





Portland hosts Main Street associate training program

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PORTLAND, Mich. — With Portland being a Master in the Michigan Main Street Program, it hosted an associate level training program to educate communities in Michigan about the program.

“We love hosting these types of training in downtown Portland,” said Downtown Development Authority Director and Main Street Manager Patrick Reagan. “This is our second one we have held, and we always take the opportunity to show off downtown Portland and how much Main Street has done for the community and with the community.”

The Michigan Main Street Program used Portland as a base for the training, and communities wanting to learn more about the program, and 55 participants came out.

“We had a team from the (Portland) Main Street Program, and we not only talked about successes, but all of the obstacles and wrong turns we made along the way,” said Portland Main Street Board Chairperson Joel VanSlambrouck. “This group of people heard from a lot of people from the Portland program.”

Some of the local speakers included Portland City Mayor James Barnes, Reagan, Main Street members Kathy Parsons and Wanda Urie and Portland City Manager Thomas Dempsey.

“We can help them so they don’t make the same mistakes that we did as we were growing into the program,” said VanSlambrouck. “This associate program allows a group of people interested to go out and learn the process before being selected.”

The group also heard from speakers from the Michigan Main Street Program.

“It probably had representatives from about 10 or 15 different communities throughout the mid-Michigan area,” said VanSlambrouck. “It was very well rounded.”

The group of participants were able to take a quick tour of Portland, including some of the River Trail, boardwalk and band shell.

There are three different levels of Main Street Programs. The top level is the Masters Program for cities who have been a part for several years, the Selected Level for cities who are in their first couple years, and Associate Level for cities thinking about joining the program.

“These (training programs) are for the communities that are not yet a Main Street, but are looking into it,” said Reagan. “We look forward to doing it next year if the opportunity arises.”

For more information on the Portland Main Street Program, visit <http://www.portlandmainstreet.org/>.

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