



2026 GREAT AMERICAN MAIN STREET AWARDS

An Insider's Guide

June 4, 2025



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GAMSA 2026 TIMELINE

Monday, May 19

Application Opens

Friday, July 11

Applications Due (11:59 p.m. CST)

September (tentative)

Semifinalists Announced

April 13, 2026

2026 Winners Announced at
Main Street Now 2026 in Tulsa

For more info, resources, application link, visit mainstreet.org/gamsa

ELIGIBILITY & PROCESS

- 1) Accredited Main Street America® Program with active membership
- 2) Have not previously won GAMSA
- 3) Complete online application including narrative, photos and letters of support
- 4) Mail in payment of \$150 to:
National Main Street Center, Inc.
Attn: GAMSA
53 W. Jackson Blvd., Suite 350
Chicago, IL 60604



*If prefer to pay by credit card, email gamsa@mainstreet.org

JURY & SELECTIONS OVERVIEW

- Nationwide Jury
 - Some carry-over year to year
- 8 Semifinalists Selected
 - Phone call with Jury
 - September 2-4, 2025
- 3 Winners Selected



2026 APPLICATION UPDATES

- Reintroduce short narrative
“Tell us about your Main Street”
- Updated word counts



Berlin, Maryland. Photo by Charlene Sharp

APPLICATION TIPS & TRICKS



- Start early!
- Use data to support application
- Focus on outcomes of the Main Street organization (not future plans)
- Be proud, but not boastful
- Compose answers in a Word document
- Double- and triple-check application for consistency
- Have an extra set of eyes on your application

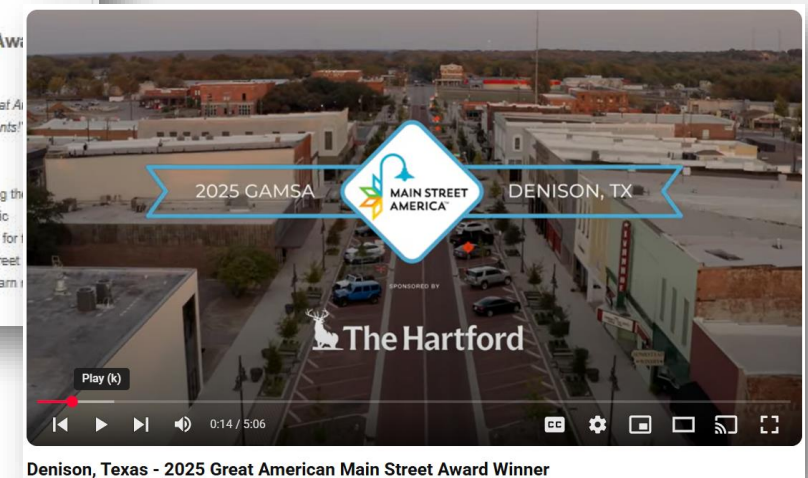
APPLICATION TIPS & TRICKS (CONT.)



- Ensure website is updated/reflects application & MSA logos included
- Letters of support
- Video strongly recommended – *does not need to be professionally produced!*
- Photos
 - 2000x1500 px, 150 dpi or higher
 - Collages with 2-4 images OK – but be prepared to submit original images, if requested
 - Index is required – using the provided template is strongly encouraged

SEMIFINALIST & WINNER BENEFITS

- Semifinalists
 - Announcement blog
 - Press release template
 - Semifinalist logo pack
 - Social media posts
- Winners
 - Short documentary film
 - Media kit & support
 - Plaque, winner logo pack
 - Ceremony at Main Street Now
 - Prominent website placement



TIPS & TRICKS

– MATT WETRICH, JEFFERSON MATTERS

- + Start early!
- + Do a deep dive on yourself – look at everything you've accomplished.
- + Visit with visitors and new residents about what drew them here.
- + Multiple non-author eyes to review.
- + Utilize the different avenues, minimize overlap in information.

GAMSA VIDS

- + <https://www.facebook.com/JeffersonMatters/videos/681539871448570>
- + <https://www.facebook.com/JeffersonMatters/videos/1055804123055490>
- + <https://www.facebook.com/JeffersonMatters/videos/1146186567522748>

JEPHERSON TO PHILEDELFFIA ...FROM THE BELL TOWER TO THE LIBERTY BELL



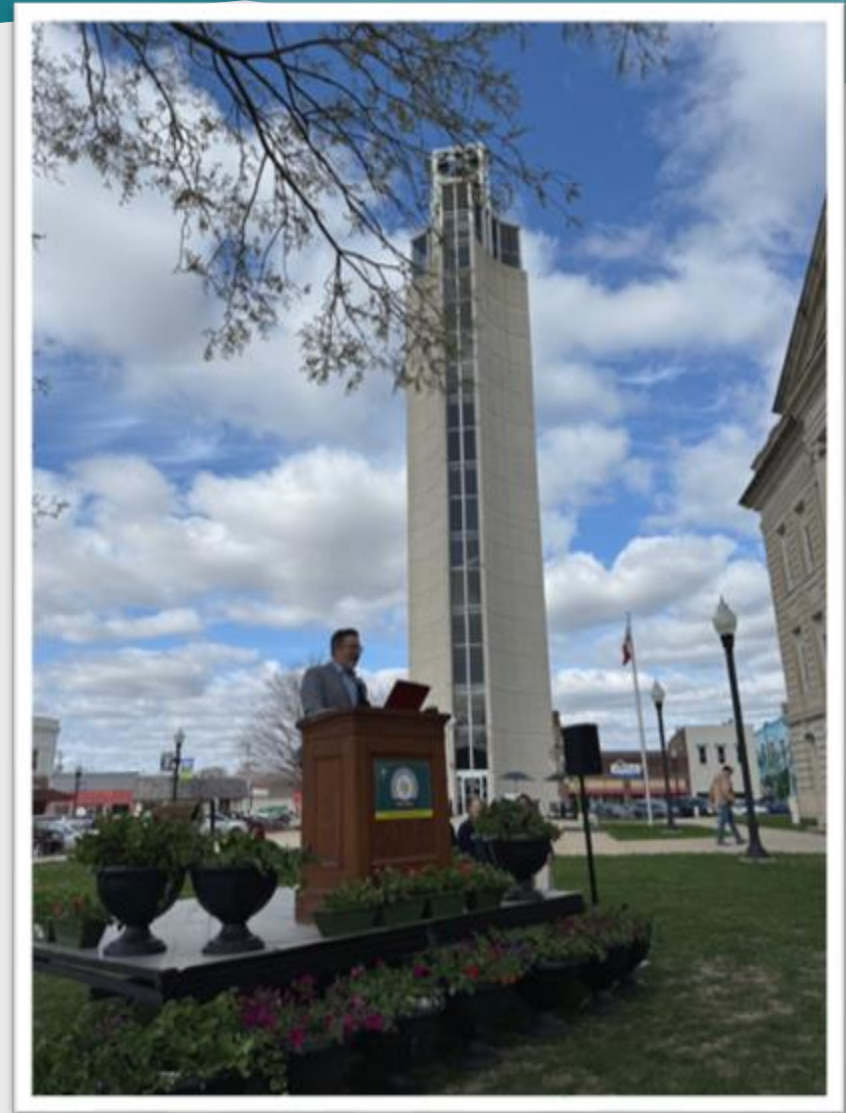
YOUR PEOPLE



LOCAL GOVERNMENT & BEYOND



PRESS CONFERENCE



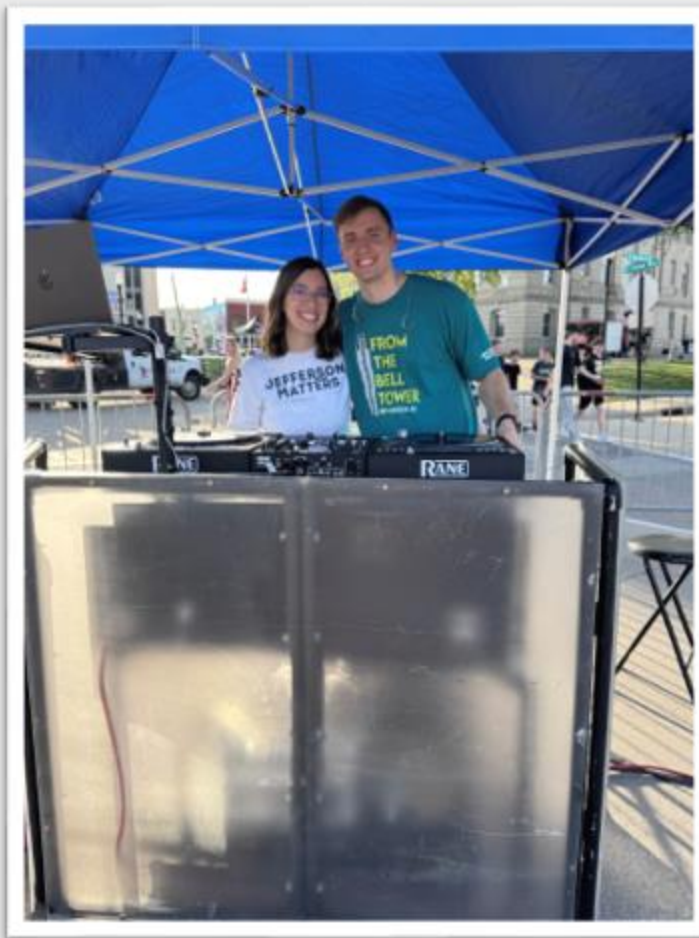
SIGNAGE



CELEBRATING GAMSAS – STREET PARTY



STREET PARTY



Q&A





**MAIN STREET
AMERICA®**

Nationally recognized.
Locally powered.™

Thank you!

Steve Amraen

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