

# The Importance of Images to Telling your MainStreet Story

Tell the story of your High Performance MainStreet district to visitors, residents, new businesses, volunteers, local stakeholders, and beyond. The use of high-quality and original images can help make your organization and programs stand out, and help tell the story of your organization's accomplishments and demonstrate the community support behind your endeavors.

## Images can

- Create a sense of place for your district
- Demonstrate economic vitality
- Celebrate your accomplishments
- Document the progress of district-changing projects
- Highlight district events
- Engage your community
- Bring the district to life

## Why Quality Images

- MainStreet is "open for business"
- Desirable place to live, visit, & do business
- Engaged community members
- Fun events
- Thriving downtown

## How to use Images

- Websites
- Social Media
- Flyers/Print Materials
- Press Releases
- Advertising

## Story through Images

- Quality Businesses
- Annual Events
- Successful Fundraisers
- Community Engagement
- Unique Cultural Assets

## Who to Engage

- Prospective Businesses
- Community Partners
- Media
- Local & Regional Stakeholders
- Social Media Followers
- Volunteers
- Residents & Visitors
- Potential Funders



# Making Your MainStreet Photos Count

With today's automatic cameras and smartphones, almost anyone can take a sharp, well-exposed picture. What will set you apart from other photographers is how well you compose your images. And composing you must do—not just point the camera and snap. So, here are a few tips to keep in mind next time you have a MainStreet event or project...

## Copyright, etc.

- You can photograph strangers in public places, unless you do it in such a way that you become a harasser or nuisance to the public.
- Assume another person's photo is copyrighted. Don't use it without the appropriate permission.

## Camera Settings

- You want as large a file size as possible when you set up your camera.
- When using your smartphone to take a photo or video, hold your phone horizontally.

## The Rule of Thirds

- Placing your subject off-center creates an interesting, dynamic image. Imagine your photograph divided into three horizontal and vertical sections.
- To compose a well-balanced, off-center shot, place your subject near the intersections of the imaginary grid lines.

## Get Close.

- Your subject is interesting, so get close to it. No one needs to see what your subject's shoes looked like.

## Try Unusual Angles

- Try turning your camera 45 degrees before snapping a picture. Or instead of snapping it from eye level, kneel down or lie on the ground to get a more interesting shot.

## Frame Your Subject

- Try framing your picture with foreground objects to add depth to the image. Or isolate them from their surroundings.

## Pay Attention to Lines

- Curves, straight lines, and diagonals add energy and movement to your compositions. Let roads and rivers draw the viewer into the image or lead the viewer's eye in a specific direction.
- Watch for natural geometric patterns and place yourself at an interesting angle to them.

## Avoid Cluttered Backgrounds

- Don't let a cluttered background overwhelm or obscure your subject. Move around, or lie down, to get a clear shot at your subject without the distractions.

## Avoid Mergers

- As you position yourself to avoid a cluttered background, also look out for trees, lamp posts, and other background objects which might merge with your subject in unfortunate ways.

## Look For Interesting Reflections & Shadows

- They lend a touch of artistry to an otherwise plain picture. They can also provide meaningful contrasts (such as an old building reflected in a modern window) or depth (such as the shadows of trees along an adobe wall.)

## Twilight Time

- The 30 minutes or so before sunrise and after sunset, is referred to as "twilight time" or as the "magic hour." Colors richen and the warm glow from the sun can really add excitement to an otherwise dull photo.

## Get Your Basic Shot First

- Trying all or some of these ideas is a good thing and will result in expanding your photography stock with a lot more interesting images for you to use in your advertising and promotion material, but... always remember to take some basic, cover-your-bases photos too.

## Tell A Story

- Creating a story in your photos is very important.
- It gives the viewer something they can relate to.
- It will inform your viewers on your latest Main Street activities and projects in a way they can connect with and appreciate.



# NMMS Loves Lovington Exercise

As you explore and enjoy your time in Lovington, we would like you to capture images of the community. We ask that you bring a new perspective to how to “see the community” using a creative eye to create content about your experiences. NMMS is holding an image competition via Facebook to capture the best of your images. We have several categories in which we will award “Best of” and “Peoples’ Choice” awards. Images should be taken within the perimeters of downtown, if there is an image that is outside of the district but can help tell the story of the district then go for it. The intent is to encourage creative thinking and a unique approach to telling the story of MainStreet.

## Photo Competition Categories:

- 1) *A Night at the Theatre* – capture images at the reception at the Lea Theatre—maybe architecture, details, people, etc. Create a sense of place for the Lea Theatre and see it through a fresh lens.
- 2) *After Hours Lovington* – Thursday night dinner, out and about, capture images of your evening in Lovington, curate what your experience is, what is happening when you look around, who is there, what are you seeing around you, it can be a unique detail (is it a gorgeous plate of food or a frothy beverage). Create vignettes or snapshots of your time and the energy of folks gathered.
- 3) *NMMS in Action* – capture images from the Summer Leadership Network Meeting, approach documenting the event from a candid perspective of scenes, colleagues, events and moments. Try a unique approach to capturing what might seem difficult to document.
- 4) *Best Original Picture* – this can be whatever you want it to be, we recommend in the context of downtown.

## Steps:

1. Be spontaneous, if something grabs you take a photo of it - don't overthink it. Just capture a cool image.
2. Select the image to post to your Facebook page
3. Tag New Mexico MainStreet
4. Caption your image
5. Use the hashtag #NMMSLovesLovington
6. Post to your Facebook Page

## Remember:

- Have fun
- Be creative
- Create a sense of place in Lovington
- Take photos and post in all four categories

