

Beautification has ripple effect

"Main Street Gettysburg" with Deb Adamik | Posted: Tuesday, August 18, 2015 12:06 am

The flowers are up, the new street lights are illuminated and welcome travelers into Steinwehr's southern gateway. The Phase II road construction has been completed with the new pedestrian crosswalks and bike trails painted on Steinwehr Avenue. There has been quite a buzz among the community, businesses and visitors on Steinwehr about its new and improved look. However, the visual improvements only scratch the surface of the countless benefits realized by this community through the hard work of many people.

Eight years ago, a small group of Steinwehr business owners were trying to address the negative economic impact that the move of the Gettysburg National Park's Visitor Center would have on their businesses. The business owners' commitment of time, ideas and money resulted in the creation of important partnerships that helped develop and execute an economic improvement strategy to attract more patrons to Steinwehr Avenue. Main Street Gettysburg was asked to research opportunities and orchestrate the talent and funding sources necessary to support this district's dreams.

It has taken hundreds of people working together to make this facelift happen, create the Steinwehr Business Improvement District and build the foundation for even greater economic improvements in the future. The new Steinwehr streetscape has brought not only beauty to the district, but curb cuts and lighting for safety and ADA compliance, and infrastructure improvements that would have otherwise been the financial responsibility of the Borough. In the July Borough Council public meeting, Councilman Bob Krummerich commented that Steinwehr Avenue no longer floods, which can be attributed to the infrastructure improvements that were made through this project.

When Steinwehr's twenty-year economic strategy was developed, there were several empty store fronts. Prospective businesses often requested copies of these plans from MSG when deciding if to open on Steinwehr. Today these businesses have been filled and major private investments have taken place in businesses such as McDonalds, Kentucky Fried Chicken, and the new Gettysburg Heritage Center. Appalachian Brewing Company has just broken ground on Steinwehr, anticipating next spring to open. Businesses are also diversifying and teaming up with other businesses to expand their products and experience. For example, The Ragged Edge located in Gettysburg Tours, The Spirits of Gettysburg partnering with the Gettysburg Diorama, and the Gettysburg Heritage Center teaming up with History Nerds and the Farmers Market.

There are additional plans in the works for more investment and future improvements by private investors to develop new and enhanced venues. This continuous improvement began with a handful of businesses who had the wisdom to step up and look beyond their own back yards and invest in the future. The improvements on Steinwehr to-date resulted from this business community willing to work with public, private and various organizations in a proactive way to build an attractive business

friendly community. The economic dreams are not completed yet, but the framework and foundation are there.

A ribbon-cutting is planned for this fall and I hope the entire community comes to celebrate the great achievements that the Steinwehr District and its many partnerships have attained. MSG looks forward to continuing its role as business advocate, recruiter, and supporter for the Steinwehr Business Improvement District and business investors as they continue to improve this important area of town.

Deb Adamik is president and CEO of Main Street Gettysburg.