



A 3-Year Recap

2022-2024 IMPACT REPORT



“Ten years ago, some said we should give up on downtown and focus our investments elsewhere. Instead, we chose to believe in ourselves and our history. Today, that decision has paid off in remarkable ways. Our \$12 million downtown renovation has reshaped the historic heart of Farmington, honoring its charm while creating new energy and opportunity. I’m thankful for the many community members who shared their input and helped guide this vision, and I’m proud of the City Council for having the courage to make that investment. Since completion, we’ve seen our arts and music district thrive, a double-digit increase in new businesses, and a growing number of amazing local restaurants that showcase the flavor and creativity of our community. Downtown has also become a gathering place for countless nonprofit organizations that now host many of Farmington’s most iconic community events, bringing families and neighbors together throughout the year. I encourage everyone to take time on a Friday afternoon or Saturday to explore, shop, and dine downtown as our local businesses have incredible things to offer. And as we look to the future, we encourage continued investments that drive more activity and opportunity into “The Heart” of Farmington, ensuring our downtown remains a point of pride for our entire Four Corners regional community.

— Mayor Nate Duckett



A MESSAGE FROM THE HISTORIC DOWNTOWN FARMINGTON DOWNTOWN COORDINATOR

From 2022 to 2024, Historic Downtown Farmington underwent an incredible transformation. What was once a quiet corridor is now a vibrant and active destination for residents, visitors, and entrepreneurs. With the support of the New Mexico MainStreet program, community partners, and private investment, we've seen major improvements—from the renovation of the Totah Theater to the continued revitalization of public spaces like Orchard Park.

This period marked a renewed focus on economic development, historic preservation, and creating spaces where people want to gather, shop, dine, and celebrate. We've welcomed new businesses, supported local events, and built a stronger sense of community in the heart of our city.

None of this would have been possible without the support & investment by the Farmington City Council and the passion & hard work of so many staff & individuals who care deeply about Farmington's future. As we look ahead, we remain committed to building on this momentum and ensuring that Historic Downtown Farmington continues to thrive as a place where history, culture, and opportunity come together.



Karen Lupton
Historic Downtown Farmington
Downtown Coordinator



Making Downtown the **Heart** of our community, again.

The vision of Historic Downtown Farmington is to promote commerce, culture, and community in the downtown corridor.

THE MAIN STREET APPROACH™



The National Main Street Center (NMSC) was established as a program of the National Trust for Historic Preservation in 1980 as a way to address the myriad issues facing older and historic downtowns, helping to restore economic vitality, while celebrating their historic character, and bringing communities together. In 2013, NMSC relaunched as an independent subsidiary of National Trust, and is now known as Main Street America.

Today, Main Street America is a network of more than 1,200 neighborhoods and communities, rural and urban, who share both a commitment to place and to building stronger communities through preservation-based economic development using The Main Street Approach™.

In New Mexico, Main Street America partners with the State Coordinating Program, New Mexico MainStreet (NM Economic Development Department) to support local programs in 30+ communities around the state.



Economic Vitality focuses on capital, incentives, and other economic and financial tools to assist new and existing businesses, catalyze property development, and create a supportive environment for entrepreneurs and innovators that drive local economies.

Design supports a community's transformation by enhancing the physical and visual assets that set the commercial district apart.

Promotion positions the downtown or commercial district as the center of the community and hub of economic activity, while creating a positive image that showcases a community's unique characteristics.

Organization involves creating a strong foundation for a sustainable revitalization effort, including cultivating partnerships, community involvement, and resources for the district.

TRANSFORMATION STRATEGIES & STANDARDS



Economic Transformation Strategies are the center of the Main Street Approach™ that articulate a focused, deliberate path to revitalizing or strengthening a downtown or commercial district's economy. Historic Downtown Farmington's Transformation Strategies are organized around the Four Points, informed by a solid understanding of local and regional market data, and sustained and inclusive community engagement.

An effective Transformation Strategy serves a particular customer segment, responds to an underserved market demand, or creates a differentiated destination. Some "ready-to-use" strategies – called Catalyst Strategies – fall into two broad categories: those that are focused on a specific customer segment and those that are focused on an industry, product, or service segment.



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Main Street America's Six Standards:

The Six Standards are comprised of 35 performance indicators and 163 elements that outline what it means to be a highly successful Main Street program. The Six Standard include:

- I. Broad-Based Community Commitment To Revitalization**
- II. Inclusive Leadership And Organizational Capacity**
- III. Diversified Funding And Sustainable Program Operations**
- IV. Strategy-Driven Programming**
- V. Preservation-Based Economic Development**
- VI. Demonstrated Impact And Results**



Historic Downtown Farmington has met or exceeded all Six Standards of the Main Street America Evaluation Framework and has been designated by New Mexico MainStreet as an Accredited program for the 2025 calendar year following a comprehensive review in Fall 2024.

ARTS & CULTURAL DISTRICTS



The Arts & Cultural Districts Program promotes the exceptional art and history of New Mexico while assisting communities in developing their cultural and artistic resources to create dynamic and economically vibrant districts.

Arts & Cultural enterprises represent the unique fusion of local cultural expressions with economic and business development. An arts and cultural economic enterprise generates economic benefit from:

- **Job creation**
- **Sales and exports of arts and cultural products**
- **Enhanced taxes**
- **Tourism activity**
- **Community educational activities**

The Arts & Cultural District Program is a joint effort of New Mexico MainStreet (NM Economic Development Department), New Mexico Arts and the Historic Preservation Division (NM Department of Cultural Affairs). The Arts & Cultural District is a designation attached to local MainStreet programs that have identified and incorporated arts, culture, and the creative economy as primary economic development strategies for their districts.



An Arts & Cultural District designation focuses the work of a local MainStreet program around a communities' arts and cultural economic assets to grow quality of life and tourism opportunities. The work of an Arts & Cultural District is guided by a Cultural Economic Development Plan established through a community planning process and adopted by the local government.

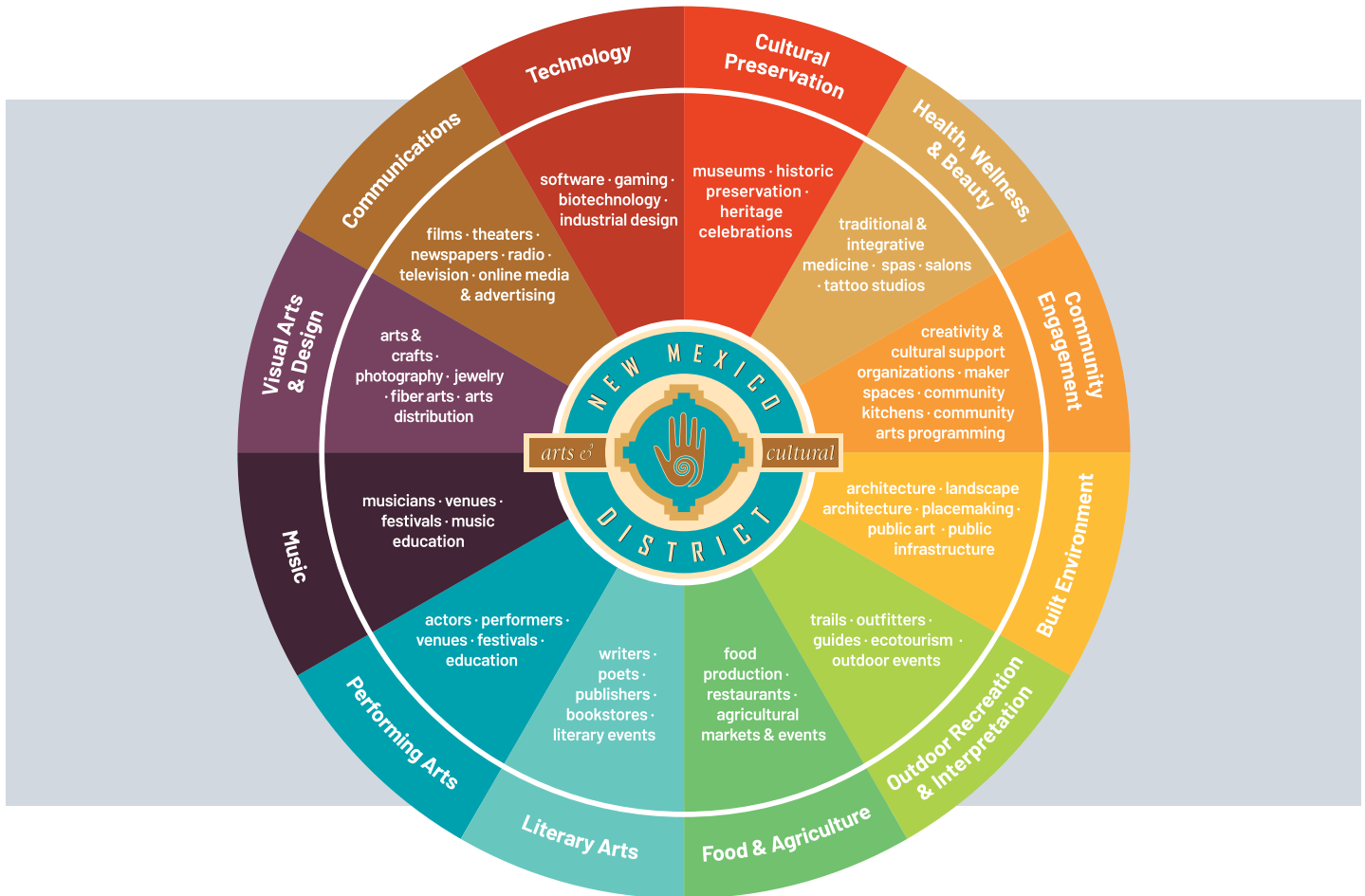
New Mexico MainStreet supports State-Authorized Arts & Cultural Districts in developing and implementing cultural economic goals based on existing arts, heritage and cultural assets, including strategies to support:

- **Arts and cultural entrepreneurs**
- **Cultural institutions**
- **Spaces for arts & cultural entrepreneurs to live and work in**
- **Creative placemaking and related organizations**
- **Cultural enterprises and cultural facilities**

THE CREATIVE ECONOMY



Building on the Creative Economy is a unique and highly specialized approach to economic revitalization in a MainStreet/Arts & Cultural district. The Creative Economy encompasses entrepreneurs, enterprises, and industries that engage at the intersection of commerce, creativity, innovation and culture to enhance local and statewide economies.



The Creative Economy includes those who:

- Produce creative products
- Turn creations into commercial products
- Distribute or market creative projects
- Support creative endeavors and the spaces they live and work in

Cultural and Creative Entrepreneurs cannot exist in a vacuum — they require a rich creative and cultural environment, or ecosystem, in order to thrive. New Mexico MainStreet has identified twelve Creative Economy sectors, each of which includes a comprehensive listing of different business types and cultural/creative industries.



Historic Downtown Farmington has met all performance requirements to be designated as a start-up Arts & Cultural District

ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION STRATEGIES



Strategy 1

Continuation of creative placemaking projects within the Historic Downtown Corridor.

- Orchard Park is being redesigned using NMMS Capital Outlay funds; the final schematic design choice is expected to be decided upon by mid-November 2025.
- The Historic Totah Theater was renovated into a multi-use venue and the headquarters of Film Four Corners.
- With funding from an NMRA grant, 5 downtown restaurants were able to create or expand their outdoor eating spaces.
- Using grant funds from a 2024 NMRA grant, 9 downtown businesses were able to install new signage or add awnings to the exterior of their buildings, adding to the vibrancy and aesthetic of the downtown corridor.
- 2023 was the inaugural year of the Art in the Heart Sculpture Exhibit, an annual call for sculptures from artists in the surrounding 4-state region.

Strategy 2

To create a thriving arts and cultural district, including art galleries, creative industries, and ongoing opportunities for the visual, performing, and literary arts.

- The Historic Totah Theater is now home to Film Four Corners, a regional, non-profit organization connecting filmmakers to the Four Corners Region. They host an annual Community Film Festival, featuring local filmmakers, student showcases, as well as original productions.
- The Farmington Civic Center is home to the Four Corners Musical Theatre Company, a professional theater company that produces a number of family-friendly theatrical productions each year, as well as welcomes community actors to many shows and mentors youth actors.
- The Northwest New Mexico Arts Council hosts Art Walks throughout Downtown Farmington's Business District several times a year. This helps bring awareness to businesses by having them host a local artist in their space.
- First Fridays have become popular in the Downtown Corridor, with art galleries staying open later and several businesses extending their hours to encourage community members to enjoy downtown.

Capacity Building Strategy

Continue to identify events and opportunities for expanding capacity to support local economic development, historic preservation & redevelopment efforts.

- The Arts & Cultural District is in the process of reimagining its annual signature event that will draw on the history, cultures, natural resources, and artisans of our community to help shape the event. Historically, this has been known as the SW Apple & Chile Fest.
- The Museum of Navajo Arts and Culture is located in the Historic Downtown Corridor and showcases the vibrant art, culture, and history of the Diné (Navajo) people.
- The Northwest New Mexico Arts Council hosts a weekly Maker's Market during the summer months, weekly Jazz Jams in July & August, and a Jazz Festival in July.

AT A GLANCE · OUR IMPACT
2022 — 2024



\$224,945

Public Reinvestment



4,761 Volunteer Hours



\$95,000

Grants Received



27

New Businesses

24

Building Rehabs



224,400

Unique Downtown
Visitors



80

Net New
Jobs Added



\$2,789,427

Private
Reinvestment

49

Events Conducted

15

Design/Placemaking Project



\$186,213

in NMMS Services
Utilized



110

Businesses
Supported



\$90,000

Amount of NMMS
Capital Outlay
Funding



Project Highlights

2022—2024





Photo Credits: The City of Farmington

Rehabilitation of Historic Totah Theater

The Totah Theater, an iconic 1949 venue on Main Street in Historic Downtown Farmington, has been carefully revitalized as part of a collaborative effort by San Juan County, the City of Farmington, and state partners. Following its purchase by San Juan County in 2020, a grant funded renovation preserved the theater's historic Art Deco charm while upgrading infrastructure to serve new creative purposes

As part of the refurbishment, industry-leading audiovisual technology was installed using NMMS Capital Outlay funds, making it suitable for cinema, live performances, and

film production events. Accessibility updates and structural improvements accompanied the upgrade, along with the addition of office spaces with fiber internet on upper floors to host production crews through Totah Studios, a regional filmmaking hub.

Reopened in 2023, the restored Totah Theater now supports monthly programming—from films to live theater, music, poetry, and educational events—reclaiming its role as a cultural centerpiece for the revitalized Historic Downtown Farmington.

Art in the Heart Sculpture Exhibit



The Art in the Heart Sculpture Exhibit transforms Historic Downtown Farmington into an open-air gallery featuring sculptures by Four Corners regional artists. Launched in 2023, the program presents a rotating collection, with 11 sculptures hosted in 2024, that are displayed year-round along Main Street.

The exhibit showcases outstanding creativity and craftsmanship, curated through a jury process that prioritizes quality, longevity, durability, aesthetic compatibility, and safety. Each artist selected receives a \$1,000 honorarium and out-of-town participants enjoy two nights of lodging.

Noteworthy pieces in the 2024 lineup included *The Warrior Protector* by Tamie Cottrell, a commanding eight-foot metal-and-sandstone sculpture; *Little Cowboy* by Lawrence Starck, evoking the rugged spirit of the West; and *Free Range Longhorn* by Fredrick Prescott, a dramatic powder-coated stainless steel work towering at ten feet. By blending public art, culture, and community, the exhibit encourages the exploration of downtown, supports regional artists, and has boosted foot traffic to local businesses. All sculptures are available for purchase, with some becoming part of Farmington's permanent collection.



Photo Credits: Brad Ryan

Ongoing NWNMAC Arts Projects throughout Historic Downtown Farmington



The Northwest New Mexico Arts Council enriches Historic Downtown Farmington through programs that celebrate local creativity and activate public spaces. Each summer, the Council presents the weekly *Maker's Market* in Orchard Park, held on Thursday afternoons from June through September. The market features regional artisans, handcrafted goods, live music, and a welcoming community atmosphere.

In partnership with the San Juan Jazz Society, the Arts Council also brings *Jazz Jams* to Orchard Park in July and August, offering free performances by local and regional musicians. These gatherings culminate in the annual *Jazz Fest*, headlined each year by internationally acclaimed Farmington-born jazz artist Delbert Anderson along with special guests—an event that consistently draws both residents and visitors to the downtown district.

Beyond events, the Arts Council strengthens downtown's visual identity through the *Art in the Alley* program, which pairs local businesses with local artists to create murals on commercial properties. By managing contracts and artist partnerships, the Council supports small businesses while fostering a vibrant, colorful downtown corridor. Together, these programs build community, support local talent, and enhance the cultural vitality of Historic Downtown Farmington.



Photo Credits: Northwest New Mexico Arts Council



Photo Credits: Cliffhangers Four Wheel Drive Club

Cliffhangers 4x4 Downtown Takeover Week

Cliffhangers Downtown 4x4 Takeover is one of Historic Downtown Farmington’s most dynamic signature events—transforming Downtown into a high-energy showcase of regional off-road culture. Hosted by the Cliffhangers Four Wheel Drive Club, the takeover brings together hundreds of custom 4x4 vehicles, off-road enthusiasts, and families for an afternoon that celebrates adventure, craftsmanship, and community pride.

The event features an impressive lineup of Jeeps, trucks, crawlers, classics, and modified builds, with owners on hand to share stories, technical know-how, and the spirit of the local off-road community. Downtown businesses enjoy increased foot traffic as spectators explore restaurants, shops, and galleries between vehicle displays.

More than a car show, the 4x4 Takeover embodies Farmington’s outdoor identity—connecting the city’s vibrant downtown with the rugged trails and landscapes that define the Four Corners region. It is a family-friendly, highly photogenic event that draws locals, visitors, and off-road travelers alike, boosting economic activity and reinforcing downtown as a gathering place for community celebration.



Farmington Cultural Economic Development Plan

September, 2025 Working Draft

Prepared by
Strata Design, LLC

Funded by a grant from
New Mexico MainStreet

September 17, 2025

Photo Credits: Historic Downtown Farmington

Development of an Arts & Cultural District

Since 2019, Historic Downtown Farmington has been a designated Start-Up Arts & Cultural District, laying the groundwork for cultural and economic revitalization. The process of developing an Arts & Cultural District Economic Development Plan has been a collaborative effort involving the City of Farmington, local businesses, artists, cultural organizations, and community stakeholders.

Guided by New Mexico Arts and the New Mexico MainStreet program, the effort has included assessing existing cultural assets, identifying opportunities for growth, and engaging the community through surveys, workshops, and public meetings. This inclusive process ensures that the plan reflects Farmington’s unique heritage, diverse voices, and long-term vision for the district. The plan emphasizes integrating public art, historic preservation, creative entrepreneurship, and cultural programming into downtown development strategies. It also provides a roadmap for strengthening partnerships, expanding arts access, and stimulating tourism and private investment.

Completion of the Arts & Cultural District Economic Development Plan will position Farmington to apply for authorization as a full State-recognized Arts & Cultural District, unlocking greater resources and visibility. Ultimately, the process has strengthened community pride, highlighted Farmington’s creative assets, and built momentum toward a vibrant and sustainable cultural economy.

“The return on investment from downtown’s streetscaping has been evident in the amount of new businesses, increase in property tax, and additional GRT in the district, as well as the increased foot traffic.”

— Warren Unsicker *Director of Economic Development*



Photo Credits: Jonathan Bacon

Southwest Apple & Chile Fest

The Southwest Apple & Chile Fest was created as the annual signature event for Farmington’s Start-up Arts & Cultural District. It included an Art Walk on Friday evening as well as a Chile Cookoff held along Main Street on Saturday, as well as vendors, music and awards for the best chile.

As we continue to move towards becoming a state-authorized ACD, we anticipate that the signature event will evolve to be more reflective of our broad cultural heritage and be an exciting catalyst for our ever expanding MainStreet and Arts & Cultural District.

Average Visitor Spending by Sector (2022-2024)

	2022	2023	2024
Accommodations	\$300	\$379	\$406
Outdoor Recreation	\$200	\$235	\$240
Retail	\$175	\$189	\$218
Restaurants	\$225	\$250	\$250
Lodger’s Tax	\$1,500,000	\$1,650,000	\$1,791,837

Information courtesy of Visit Farmington!

“From 2022 through 2024, Historic Downtown Farmington has demonstrated remarkable progress in its revitalization and cultural development efforts. The completion of key projects, including Complete Streets along Main Street, rehabilitation of the Totah Theater and the continued success of the Art in the Heart Sculpture Program, have strengthened Downtown’s role as a center for business, arts, entertainment, and community engagement. Through thoughtful planning, public and private investment, Downtown Farmington has evolved into a vibrant and inviting destination that reflects our city’s commitment to economic vitality, cultural enrichment, and long-term sustainability. The growth we have witnessed is a testament to the dedication of our community and the vision guiding Farmington’s future.”

— City Manager Rob Mayes



LOOKING AHEAD



The coming year in Historic Downtown Farmington brings exciting growth and renewal. Orchard Park is in the process of a reimagined. As a central gathering space for events and community activities, it holds the potential to be even more of a center point for the downtown. The Art in the Heart Sculpture Exhibit enters its fourth year, showcasing rotating works by regional artists, transforming Main Street into an outdoor gallery that invites exploration. Downtown’s momentum continues with support for new and expanding businesses, fostering entrepreneurship and vibrant street life. Together, these efforts strengthen the district as a cultural and economic hub—celebrating creativity, community, and the ongoing revitalization of Farmington’s historic heart.

Revitalization of Orchard Park

In 2024, the City of Farmington received a Capital Outlay Grant for the redesign of Orchard Park. Long considered the Heart of Historic Downtown Farmington, this park serves as the primary gathering space for local events, residents/visitors alike, and many local gatherings and celebrations. City staff have been working with a local architect to create a vision for the future of this iconic park.



Reimagination of the Arts & Cultural District Annual Signature Event

As Farmington moves closer to becoming a State Authorized Arts & Cultural District, the Coordinating Council is looking at ways to reimagine the annual signature event. With renewed focus on the Arts & Cultural District, there is a desire to create something new and fresh that will showcase the variety of cultures in our surrounding region, the many artistic expressions, and the cultural vibrancy that abounds here in the San Juan Region.

LOOKING AHEAD



ADDITIONAL ONGOING PROJECTS WITH THE DOWNTOWN AND ADJACENT DISTRICTS

As we move into the formal design phase of the revitalization of Orchard Park, the conversation about connectivity to the river will become more prevalent. This has been a long-term goal of the City, and one that fits with the goal of creating walkability and connecting with our outdoor recreation assets.

Farmington has had several discussions regarding potential hospitality opportunities in the Civic Center district (adjacent to downtown). This would help to increase overnight stays for Civic Center events, theater productions, concerts, and other events along Main Street.

The Animas District, just south of downtown, continues to be a focal point for potential redevelopment, including a lot that is being developed into a medical facility near the hospital, and the assembly of a full City block for future development. Additionally, there has been some interest in parcels in the Animas District.

“The recent Complete Streets transformation, sculpture installations, increased events, and more...have *enlivened* Farmington’s downtown!”

— **Jill Tanis** *Chair, Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency*

Want to get involved?

Contact the Historic Downtown Farmington Coordinator at klupton@farmingtonnm.gov or visit FarmingtonNM.gov/Downtown for more information.



MEET OUR STAFF, BOARD, AND PARTNERS

Staff

Karen Lupton

Downtown Coordinator

Board of Directors

Jill Tanis

Board President

Doug Dykman

Board Member

Tara Taylor

Board Member

Vince Mitchell

Board Member

Sam Todd

Board Member

Partners



VOLUNTEER HIGHLIGHT



The Northwest New Mexico Arts Council has played an essential role in enriching the Historic Downtown Corridor, contributing vision, creativity, and countless volunteer hours to strengthen Farmington’s cultural landscape. As a fully volunteered organization—guided by Flo Trujillo and supported by committed staff/board members— the Arts Council has brought dynamic programming, vibrant public art, and meaningful artist partnerships to downtown. Their efforts have activated public spaces, supported local makers and performers, and fostered a stronger sense of place for residents and visitors alike. The Historic Downtown community gratefully acknowledges their unwavering commitment, generosity, and passion for the arts, which continue to enhance the vitality and spirit of our MainStreet district.



“In recent years, Farmington’s MainStreet has evolved into a beautiful and inviting space, attracting businesses and visitors alike. Its walkability has allowed for people to spend more leisurely time in this historic part of town, enjoying the restaurants, shops, and events.”

— Tonya Stinson *Executive Director, Visit Farmington*

Background Photo Credit: Brad Ryan



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