

Main Street Oakland County Hattiesburg Assistance Team **Background**

Scope of Problem: The National Main Street Center is continuing to respond in this serious time of need in the wake of America's largest natural disaster, Hurricane Katrina. As time passes, media attention lessens, funding and labor shortages persist, and it becomes more difficult to find and provide services still desperately needed. As a result, there is a waiting period of 1 – 3 years for some rehabilitation and repair projects on the outer rim (major wind damage only) of the devastation area, especially in downtown Hattiesburg, Mississippi, a National Main Street Community.

Goal: To respond to a fellow Main Street Program in their time of need by assisting a Main Street Community with a specific project. This is a time when the Main Street spirit and networking are called upon to help our fellow Main Street Communities.

Project Description: According to the National Weather Service, the Hattiesburg area sustained winds of 95 mph with wind gusts in excess of 110 mph. As the storm subsided, residents were able to survey historic treasures in the Downtown area. Of particular concern was the Old Hattiesburg High School, two conjoined structures, built in 1911 and 1921, and listed on the National Register of Historic Places. This downtown structure was destined to become the University of Southern Mississippi's Department of Art and Design and Museum of Art.

The initial response was one of relief as the structure appeared to stand as majestically as it had when it welcomed students every morning nearly fifty years ago. Yet the relief has quickly turned to alarm when they discovered damage to the roof and windows removed or destroyed by the storm. Subsequent rains and water damage has significantly delayed the rehabilitation project. The clean up required is sizeable. It is the professional opinion of the architect that if the envelope of the building is not repaired and sealed immediately, and the moisture laden contents removed, the building will not survive long enough to secure the funding for the rehabilitation project.

Main Street Oakland County Response: Coordinating Main Street Programs, like Main Street Oakland County, are now assembling teams to provide direct assistance to affected downtowns along the Gulf Coast. Main Street Oakland County, a leader in providing support to traditional downtown communities, responded to the call from the National Trust for Historic Preservation to provide assistance to other Main Street communities damaged by Hurricane Katrina. Main Street Oakland County Coordinator Bob Donohue made contact with the Historic Hattiesburg Downtown Association and worked out an assistance plan.

Project Time Period: February 24 – March 5, 2006, including 4 days travel time.

Benefit to Main Street Oakland County: While there, each participant will be undergoing disaster response and historic preservation training that may serve their own communities in the future. In return, our involvement will yield benefits for all in future times of need. In addition to the positive benefits of assisting a fellow Main Street program, the assistance team will develop hands-on skills in disaster preparation & response training, historic preservation & building rehabilitation training, and leadership and team building skills.

Team Members: The team consists of:

- Oakland County staff
- family members
- students from Western Michigan University, Eastern Michigan University, Oakland Community College, Oakland University, and Baker College
- Five men in the recovery program at Grace Centers of Hope, Oakland County's oldest and largest homeless shelter
- Leadership Oakland alumni
- And many concerned Oakland County residents

Rooms & Meals: All housing & meals are provided free by the Historic Hattiesburg Downtown Association to the Main Street Oakland County Hattiesburg Assistance Team.

Transportation & supplies: Made possible through donations provided by

Abarici Construction,	the Joseph Kube Family,
American Flag & Banner,	Kelly Services,
Archive DS - Detroit,	Kerton Lumber Co. - Holly,
Akwa Water - Ortonville,	Media Network,
M59 Big Boy Restaurant,	Metro Aircraft Instruments, Inc.,
Blue Lakes Charters & Tours,	Michaels Arts & Crafts,
Butzel Long,	Michigan Schools & Government Credit Union,
Budget Rental,	National City Bank,
Clarkston State Bank,	National Scaffold Rental Co.,
Colours By Christopher,	National Trust for Historic Preservation,
Contemporary Sign & Design,	Oakland Community College,
Costco,	Oakland County Business Finance Corporation,
Dillman & Upton Lumber Co. Rochester,	Oakland County Economic Development Corporation,
Dolly's Pizza,	Oakland County Drain Commission,
State Representative Fran Amos,	Oakland County Executive L. Brooks Patterson,
Galaxy Transport, Inc.,	Oakland County Facilities Maintenance & Operations,
Gordon Foods Service Marketplace,	Main Street Oakland County,
Grace Centers For Hope - Pontiac,	Oakland County Parks & Recreation,
Heroes BBQ & Brew,	
Historic Hattiesburg Downtown Association,	
Industrial Cleaning Supply, Inc.,	
James Lumber Co. - Oxford,	

Oakland County Planning & Economic
Development Services,
Oakland County Road Commission,
Robertson Bros., Inc.,
Rochester Mills Beer Co.,
Roy Lange Construction,

Sam's Club,
Schram Auto Parts, Inc.,
Spencer Roofing - Commerce Township,
Waterford Rotary Club,
WCHB AM 1200 Radio
and WWJ Radio AM 950.

What is Main Street Oakland County: Farmington, Ferndale, Highland, Holly, Keego Harbor, Lake Orion, Ortonville, Oxford, Pontiac, Rochester, Royal Oak and Walled Lake are members of Main Street Oakland County, the only county-based coordinating program in the nation. Main Street Oakland County is managed by Oakland County, Michigan. More than \$344 million has been reinvested in Main Street communities in Oakland County since the program was formed here in 2000.

The web site for Main Street Oakland County's Hattiesburg Response Team is at www.oakgov.com/peds/program_service/main_street/msochattiesburg.html.