



...from the Mayor's desk

Downtown Revitalization Gets Big Boost

Town government's efforts to bring new life to our downtown area got a huge helping hand recently when the state named Clayton a "Main Street Community" — a designation that brings with it the technical assistance we need to get the job done.

Only four towns were accepted into the *Main Street Program* this year, and by making us one of those, the state is giving a big "thumbs up" to what Downtown Development Coordinator Bruce Naegelen and his staff have already done, as well as showing great faith in the commitment to a vibrant downtown that the town Council has made.

Soon, members of the *Main Street* staff will be making a reconnaissance visit to meet with merchants, property owners and others with a connection to downtown — and the

process will begin. Along the way, we'll probably have to do a lot of work and overcome a lot of obstacles. At times we might have to make difficult decisions.

Already Rodney Swink, *Main Street's* director, has visited with the Downtown Development Association, outlining the many steps involved and asked them if they're ready.

They said "Yes." And, proudly, so do we.

A few weeks ago I accepted, on your behalf, the award from the *North Carolina Main Street Program*.

This year, out of many applications received from across the state, four municipalities were the recipients of this great honor.

Becoming a part of the *NC Main Street* program acknowledges the vision and possibilities in the enhancements and continued vitality we have in our downtown. I am extremely thankful to the council, the staff, the downtown



Mayor Jody McLeod accepts the award designating Clayton a "Main Street Community" from Cleve Simpson, NC Commerce Assistant Secretary for Community Development.

development association, the business owners and to you for your support to create Clayton's downtown into a destination. We see it and now others see it and want to help support us in achieving our goal of a lively and vibrant downtown!

Johnston County Artists Guild to Exhibit at The Clayton Center

Each month the *Clayton Visual Arts Committee* presents the work of local and regional artists on display in The Clayton Center.

The April exhibit will feature a collection of works by the *Johnston County Artists Guild* and will be on display in The Clayton Center lobby from April 2-30.

The *JoCo Artists Guild* is

a guild for artists sponsored by the *Johnston County Arts Council*. Its membership includes artists of varied disciplines such as photography, painting and mixed media.

A reception for the artists will be held Thursday, April 12, from 5:30 - 7:30 PM. The reception is free and open to the public.

You don't need to be an art expert nor do you have

to know the artist to attend.

An art reception is a great opportunity to view art and to meet and speak to artists directly about their work.

These monthly receptions are a great time to join together in a celebration of art in our community.

The Clayton Visual Arts Committee is partially supported by funding from the Town of Clayton.



Town Exploring Public Art Opportunities, Seeks Input From the Community

The Town of Clayton is exploring public art opportunities throughout the community and seeks input from the public. A *Community Vision for Public Art Forum* will take place on Thursday, March 29 from 6:30 - 8:30 PM in the Clayton Center. Refreshments will be served beginning at 6 PM.

“The input received from this community forum will help shape a planning document to be used in developing future public art projects in the Town of Clayton,” said Project Coordinator, Bruce Naegelen.

It is envisioned that this project will act as a springboard for a broad-scale public art master plan for the Town of Clayton as well as strengthen the community’s understanding of public art. The visioning is a first step in the development of a master plan, a process which can take several years.

The forum is open to the public and will include a brief slide presentation on public art by consultant Laura Coats of Morrisville, NC. There will be several activities during which participants will be able to provide input on public art opportunities throughout Clayton.

“The input received from this community forum will help shape a planning document to be used in developing future public art projects in the Town of Clayton.”

Mayor Jody McLeod said, “As a goal of the Town Council, this project will go a long way toward developing a direction for a public arts policy and program development for the town of Clayton.” Mayor McLeod added, “We’re grateful for the continued support of the North Carolina Arts Council and the N.C. General Assembly in our community and for this project in particular.” Clayton Visual Arts is also contributing monetary resources to the project.

In July 2006 the Town was awarded \$3,000 from the North Carolina Arts Council for the *Community Vision for Public Art Project*. In October, the Public Art Planning Committee began working with Ms. Coats to help develop a public art plan for Clayton.



*Downtown Development Coordinator
Bruce Thompson*

The North Carolina Arts Council, a division of the Department of Cultural Resources, awards grant money each year to provide diverse arts experiences for citizens in all 100 counties of North Carolina.

To be eligible for Arts Council funds, organizations must produce programs of artistic merit that encourage community involvement. Grants require that matching funds be raised by the applicant organization.

For more information on the *Community Vision for Public Art Project*, contact Bruce Naegelen at 553-1545 or online at bnaegelen@townofclaytonnc.org.

Clayton Public Art Planning Committee

Jody McLeod - Mayor, Town of Clayton; Owner, Annie V's Floral Company

Lyn Austin - President, Clayton Cultural Arts Foundation

Margaret Ritchie - Chairman, Clayton Visual Arts; Editor, the Clayton News-Star

Joyce Blackley - President, Clayton Downtown Development Association; Owner, Blackley Printing Company

Jessica Meadows - Executive Director, Johnston County Arts Council

Heidi Stump - Director, The Clayton Center

Kelly Sari, Walter Day and Cheryl McCardle - Clayton artists

Leslie Barranco - Past Chair Clayton Area Chamber of Commerce; Owner, Pancho's International Foods

Bruce Naegelen - Clayton Downtown Development Coordinator; Project Coordinator and Grant Administrator