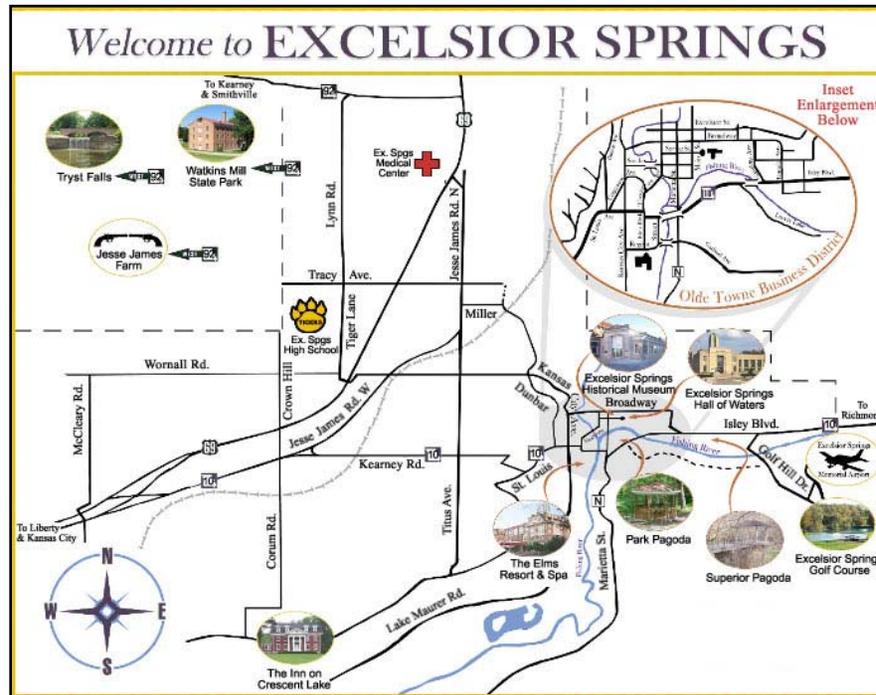
The proximity of Excelsior Springs to Kansas City makes Excelsior Springs easily “drivable” and so accessible that little advance planning would be needed. The 25 minute drive to Excelsior Springs is no different than a drive from a suburban home to a downtown office in Kansas City. The quaint small town atmosphere of the historic Downtown district is dramatically different than Kansas City’s Downtown. It reinforces the feeling

that visitors to Excelsior Springs can “get-away” from the big city to go boutique shopping, enjoy a game of golf, or listen to a live performance of blue grass music.

Attractions and events that bring visitors to Excelsior Springs include the historic Hall of Waters, Excelsior

Springs Golf Course, Paradise Theatre, Wine Festival at the Elms, antiques shopping and the Historical Museum. In addition, families enjoy visiting Watkins Woolen Mill State Park, and the Jesse James Farm and Museum located in the region around Excelsior Springs. There are a few special events and fairs in Excelsior Springs which occur throughout the year and appeal to a broad audience of families, adults and seniors. Regularly scheduled events such as Gatsby

Days, Waterfest, monthly Art Crawls, and live music performances attract residents and visitors of all ages to Excelsior Springs’s Downtown district. In addition, the Elms Resort & Spa hosts meetings, wine festivals, weddings and reunions throughout the year, drawing thousands of visitors.



Many shops are only open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Retail that closes in step with the standard work day contradicts the desired perception of Excelsior Springs as a viable destination for consumers.

Efforts are needed to promote the entrepreneurial spirit in Excelsior Springs to bring redevelopment in the form of new shops, restaurants, and offices, and help them to locate in downtown. To encourage long-term success these entities must differentiate their product or service from the average consumer experience, typically big-box retail or strip malls.

The rise of strip malls and Wal-Mart over the last 20 years have taken shoppers from Downtown. Wal-Mart is now the major store where most people do their everyday shopping. Additionally, many residents go to Kansas City for more luxury items or for a bigger selection than Excelsior Springs has to offer.

Identifying Downtown Excelsior Springs as a destination shopping experience that offers unique retail and restaurants is a way for the downtown to differentiate itself from the everyday shopping experience. Consequently, the Downtown should draw upon its unique environment and mix of businesses to create an enhanced consumer experience.

Business community stakeholders have asked for a structured plan and consensus in order to improve the overall business development of Excelsior Springs. Downtown has seen a resurgence in interest and development among key investors.

However, a high turnover rate of businesses and concerns with non-compatible land uses has increased the number of vacant buildings, giving sections of Downtown a rundown appearance.

There has been significant progress in rehabilitation efforts in Downtown Excelsior Springs. These efforts include the redevelopment of the Oaks Hotel into senior-living apartments, and renovations of some of the buildings into residential loft apartments. The many Downtown infrastructure improvements involving new streets, sidewalks, and streetlights are a catalyst for further revitalization.



Example of recent building renovation in Downtown

Even with the progress, many Downtown buildings still need significant façade improvements. Property owners need assistance in updating historic buildings and making historically accurate and appropriate improvements. There is a high level of interest from the Downtown business community in revitalization.

TARGET MARKET ANALYSIS

The following Target Markets have been identified to assist Excelsior Springs in effectively implementing this Marketing Plan.

Primary Market

Success in the influencing of this market will build a base of activity that will provide a level of stable support and will help future marketing to the secondary and tertiary markets. The following categories compose the Primary Market:

- Local Residents - residents that live in Downtown and the Excelsior Springs Zip Code (64024)
- Area Residents - residents that live within 50 miles
- Downtown Business Owners
- Excelsior Springs or Downtown Visitors

An effective marketing plan for a community is primarily targeted at its residents and local businesses. The tools and messages sent to residents and local business owners are similar to those meant for visitors already in town and deal with such topics as ease of downtown navigation, special events, and positive news about town.

Secondary Market

- Regional Residents - residents that live 50-100 miles away

As the marketing message influence spreads and the Primary Market is saturated, it will be important to expand the outreach to add more people. The typical definition of a “tourist” is a visitor from at least 50 miles away. This visitor is more likely to be spending more and, possibly, staying overnight because of the distance travelled.

Tertiary Market

- Tourists within a 350-mile radius
- Retirees & Baby Boomers
- Real Estate Investors

News of, and growing excitement about, Excelsior Springs should ultimately reach potential tourists looking to escape for longer visits, potential residents, and potential development investors.

Communication Channels

The following avenues can be used to communicate with the primary, secondary and tertiary markets:

- Websites
- Newsletter
- Special Event Brochures
- Newsprint/Press Releases
- Signage/Wayfinding
- Community Meetings
- Radio
- Visitor Information Centers

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OBJECTIVES, GOALS & STRATEGIES:

The following text outlines the specific Objectives, Goals and Strategies that must be followed to adequately and effectively market Downtown Excelsior Springs:

OBJECTIVE 1: Brand the target area to create a cohesive and exciting image that is both easily understood by, and which captivates, the target audience.

GOAL: *Develop a yearly community survey that builds on the DREAM Community Survey results.*

Target Markets: ALL

Strategy: Design a Logo to portray Excelsior Springs:

- Simplify design of Excelsior Springs logo.
- Build on the past and future of mineral springs and baths in Excelsior Springs.
- Build on the local art scene.

Strategy: Define Excelsior Springs in a tangible, physical way with:

- Wayfinding
- Streetscape Design: lighting, site furnishings, landscaping, art, gateway signage.

OBJECTIVE 2: Through the use of continued surveys and focus groups monitor resident and visitor attitudes about Excelsior Springs.

GOAL: *Develop a yearly community survey that builds on the DREAM Community Survey results.*

Target Markets: Primary

Strategy: Conduct, tabulate and evaluate an annual community survey that will measure the target market's perceptions and behaviors of the following:

- Opinions of Downtown
- Awareness of Products & Services
- Plans for Downtown
- How respondents obtain Information for Events and Attractions in Excelsior Springs
- Number of Visits to Excelsior Springs
- Visits to other cities to shop or dine
- Reasons for visiting Excelsior Springs
- Reasons for not visiting Excelsior Springs

GOAL: *Develop a Downtown Excelsior Springs website to be the central website for cultural, entertainment and hospitality information.*

Target Markets: ALL

Strategy: Create categories for the Downtown Excelsior Springs website that highlight and illustrate the following categories:

- Entertainment: Nightlife, Music Events & Special Attractions
- Dining - Restaurant/Bar Locations for Excelsior Springs
- Shopping - Retail Locations
- Tourism— Includes lodging information

Develop the Downtown Excelsior Springs website to serve as an "online concierge." All tourism/visitor information can be centrally located and the website will provide residents and visitors with information related to entertainment, festivals, special events, dining, lodging, and shopping options.

Strategy: Coordinate all calendars from the City of Excelsior Springs, Chamber of Commerce and other, Excelsior Springs related websites to ensure that all event information is centrally located. Creating a comprehensive list of activities through an “Excelsior Springs Community Calendar” provides visitors and residents with comprehensive information.

Strategy: Provide downloadable versions of all of Excelsior Springs’s brochures in PDF format.

Strategy: Tag all possible keywords for internet search related queries. Including:

- Excelsior Springs
- Harry Truman
- Entertainment
- Missouri
- Shopping
- Golf Course
- History Museum
- Hall of Waters
- Art Crawl
- Jesse James
- The Elms
- Mineral
- Baths
- Watkins Mill

Strategy: Create descriptions of all planned, annual events and feature them on the Excelsior Springs website and the Excelsior Springs Community Calendar.

Strategy: Publicize and promote special events by providing pictures and descriptions of the following in brochure form:

- Wabash Blues Garden
- Gatsby Days
- Waterfest
- Art Crawls
- Other events located in Excelsior Springs



Hall of Waters during Gatsby Days

Strategy: Modify Excelsior Springs website to include content that would interest young adults. Use Facebook, YouTube and MySpace pages to promote Excelsior Springs.

OBJECTIVE 3: Increase Sales

GOAL: Increase awareness of what products and services are available in Excelsior Springs

Target Markets: All

Strategy: Residents must be kept aware of the new dining and shopping opportunities in downtown Excelsior Springs. Currently, the Chamber of Commerce distributes the "Connection." A newsletter for the community could be used to accomplish this goal. The newsletter should include coupons, special promotions and ads for Excelsior Springs businesses. The Chamber should coordinate with businesses and restaurants to offer a discount with the newsletter.

In addition to mailing the newsletter to residents and retailers in Excelsior Springs as well as providing it in the form of an e-newsletter, the newsletter should also be made available on Excelsior Springs websites. Create a listserv for e-newsletter distribution. This will allow for updates about new restaurants, retail locations, upcoming events, etc. Using the listserv helps ensure that a maximum number of individuals are reached in the most cost-effective and timely manner.



Local Retailer in Downtown

Strategy: Increase outside advertising for Excelsior Springs. Advertising should be consistent and each ad should build on impressions made by previous ads. Ad campaigns that coincide with planned newsletter delivery or a campaign that is coordinated with the special events of Excelsior Springs will foster more recognition within the target audience.

Consider different media alternatives to deliver the message. Advertise to local areas (e.g., Kansas City, Liberty, St. Joseph, or Omaha, Neb.) with Billboard campaigns along Interstates 35, 29, or 70; or another local state highway. Engaging such creative marketing efforts is a way to get instant and widespread recognition in regional markets.

Strategy: Create a list of the "Top 10 Things to Do in Excelsior Springs." The list should be updated annually, and also should be distributed with the Shopping Directory available from the Chamber of Commerce.

Strategy: Enhance the information available in brochures and visitors guides, and displays that encourage visitors to take information.

Strategy: Creating a guide to illustrate previous visitors' and residents' favorite things to do can provide a useful guide to see all of Excelsior Springs. Include testimonials if possible. Not only will this allow tourists and visitors to identify with others who find Excelsior Springs an appealing tourism destination, but this also encourages residents to be tourists in their own city.

GOAL: *Create Customer Appreciation for residents*
Target Markets: *Local residents*

Strategy: Institute a Residence Appreciation Week that offers specials and discounts to Excelsior Springs residents. With a proof-of-residency within Excelsior Springs, residents can receive discounts to Excelsior Springs restaurants and retail stores. Host special events such as Wine Tastings, discounts on Christmas Trees or Pumpkins (if held during Holidays), discounted tickets to local plays or music events, discounted admission to local museums, reduced rates at Excelsior Springs' Bed and Breakfasts.

GOAL: *Position Excelsior Springs as a unique shopping experience in the minds of local and regional residents.*
Target Markets: *Excelsior Springs residents & customers within a 60-mile radius of Excelsior Springs*

Strategy. Reinforcing the idea that Excelsior Springs is an exciting place to visit and shop is important to reinforcing its identity. Marketing the area as a place that has something for all target markets including blue and white collar workers, college students and families is important to enticing these groups to visit Excelsior Springs.

Strategy: Promote Excelsior Springs for what it is not - it is not like shopping at the mall, strip mall or chain store.

Market Excelsior Springs as a boutique and unique shopping experience. It is important to market the area by showing customers the special and unique experiences that are only available in Excelsior Springs.

Strategy: Allow licensed street vendors/performers in the Downtown area of Excelsior Springs; including clowns making balloon animals, face-painting, magicians, jugglers, caricature artists, musicians, and food vendors. Start with only allowing them on certain days, such as Friday evenings and Saturdays or during special events. Also, limit the number of vendors who are allowed on particular days, and make sure they actually show up for the days and hours they are licensed to be there. The vendors can pay a set fee for the privilege of performing in Excelsior Springs. There will need to be a set of guidelines governing their appearance, general conduct, and performances that are allowed. Everything should be acceptable for family audiences. The activity generated by street entertainers reinforces the concept of Excelsior Springs as a place of excitement and energy.



Example of a Food Vendor Cart

GOAL: Extend shopping hours in Excelsior Springs
Target Markets: Excelsior Springs business owners, local & regional residents

Strategy: Excelsior Springs should encourage businesses to extend store hours. Extending store hours creates an atmosphere that promotes shopping after work and furthers Excelsior Springs' capacity to establish itself as a destination retail district. Of particular importance are hours of operation during and around special events. Expanding business hours and opening on Sunday during special events and festivals will do much to enhance a visitor's perception of Excelsior Springs. Develop incentives to encourage businesses to stay open a certain number of evenings.

One incentive could be extra ads and promotions in the newsletter and on the website, featuring businesses that are open longer.

Strategy: Start with extending hours for special nights, such as "Art Crawls." Discounts and specials should be offered by local businesses. The Excelsior Springs Downtown Businesses could have local musicians perform in downtown and portions of the streets could be closed off and area restaurants could offer seasonal outdoor dining.

GOAL: Ensure that Downtown shoppers and visitors know what shops are in Excelsior Springs that would be of particular interest to them.
Target Markets: Visitors to Excelsior Springs

Strategy: This goal can be accomplished by promoting and marketing Excelsior Springs with the resources currently in place as well as the enhanced website with retail and restaurant directories. The newsletter and e-newsletter are also ways to inform the public about new retail establishments, businesses, and extended hours.

GOAL: Increase the number of day-trip visitors to Excelsior Springs.
Target Markets: Regional residents

Strategy: Use mailers, billboards and newspaper ads in markets within a 60-mile radius to convey the Excelsior Springs experience. This would be a particularly good market to target for promotion of some of the smaller events such as Art Crawls, Waterfest, Gatsby Days and other local events.

Strategy: Build upon local events in Excelsior Springs, such as the Wine Festival, to draw local and regional residents and visitors to Excelsior Springs before and after such events. Retailers and restaurants could offer discounts and special promotions.



Wine Fest and other events provides opportunity for retailers

GOAL: Increase the number of overnight visitors.

Target Markets: Visitors from metro areas within a four-hour drive from Excelsior Springs

Strategy: Excelsior Springs is located within easy driving distance of Kansas City and St. Joseph, Missouri and within a 2-4 hour drive of St. Louis, MO, and Omaha, NE. For major events, promotional campaigns should target these cities. The campaigns should include press releases to newspapers in those cities and their suburbs. The releases should be pitched directly to travel and entertainment editors and reporters. The releases can also be sent to the managing editors and posted in the travel/entertainment section of the paper.

Strategy: Create “suggested” or “recommended” two and three-day tour packages including approximate costs for all points of interest on the tour. The packages can also include stays at specific B&Bs or hotels, and dinner at restaurants. Offer discounts on the packages. Make the purchase of these packages available around special events. These packages should be available from the Downtown Excelsior Springs website. The Chamber of Commerce currently has a “Day Trips” Section on their webpage. This idea should be continued and expanded on the Downtown Excelsior Springs Website.

Strategy: Create an interactive section on the Excelsior Springs website that allows people to go in and “choose your tour.” The site would offer different activity options, point-of-interest options (broken into categories), different dining options (again broken into categories), varying distances, accommodations options, etc.

For instance, someone could specify that they wanted to stay at the Elm’s Hotel or a local B&B, would like to visit historic sites within a 15-mile radius, eat at an Italian restaurant, walk/bike along a trail, and end with a concert. The tour itinerary could then be printed out. This would be a good way to promote to both locals and tourists, the variety of activities that are available in Excelsior Springs.



Recent newspaper ad insert for Excelsior Springs

OBJECTIVE 4: Promote a positive perception of Excelsior Springs in the minds of local and regional residents.

GOAL: Establish the identity of downtown as Excelsior Springs in the minds of local residents, and consequently increase its image as a vibrant and exciting neighborhood.

Target Markets: Excelsior Springs & area residents

GOAL: Increase the awareness of the positive progress and beautification accomplishments that have occurred. Also increase the awareness of improvements that are planned for Excelsior Springs.

Target Markets: Excelsior Springs and area residents, Excelsior Springs business owners

Strategy: Create a section on the Downtown Excelsior Springs website that highlights plans and improvements. Conduct ongoing communication informing the public of completed projects, those under construction, and projects in the early development stages. This section of the Excelsior Springs website can also contain information on beautification and sustainable “green” efforts of Excelsior Springs.

GOAL: Improve the appearance and appeal of Excelsior Springs businesses and buildings.

Target Markets: Excelsior Springs business and building owners

Strategy: Encourage businesses to add flower boxes, paint façades, and make window-display improvements. By implementing these minor improvements the area becomes more inviting to residents and consumers.

Encourage businesses to decorate stores for the holiday season. Make business owners aware of façade improvement programs and other financial assistance available for building improvements.

Strategy: Work with shop owners to help them improve their presentation of merchandise in windows and shops. Currently, the appearance of many down-town shop windows ranges from cluttered to unkempt. It is also important to remind shop owners of the importance of maintaining an attractive presentation of merchandise to be competitive with other businesses. Ultimately, an attractive presentation can dramatically affect a business’ bottom line. It’s all about style.

Strategy: Fill vacant store fronts with local art, signage promoting downtown or other stores window displays. If storefronts remain vacant make sure they are maintained. Using window displays allows for marketing of specials for stores in the downtown area.



Artists display work in empty storefronts

Strategy: Work with shop owners to help them improve signage. Some shops serve dual purposes and consumers are unaware of what they offer.

Strategy: Maintain upper floor windows. Some second-story windows are unattractive, have broken windows or are boarded up. This gives the impression of an area that is in a stage of deterioration. The area appears more vital, healthier and safer when windows on the upper-floors are repaired and are well-decorated.

Strategy: Start contests for the most attractive shop window to encourage Excelsior Springs businesses to improve window displays. These contests and judging could be kept strictly within the business community, or visitors to Excelsior Springs could become involved in voting for their favorite shop window. The latter would be especially appropriate during the Christmas holidays. The contests could be based strictly on appearance, or they could also be theme based, which would be most appropriate around certain holidays and seasons.



Decorated shop window

Strategy: Improve on the streetscape and beautification of streets in the area of local retailers. Create an environment that encourages visitors and residents to relax and linger in Downtown.

OBJECTIVE 5: Increase the business and retail development in Downtown Excelsior Springs and take steps to ensure longevity.

GOAL: Increase education and available resources to current and new business owners.

Target Markets: Excelsior Springs businesses

Strategy: An educational component for downtown businesses owners would encourage development of business skills necessary for the establishment of successful businesses; designing a lecture series or series of seminars that provide the skills and knowledge for local business owners to streamline business processes, would be particularly beneficial for area businesses.

Strategy: Remind business owners of the importance of excellent customer service. Business owners and employees should always greet customers and get back to the basics.

Strategy: Identify current needs and desires of the customer base. Extending business hours easily accommodates more customers and the schedules of dual-income households. Coordinating business hours with special events will increase the foot traffic and flexibility for the patrons.

Strategy: Increase the number of retail options in an effort to bring local and regional residents to Downtown.

Strategy: Create a cooperative effort to advertise and market all Downtown businesses as a cost-effective approach that will promote both Excelsior Springs and Downtown. Clustering mail promotions among stores located within a concentrated area will allow more businesses to capitalize on marketing efforts. Advertising Excelsior Springs as a special retail experience creates a unified effort that will increase the awareness of the area.

OBJECTIVE 6: Increase the residential population in Downtown Excelsior Springs.

GOAL: Increase awareness of housing opportunities in Excelsior Springs.

Target Markets: Excelsior Springs and area residents, historic-homes enthusiasts, developers

Strategy: Produce articles and news releases about the conversion of Excelsior Springs buildings to residential units. Also, prepare and publish articles about the renovations of some of the historic, single-family homes in Excelsior Springs. Photos of these conversions should be included to visually support the articles. Pitch these stories to local papers, real estate magazines, radio talk shows, and local news programs. To reach people who may be interested in restoring historic buildings, distribute these stories to national magazines that appeal to that market.

GOAL: Increase the 24 hour population

Target Markets: Baby Boomers, Retirees & Young Professionals

Strategy: Increase the number of available housing units in the downtown area. Many baby boomers and young professionals are looking for alternative housing that provides an urban feel. These housing options are located within Downtown and are within walking distance of shopping, dining and entertainment. Highlight the ways living in Excelsior Springs meets the life style needs of retirees and young professionals. Include testimonials from individuals that live in the area and consider the idea of housing tours to increase awareness.

GOAL: Market to the Oaks senior-living development
Target Markets: Baby Boomers, Retirees & Seniors

Strategy: The Oaks apartments consist of 42 senior-living units currently in lease-up. Given the 2007 demographic statistics and noting that the residential makeup will consist mainly of empty nesters, the Oaks project could potentially represent another 84 people to the DTA. This is a 76% increase over the current 110 population and they will all be located within the same address. These residents will be entering the trade area soon and the Downtown should be prepared to serve, and capitalize, on this market.

Outreach could take many forms such as a welcoming service to the Oaks, regular surveys to determine the needs of the incoming residents, and assistance with Oaks marketing campaigns through the lease-up period.



The Oaks Hotel was converted to senior-living apartments

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APPENDIX

SWOT Analysis

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EXCELSIOR SPRINGS STRENGTHS

- Excelsior Springs has beautiful landscape, and is saturated with parks and walking trails.
- The City has a very nice, historic, public golf course. It's the oldest west of the river in the Kansas City area. It is an underutilized resource, although the Elms Hotel has created a gold package.
- The Elms is a beautiful, historic hotel in Excelsior Springs. It provides activities in the evenings and on weekends for tourists, and in the past year sold 1,000 more weekend spa & gold packages than it sold the year before.
- Tourism is improving.
- The City has a rich historic background with the Hall of Waters, Jesse James, Watkins Mill, and Fishing River.
- **(According to focus group comments)** Excelsior Springs is a friendly, quiet, small town and a good place to raise a family. It's only 25 minutes from Kansas City, so one still has the shopping convenience of a large metro area and the pleasantness of a small-town atmosphere. For real estate, the same amount of square footage in Liberty costs four times as much as in Excelsior Springs.
- Downtown has a lot of historic buildings with fantastic architecture. The Historic Commission is active again and the City has just declared a portion of Downtown to be the Hall of Waters Historic District. The area has already been undergoing some revitalization, and the City is currently designing guidelines for that district.
- The Downtown Excelsior Partnership (DEP) has a calendar of events that they put together.
- The City has various organizations involved in many of the special events.
- Downtown is one of the main shopping areas in Excelsior Springs with primarily specialty shops, art galleries, a few antique shops, a barber shop, and some dining establishments. Specialty shops and gift shops appear to have the most success. These shops have good tourist appeal, but not a lot to appeal to locals for everyday patronage.

EXCELSIOR SPRINGS WEAKNESSES

- There are multiple problems with parking in Downtown. Even though there may be an adequate number of parking spots within walking distance of some shops, they are in areas with abandoned buildings. Some blocks actually do not have enough parking. In addition, a number of people from the drug rehab center and other social service organizations located in Downtown frequently wander the streets in Excelsior Springs' downtown and their presence and behavior often makes shoppers and visitors feel unsafe in those areas.
- **(According to focus group comments)** Compared to surrounding school districts, Excelsior Springs doesn't offer as many programs or classes. It's not considered a bad system, just not as advanced as some of the other school systems in the region.
- The Community Center is in poor condition. **(According to focus group comments)** One participant of the focus group sessions was appalled at the condition of the community center—a room in the back had the ceiling falling down and "stuff" was piled everywhere.
- Downtown Excelsior Springs has few places to relax and linger; only one bench on Broadway in front of Hall of Waters was available. There were also no trash receptacles visible. There were no outdoor cafes at that time, however, it was cool weather; possibly restaurants provide outdoor seating in Downtown during warmer weather. No amenities seemed to be available that would encourage visitors to lingering in Downtown.
- **(According to focus group comments)** One participant of the focus group sessions mentioned that a potential real estate client had made the statement that they liked the town, but the entries into town were in terrible disrepair. The participant then drove out of town and drove back in looking at everything from the eyes of a visitor, and agreed that it is terrible. Weeds are not kept down along the sides of the roadways projects a lack of maintenance. As part of any focus on Downtown, it's important to look at the roads coming into Downtown.
- **(According to focus group comments)** There are many abandoned buildings in Downtown.
- Many of the upper-story windows show obvious vacancies in Downtown. This makes the whole area seem less vital and alive.
- Signage directing people into Downtown and identifying places of interest is a problem. Some of the signs intended to direct people are confusing to tourists. The Hall of Waters is one of the jewels of Downtown, but the sign identifying the building is small and easy to miss. Since the building sits back from the road, visitors can drive past without noticing it. Visitors to the community have difficulty seeing any signs indicating where visitor information is available in Downtown.
- There is a general lack of marketing, specifically Downtown businesses don't have brochures or any marketing program.

- Visitors to Downtown can find information about the City at the museum and at The Hall of Waters. The hours for museum are short, however—Tuesday through Saturday, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. The Hall of Waters maintains Monday through Friday business hours, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. This would make it difficult for visitors to know what the city has to offer if they come after hours. There doesn't appear to be a place where information would be available after hours at either location.
- Shop hours of Downtown merchants generally are Tuesday through Saturday, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., or from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. These are the hours most people are at work, which makes it difficult for people who work to patronize Downtown businesses. Some shops have short hours on Saturdays and a few are open a short time on Sundays.
- Restaurants are open later, but most not open on Mondays. If people come Downtown to eat in the evening, there is nothing else to do before or after dinner. Tourists often come on weekends and plan to extend their stay into a long weekend that includes Monday. With so many places Downtown closed, these visitors are sometimes left with nothing to do. Some businesses, however, have begun to stay open on Art-Crawl nights.

EXCELSIOR SPRINGS OPPORTUNITIES

- The number of businesses in the City of Excelsior Springs has increased and there are a variety of dining options now.
- The Wabash BBQ restaurant has a free, outdoors Blues Garden that draws 300-400 people. **(According to focus group comments)** One participant of the focus groups mentioned that the best thing that ever happened was when the Wabash started putting music outside – people would literally walk a mile to get there.
- The number of festivals and events has increased, and the events are becoming annual, not just a one-time thing. There is an Art Crawl once a month, which the Chamber sends out postcards to advertise. There are also several Girls Night Out events held during the year, and two wine festivals. **(According to focus group comments)** These new events are bringing people to town from all over and even getting locals excited. Other annual events include Gatsby Days in April, Waterfest in June, and a Downtown holiday open house in November.
- There are already a considerable number of local residents who come Downtown for businesses purposes. City government, municipal court, the police station, and all of the City services all bring local residents Downtown.
- The area around the Excelsior Spring's Spa and Elms Hotel has a special tax that can be used for marketing and promotion.
- **(According to focus group comments)** Participants commented they would like a community center with a pool for all ages. For location they suggested land the city already owns near the golf course.
- The Hall of Waters and museum are big draws for tourists. Excelsior Spring's mineral waters made it once a regional hub for medical and spa care for patients. **(According to focus group comments)** Excelsior Springs has more mineral waters in one location than anywhere else—four to seven different types of mineral water. Plus the City has a carbonic gas plant.
- From a tourist's perspective – Excelsior Springs is a great getaway town for folks who live in Kansas City; there's shopping, food, history and adventure. Excelsior Springs has a million people located within 40 minutes of it.
- According to a market profile report prepared by ESRI (Environmental Systems Research Institute, Inc.) in May of 2007, the median home value within a 15-minute drive from Excelsior Springs' downtown was \$119,622. This compares to \$147,430 within a 30-minute drive and \$147,575 within a 60-minute drive. According to 2006 U.S. Census Bureau statistics [latest year for which figures were available], the median home value in Missouri was \$131,900 and \$185,200 for the U.S. In addition, the ESRI report indicated that the median-household income within a 30-minute drive from Excelsior Springs' Downtown was significantly higher than state and national averages, and people within the 45 to 64 age group made up one-quarter of the population in those areas.

- **(According to focus group comments)** The House passed legislation recently with the Senate that allows for designation of an art district.
- Waterfest used to be a seven-hour festival with 4 hours of entertainment value. It became a way to hand out business cards and set up business booths. Now it will be a three-day event with more entertainment value. The commercial booth rate has been raised to limit the number of booths, more craft booths have been added and there will be some state and county displays from the Department of Natural Resources. It is being set up to appeal to the whole family. They also have sponsorships this time and are putting a lot of money into it. They want to use radio, TV, and newspaper ads to promote it, and have forms on the City's website. Promoters are encouraging the Downtown merchants to put out sidewalk sales during the event. There will also be a quilt show at the Elms.
- The Elms Hotel does a wine and jazz fest, which is a one-day event. In 2005 it was priced so high that only 40 people attended. In 2006, the hotel partnered with the Downtown organization and cut the price from \$50 to \$10. As a result, 400 people attended. Received good feedback. Had people from all over attend the event.
- Gatsby Days is handled by the Cultural Guild. It is a three-day event with a dinner theater as part of it. It also includes a style show. They keep stretching Gatsby Days to tie with different events, but it never seems to grow. It has centered around people who enjoy dressing up. It needs to grow to something that attracts more people.
- Downtown Excelsior Partnership is doing a Missouri wine festival and also a Bluegrass music festival.
- A 1950s event has been brought back. In the fall they have the Mineral Water Bowl. It is a National Collegiate Athletic Association bowl game put on by the quarterback club and brings a lot of people to town. It used to have a parade, but that has been scrapped. The revived event has been growing.

EXCELSIOR SPRINGS THREATS

- **(According to focus group comments)** The post office is at the point where it will have to expand or have another office built outside Downtown.
- **(According to focus group comments)** Parks and recreation is handcuffed right now because they are using the high school for programs. There is a proposed sports complex on the west side of town with various fields, courts, and pools.
- **(According to focus group comments)** There is a perception among residents that Downtown is unsafe. Much of this perception comes from the abandoned buildings, the apartment buildings with absentee landlords or “slumlords,” the drug rehab center, and the people from the drug rehab center that are on the streets and sidewalks in Downtown. Excelsior Springs became the dumping ground for Liberty, Gladstone, and Kansas City bringing their drug rehab into town.
- Also, the Chamber did a survey in which they asked participants in regards to 6 different areas, “Do you feel safe?” Sixty-eight percent of the respondents said they did not feel safe Downtown. Visitors to Downtown have also indicated they don’t feel safe walking around Downtown.
- In a 2006 online survey conducted by the Chamber of Commerce, 68 percent of the respondents felt public drug sales were either a “big problem” or a “very big problem” in Excelsior Springs. Sixty-one percent of respondents felt public drug use was either a “big problem” or a “very big problem” (should be noted that the total pool of respondents was only 88).
- According to a 2005 Direction Finder Survey the city conducted, 80 percent of respondents were either “somewhat concerned” or “very concerned” that someone would try to break into their homes. In the same survey, 76 percent were either “somewhat concerned” or “very concerned” that someone would damage or vandalize their property, and 72 percent were either “somewhat concerned” or “very concerned” that someone would try to steal or damage their cars.
- Absentee landlords.
- At one time there was criticism that there were too many festivals. The groups wanted to pull all the festivals due to costs and problem of getting workers. There are problems with events landing on weekends of events in other communities.
- The strip malls on the western side of town have major chains such as Wal-Mart and Applebee’s. The grocery and household stores are mainly on the west side of town in these strip malls.
- Quite a few things that used to be located Downtown are no longer there, including many shops, drugstores, movie theaters, the library, more bars and restaurants, banks, and the high school. The high school moving outside of Downtown drew a lot of business away.
- **(According to focus group comments)** Unless they can raise their sales tax revenues, which have basically been flat since 1999, it will be difficult for Excelsior Springs as a City and as a government to provide the necessary services.