

December 2002

2002 Annual Report for Portland Revitalization, Inc. (PRIDE)

In August, Valencia Crisafulli, Senior Associate, National Trust for Historic Preservation, National Main Street Center, spent two days in Portland to help PRIDE assess what we had done and what we needed to do in the future. Here are some excerpts from her report.

“PRIDE is doing a very good job in general, probably much better than the board and committee members realize. A number of visible project have been accomplished, including the banners, planters, down-town cleanup, movies on the green, Business Excellence Club, Junior Main Street, and the wedding cluster promotion, to name a few. These may seem small in comparison to major development projects, but Main Street works incrementally. What PRIDE has been doing for the past two years is building its credibility in the community and its capacity as an organization in order to become more effective and tackle more significant projects in the community.”

“In general, the organization appears to be positively regarded in the community. PRIDE is perceived as a mission driven organization and as a ‘convener’ of different entities that have a stake in downtown improvement. Early skepticism that this is ‘just another short-lived program’ is beginning to disappear. People need and want PRIDE to succeed-at least, the people we talked to do. It’s always safe to assume that there are still plenty of people out there who do not know what PRIDE does, that there are some people who don’t care, and there are some who may have negative perceptions.”

“PRIDE is at a very critical point in it development as an organization, which is typical for Main Street programs after three or four years of operation. At this point, the original enthusiasm is generally beginning to wane and the initial financial pledge period is coming to an end. During the coming year, PRIDE supporters will want to see some significant accomplishments and be convinced they are receiving a return on their continued investment of time and money in the program.

“PRIDE, Inc., already has all the tools it needs to get the job done. The challenge is to *just do it.*”

Beautification

--Worked with the Portland Economic Development Commission to design and install the “Celebrate Portland” banners on Main Street and a portion of Route 66. We hope to install a set of winter banners in early 2003.

--Worked with Pine Ledge Nursery landscape the triangle at the junction of Main and Marlborough Streets. We are very pleased that Pine Ledge will also maintain this space.

--Worked with the town grounds department to landscape the two triangles on either side of the bridge. A number of people brought bushes that were planted in these triangles.

--Working with the Youth Services Summer Program and Main Street businesses, painted the fence a planted a tree the Portland Country Markey, cleaned and planted ground cover at Cycles Unlimited and planted ground cover at Café 66.

--Added planters on Main Street donate by the Portland Garden Club, Fleet Bank and Lucinda Patrick.

--Maintained the vacant gas station at the junction of Main and Marlborough Street with plants during the summer and wreaths during the holiday season. Janice Cross maintained the plantings and the Girl Scouts swept the sidewalks and open areas.

--Conducted a design audit with Alan Plattus, Director of the Yale University Urban Design Workshop. He suggested we could improve parking by reducing the number of curb cuts and could reduce speeding by changing one of the traffic lights to a four way stop light.

--Worked with the town planning department and the board of selectmen to implement the Carol R. Johnson Associates plan. The board voted to seek funding for the first phase of the project, streetscape improvements from the bridge to Marlborough Street.

Revitalization

--Worked with Main Street businesses to conduct the first Halloween on Main Street promotion. About half the Main Street businesses in a very successful event as patrons visited businesses when they might not otherwise come.

--Conducted the second Arts on the Green, combining it with the economic development commission farmers' market activities. This year we added music and the economic development commission added other attractions to draw more people to the town's green.

--Developed a Welcome Bag promotion of information and coupons from businesses for new Portland residents.

--Created a Business Excellence Club of a number of non-competing Main Street businesses who meet monthly to discuss how to improve their businesses and how to support one another.

--Attracted one new business, Brownstone Barbers, to Main Street.

--Participated in a number of Preservation Week activities.

--Participated in initial stages of the selection of a consultant who will carry out the economic feasibility and marketing study for the town. The consultant will consider the best ways to develop the quarries and the town land north of the quarries, together with the economic impact on Main Street.

Finance

--The town reduced its appropriation to PRIDE from \$15,000 in 2001 to \$12,800 in 2002.

--The fall business match program results fell from about \$2,200 in 2001 to about \$1,900 in 2002. Even though the John Mormile, the Medicine Centre and Edward Jones joined this event for the first time, the reduced length of the promotion reduced the total. We are grateful that TriTown Foods was the strongest supporter of this event.

--Our auction raised about \$13,600 in 2002, an increase over the \$12,500 raised in 2001.

--The Liberty Bank Foundation granted PRIDE \$10,000. This is, we believe, a strong endorsement of PRIDE's activities and goals.

--The results from our mail solicitation are incomplete, but we believe they will match 2001 results of slightly over \$4,000.

In summary, PRIDE's budget is slightly over \$68,000 and 81% of that money comes from private sources.

Other

We have developed a relationship with the Portland Middle School, and are involved in a number of joint activities. We created the Wright Brothers and Sisters Society to build competitive model airplanes. Middle school students publish the "Junior Main Street Times." With Portland Youth Services, middle school students participate in some of PRIDE's cleanup activities. We hope to add an additional program in 2003.

The organization committee has updated the PRIDE slide show and is planning a volunteer celebration. Its members also manned the PRIDE booth at the Portland Fair.

Dick Carella, Sheila Graham and Tom Stoto could not continue as board members. They were replaced by Dave Fletcher, Melissa Gran and Leslie Leon. We thank Dick, Sheila, and Tom for their help. All made important contributions to our success.

Bruce Tyler, President