

April 2011

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Board of Directors:

Joe Allman, Chairman
Fisher & Allman

Shirley Wilkins, Secretary,
Moncure Insurance Agency

Joe Borgerding, Treasurer
Citizens Bank & Trust

Barbara Thompson, Council
President, Town of Blackstone

Richard Keller, Councilman
Town of Blackstone

Beth Winn, Economic
Restructuring Chair
Blackstone Emporium

Debbie Yancey, DBi Design
Committee Chair

Barbara Gibbs,
Barbara Y. Gibbs &
Associates

Carolyn Davis, DBi Economic
Restructuring Committee,
Access Realty

Charles Nunnally II, DBi
Economic Restructuring
Committee, Benchmark Bank

Philip Vannoorbeeck,
Town Manager

Jane Barnes, Ex-Officio,
Chamber of Commerce

DBi Welcomes Blackstone's newest retail store



Ribbon-cutting: Above, DBi Executive Director Lafayette Dickens cuts the ribbon on opening day for Kim Moody Design, trend., and Stewardship Solutions located at 108 N. Main Street. l-r (front row) Andrew Moody, Lafayette Dickens, Kim Moody, Jane Parrish, (back row) Grace McDonald, Libby Parrish, Jane Barnes, Larry Parrish, Rita Leatherwood, and Mayor Billy Coleburn.

Director's Desk

April brought its usual showers and another busy month for downtown. As you see in the photo above, new businesses continue to open in the historic district of Blackstone. The latest opening occurred at 108 N. Main Street which now houses three businesses at this location, "trend.", retail store, Kim Moody Design, interior design and wedding planning and Stewardship Solutions bookkeeping and accounting. Entrepreneurs Kim [Parrish] Moody and her husband, Andrew are now the newest business owners on Main Street. Kim also chairs the DBi Promotions Committee and she and Andrew represent a new younger breed of entrepreneurs who are literally the future of downtown Blackstone.

We had a lot of responses to our downtown survey and a few of the respondents commented that the only changes they see are the new facades! I was floored by that, especially in light of the influx of new businesses and jobs in the last few years but I do understand that these things may not be as obvious to passersby as the new paint and awnings which are visible as you drive through town. We will be doing as much as we can to get the word out about the economic growth that has accompanied the physical upgrades.

Others seem to resent the block grant because it seems to have favored certain areas thereby engendering a feeling of unfairness. Blackstone pursued the block grant as a response to the March 2004 fire that left the space known as "the hole" in the heart of downtown. The grant boundary had to be set based on the amount of blight present. The overall impact, \$3.7 million in private investment, has been extremely positive despite the fact that it did not include all of downtown.

DOWNTOWN SURVEY RESULTS

The people have spoken and here are the results of the 10 question downtown survey that DBi included in its donation letter to local residents. A total of 108 people responded to the survey. On the following pages, are the results of their responses. The feedback told us what you think of downtown Blackstone and the news is good!

Here are some things that stood out. One is that there is strong public sentiment that a town square is a needed additional improvement downtown. Another is that a budget needs to be established to promote Blackstone’s special events to visitors outside of the local area. New facades on buildings was rated as the most important change that has taken place in downtown. Small town friendliness was rated as Blackstone’s greatest asset! Of the 90% of people who feel Blackstone has improved, 41% feel the improvement has been dramatic! One out of four respondents indicated that they go downtown much more often and spend more! The overall tone of the responses is positive and indicates that most people like what they see.

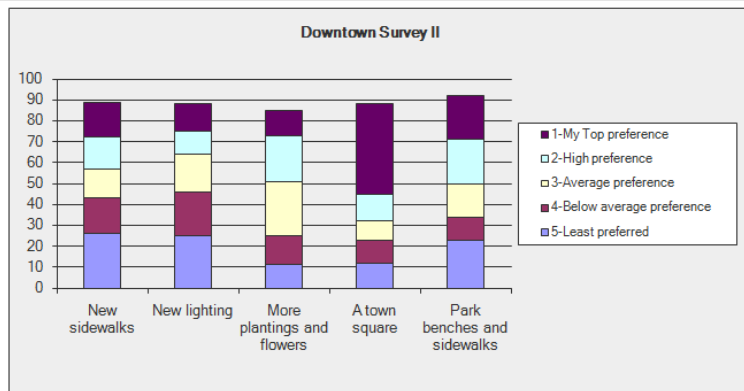
What do you think downtown Blackstone needs more of?							
Answer Options	1-Most needed	2-Highly needed	3-Needed	4-Somewhat needed	5-Optional	6-No more needed	Response Count
Restaurants	5	13	8	13	24	25	88
Retail Stores	52	19	19	23	2	3	118
Cultural attractions (includes museums, special	17	21	21	10	9	13	91
Apartment	6	9	16	15	18	26	90
Attractive public gathering spaces	21	24	18	13	12	6	94
professional offices	6	11	9	22	20	19	87
Other (please specify)							29
<i>answered question</i>							106
<i>skipped question</i>							2

Half of those who responded feel that what Blackstone needs most downtown is more retail stores! Attractive public gathering places are needed while it appears that most respondents feel that no more restaurants and no more apartments are needed downtown.



What additional improvements would you like see downtown?						
Answer Options	1-My Top preference	2-High preference	3-Average preference	4-Below average	5-Least preferred	Response Count
New sidewalks	17	15	14	17	26	89
New lighting	13	11	18	21	25	88
More plantings and flowers	12	22	26	14	11	85
A town square	43	13	9	11	12	88
Park benches and sidewalks	21	21	16	11	23	92
Other (please specify)						53
<i>answered question</i>						100
<i>skipped question</i>						8

Respondents agreed 2 to 1 that a town square is an additional improvement they would like to see downtown. Amen to that! The 2nd and 3rd place items ranked close together, more plantings and flowers along with more park benches and sidewalks. Ironically, new lighting and park benches rated equally as the least preferred additional improvement so although there is some ambivalence there, one thing is definite, a huge majority want to see a town square replace the unsightly “hole”.

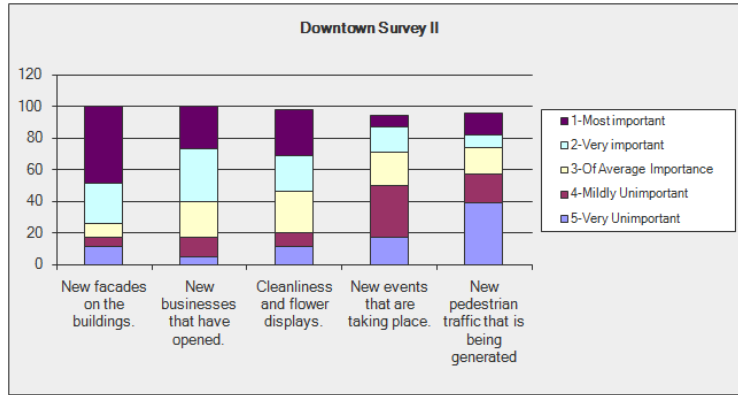


DOWNTOWN SURVEY RESULTS

What you think of Downtown Blackstone

Rate the changes that have taken place downtown.						
Answer Options	1-Most important	2-Very important	3-Of Average Importance	4-Mildly Unimportant	5-Very Unimportant	Response Count
New facades on the buildings.	49	25	9	6	11	100
New businesses that have opened.	27	33	23	12	5	100
Cleanliness and flower displays.	29	23	26	9	11	98
New events that are taking place.	7	16	21	33	17	94
New pedestrian traffic that is being generated	14	8	17	18	39	96
<i>answered question</i>						105
<i>skipped question</i>						3

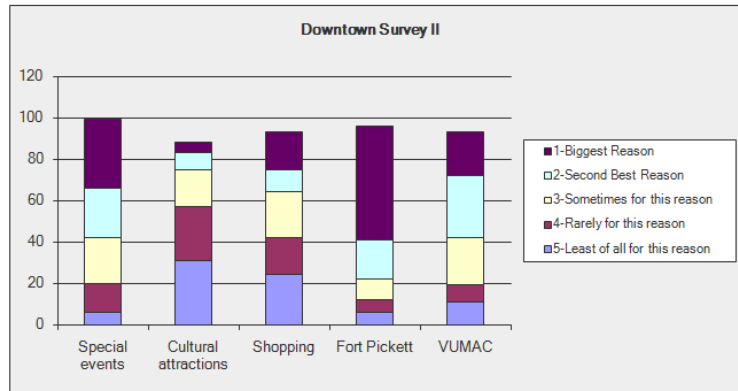
Respondents indicated that they felt the most important changes that have taken place downtown are the new facades on the buildings. They also indicated that the least important was the new pedestrian traffic being generated. This was very surprising. New businesses opened was rated as very important second to the new facades on buildings.



Why do you think people visit Blackstone? Rank the following reasons

Answer Options	1-Biggest Reason	2-Second Best Reason	3-Sometimes for this	4-Rarely for this reason	5-Least of all for this	Response Count
Special events	33	24	22	14	6	99
Cultural attractions	5	8	18	26	31	88
Shopping	18	11	22	18	24	93
Fort Pickett	55	19	10	6	6	96
VUMAC	21	30	23	8	11	93
<i>answered question</i>						106
<i>skipped question</i>						2

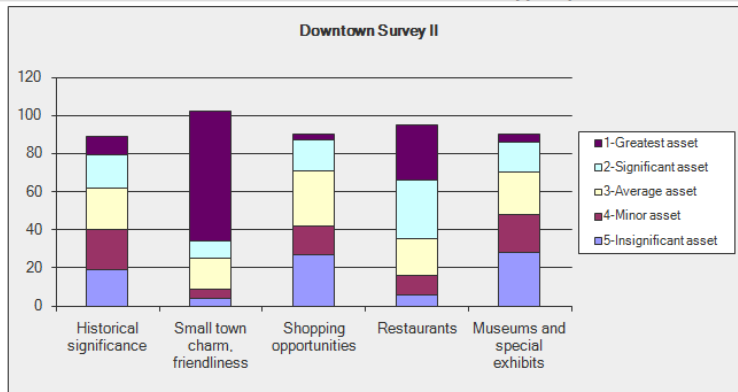
Respondents feel that Fort Pickett is the biggest draw for visitors followed by Special events and VUMAC came in 3rd place in this ranking. Respondents feel that, visitors rarely come downtown for cultural attractions and shopping ranked low on this list in the opinion of those who responded to the survey.



What do you think are downtown Blackstone's greatest assets?

Answer Options	1-Greatest asset	2-Significant asset	3-Average asset	4-Minor asset	5-Insignificant	Response Count
Historical significance	10	17	22	21	19	89
Small town charm, friendliness	68	9	16	5	4	102
Shopping opportunities	3	16	29	15	27	90
Restaurants	29	31	19	10	6	95
Museums and special exhibits	4	16	22	20	28	90
<i>answered question</i>						107
<i>skipped question</i>						1

Small town charm and friendliness ranked as the greatest asset in the mind of respondents and restaurants were rated as Blackstone's 2nd greatest asset. Shopping was rated equally as an average and an insignificant asset. Museums and special exhibits ranked as an insignificant asset.



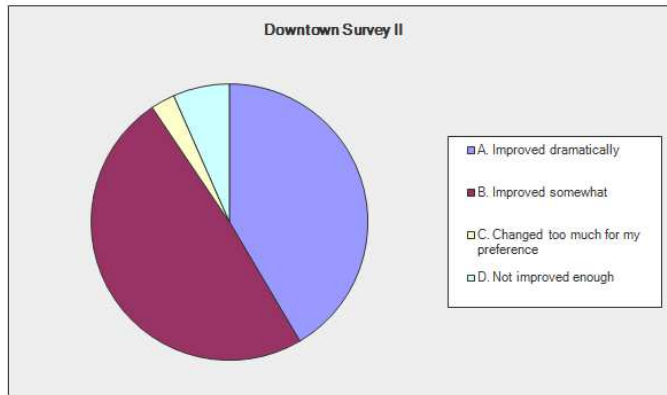
DOWNTOWN SURVEY RESULTS

What you think of downtown Blackstone

In the last 5 years, downtown Blackstone has:

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
A. Improved dramatically	41.5%	44
B. Improved somewhat	49.1%	52
C. Changed too much for my preference	2.8%	3
D. Not improved enough	6.6%	7
<i>answered question</i>		106
<i>skipped question</i>		2

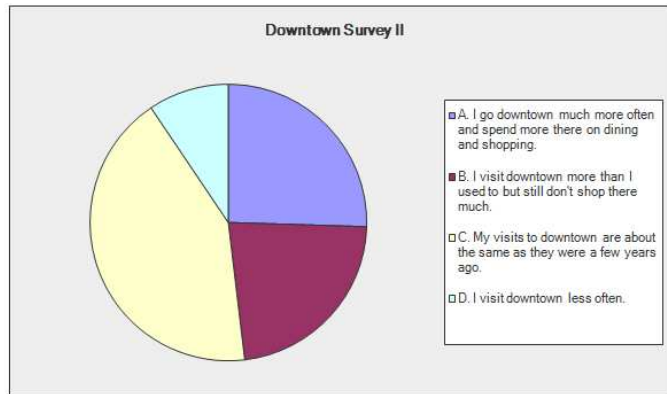
Most respondents feel that downtown Blackstone has improved somewhat and over 40% feel the change has been dramatic!



How have the changes that have taken place downtown affected you personally?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
A. I go downtown much more often and spend more	25.5%	27
B. I visit downtown more than I used to but still don't	22.6%	24
C. My visits to downtown are about the same as they	42.5%	45
D. I visit downtown less often.	9.4%	10
<i>answered question</i>		106
<i>skipped question</i>		2

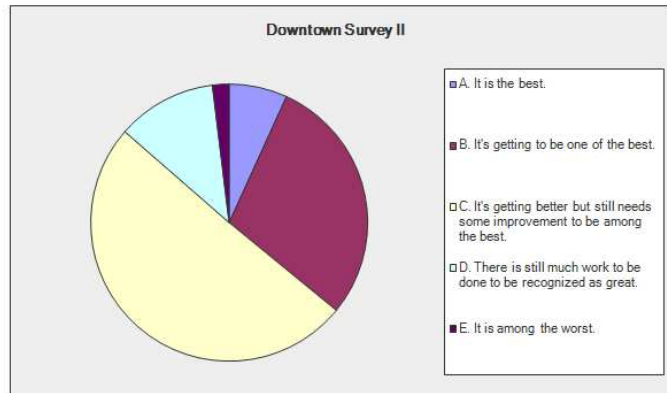
Most respondents visit downtown about the same as a few years ago but over 25% go downtown much more often and spend more! This is a good trend!



How would you compare Blackstone to towns of a similar size in Virginia?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
A. It is the best.	6.8%	7
B. It's getting to be one of the best.	29.1%	30
C. It's getting better but still needs some improvement	50.5%	52
D. There is still much work to be done to be	11.7%	12
E. It is among the worst.	1.9%	2
<i>answered question</i>		103
<i>skipped question</i>		5

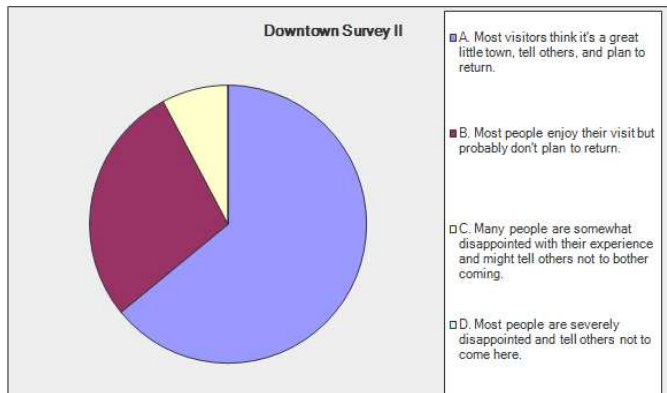
Most respondents feel downtown is still a work in progress but a third of those responding feel that it is getting to be one of the best!



How do you think Blackstone is viewed by those who visit?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
A. Most visitors think it's a great little town, tell others,	64.1%	66
B. Most people enjoy their visit but probably don't plan	28.2%	29
C. Many people are somewhat disappointed with their	7.8%	8
D. Most people are severely disappointed and tell	0.0%	0
<i>answered question</i>		103
<i>skipped question</i>		5

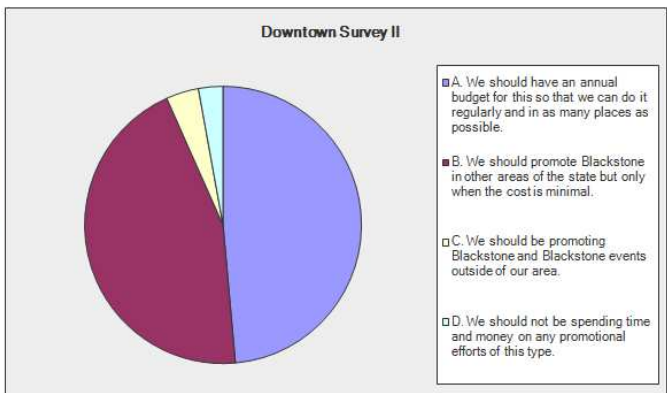
A very large majority feel that most visitors have a positive impression of downtown and tell others. A third feel visitors enjoy their visit but don't plan to return! We hope the majority is on target here and will work hard to make sure they are!



How much effort do you think Blackstone should put into attracting out of town visitors for special events, the cultural experience, shopping, etc?'

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
A. We should have an annual budget for this so that	48.6%	51
B. We should promote Blackstone in other areas of	44.8%	47
C. We should be promoting Blackstone and	3.8%	4
D. We should not be spending time and money on any	2.9%	3
<i>answered question</i>		105
<i>skipped question</i>		3

An overwhelming majority of respondents feel that Blackstone should have annual budget for attracting out of visitors to the area for special events. This indicates that we need to make this happen.



Downtown Property Owners Meeting

On Wednesday, April 27th, DBi met with property owners at the Fire station. Kyle Meyer, from the Richmond headquarters of Virginia Main Street, came and gave those in attendance, an overview of the Main Street Program. Afterwards, property owners were given the opportunity to ask any questions or voice any concerns that they were having.

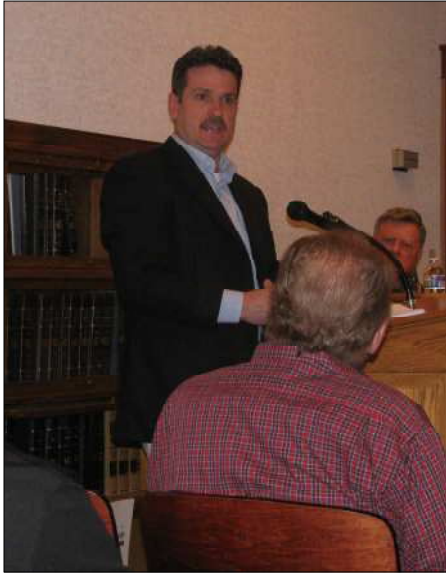


Above, Kyle Meyer addresses the property owners that came to the April 27th meeting at the Fire station.

The future of downtown Blackstone is going to be molded by its property owners. These individual building owners will need to come together and establish an agreed upon vision for the long-term development of the town. This group will need to pull up to the same table and come to terms with a strategic plan that will keep the town growing and becoming a magnet for retail businesses which should enable them to command higher rents in the long-run for their first floor Main Street store fronts. Achieving such a state of being will happen only if these owners work together and buy into the vision of a more fully functioning healthy downtown economy. It will take time to develop and it will require faith in a positive outcome for a town that has the same issues that most authentic towns face, having surpassed its hey day. Positive steps have begun and it comes down to a unified vision adapted by the downtown property owners. The future remains bright for Blackstone and the best is yet to come.

This initial property owners' meeting primarily dealt with the basics of the Virginia Main Street philosophy and its impacts which include increased private investment, increased jobs, and growth in the number of businesses, all of which have occurred in Blackstone. The beauty of the program is that it ensures that the positive benefits of downtown revitalization will be sustained over time and backed up by economic development. No amount of paint or awnings can take the place of true economic growth. Although the enhanced appearance of the town tends to engender investor confidence, it is no guarantee that it will be strong enough to attract it without the underpinnings of an organized program of work such as the Main Street model which has a proven track record of success that is backed up by measurable results.

Public Hearing on Acquiring the “hole”

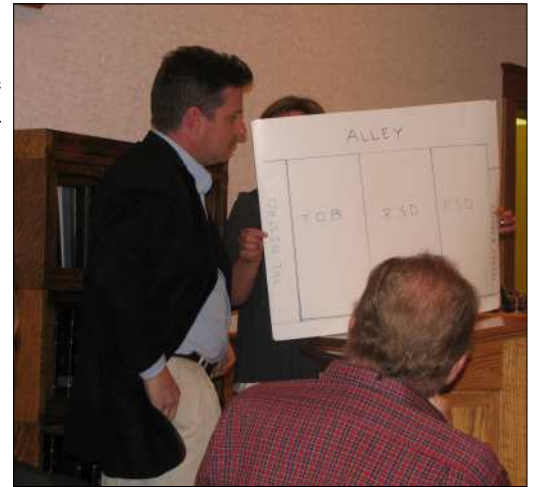


The April 18th Town Council agenda listed the Town Square Acquisition as one of two public hearings. For the next 90 minutes, many speakers came to the podium to express their opinions. Here are some of the comments from those who spoke in favor of the town going ahead with the acquisition.

Jim Hasbrouck, urged the council to take the lot from “a weed patch to a town square.” Beth Winn explained that most merchants were not interested in accessing the loan pool funds because they are not expanding so therefore they could not access the funds. Charlotte Lucy said “the hole represents the inability to get past the unresolved issues of years gone by and we need to move forward!” Francis Gilmore urged Council to buy the hole! “Please buy the hole, he said, it’s been 7 years! There is lots of new energy now. Don’t put the brakes on that energy! Replace a vacant lot with community pride!” Shirley Wilkins simply pointed out the math, \$20,000 vs \$60,000 (from the loan pool) and another \$68,000

(funds from the block grant waiting) to fix (up the lot). The last speaker in favor was DBi Board Chairman, Joe Allman, who implored council to “fulfill your partnership with the property owners who have invested 3.7 million dollars downtown. Fulfill your commitment to DHCD. This is a way for you to honor all your commitments, especially those to the community. This is a no-brainer!” Letters from the Borums and the Yanceys, two of the largest investors in downtown, were also given to Council in favor of the acquisition.

Next came time for anyone to speak against the acquisition. Bob Henkel came to the podium and said “I don’t understand it, so it is hard to embrace it totally for that reason. “ He went on to say that for 7 years, no one has done a thing and Blackstone doesn’t need another green space because we already have Seay Park and who is going to maintain it?” Mr. Henkel further said, “There is a parking problem during lunch. MY suggestion is to make it into a parking lot and use the \$68,000 to address drainage problems.”



Joe Allman, came forward to explain the property swap and the liens on the various parcels in an attempt to clarify the situation. Basically, by acquiring the property, the town clears up all the lien issues so that at this time, it can proceed with plans to develop the green space plans that were approved by council and the present lien holder, BB&T. Also at such time in the future that a prospective business wants to build on the land, it could be disposed of cleanly without the complicated entanglement of the various liens.

There was some additional discussion after the closing of the public hearing. Councilman Sam Moncure spoke of the investment value plus the good the land can be put to between now and when it is sold but Councilman Keller questioned where is the money coming from to buy the land? In the end, Councilman Nash moved to acquire and it was seconded and the motion passed unanimously. There will, however, be additional public hearings on the design and amount of parking that will go into it. The first such public hearing is set for Tuesday, May 10th at 7pm.

Concert Series Fears: legitimate or unfounded...you decide.

Town Council approved DBi's request to proceed with planning for a summer concert series at the March meeting. Since that time, a recent letter to the editor of the Courier Record expressed disappointment at the decision based on its potential negative impact on children and suggested we strive for a more "family friendly" approach. Then a week later, the following comment appeared "We need stores downtown—not beer parties." Let's examine this issue further.

Certainly, we do not want to scar children for life. Neither do we want to create an occasion for people to consume too much alcohol. In fact, the planning committee proposes a limit on the number of drinks allowed. The photos below are scenes from the "We Be Jammin' summer concert series in Franklin, Virginia. As you can see there are adults, children, and people of all ages from toddlers to seniors enjoying themselves. I even took the liberty to ask one of the two police officers about any incidents that they have and they said that people were very well behaved and rarely does anyone have to be spoken to.



Above are scenes from a the "We Be Jammin' Concert in Franklin. The kids and the adults all are having fun and relaxing in lawn chairs.



The concert series will bring more visitors downtown Blackstone and secondarily raise revenue for DBi by establishing a signature event that would create a festive family oriented fun atmosphere similar to what you see above and in the photo to the left. Although adults might enjoy a beer or a glass of wine, I wouldn't call the crowd above party animals and I would characterize this as more of a family affair than a raucous "beer party" such as depicted in the movie "Animal House". The band did inspire the outbreak of spontaneous line dancing and an opportunity to display your proficiency at the "Electric Slide". There was some drinking but the focus was clean family fun!

Fear can paralyze us but progress is always about venturing into new things with positive expectancy and events like these can usher in a new era in Blackstone and leave visitors with a good impression of the town that will inspire them to come back and shop. Improving the image of the town will also attract private investment.

Special Interest Story



Look closely at these bottles, the man said, and what do you notice? I looked and the inscription on the bottle on the right says “Fletcher’s Coca-Cola Bottling Wks, Blackstone, VA”. I had never heard of anything but Coca-cola but as my friend pointed out to me, the bottle on the left has the word Coca ground off the bottle. Interesting!

The history buff who brought these little gems to my office the other day is none other than collector and historian extraordinaire, Eddie Nash of Nash Insurance Agency. Eddie went on to tell the story of a bottler named John Fletcher who apparently had a bottling company here in Blackstone a long time ago and was sued by Coca-Cola and as a result, had to remove their name from his bottles. Eddie says he had the bottle on the right for some time but found the other one on an on-line auction so he snagged it to add to his growing collection of Blackstone artifacts.



The close-up clearly shows that the bottle on the left has had its inscription ground off. It is identical to the bottle on the right in every detail except for the obvious alteration pointed out by Mr. Nash. This is an authentic piece of Blackstone history!



Eddie was genuinely excited about his find! His passion as an unofficial historian and a bona fide collector continues unabated. If you get the chance, stop by Nash Insurance Agency. His office is practically a museum with artifacts dating back as early as the Civil War period! He also knows a great deal about the history of the various buildings in town. If you have a mutual interest in history, you can’t help but be fascinated by all the things that Eddie has collected over the years and the story behind them which he is glad to share with anyone who will take the time or interest to listen and learn.

Blackstone's First Cruise-in for the year, April 30, 2011



Photo courtesy of Walter Mac Osborne



Photo courtesy of Walter Mac Osborne



The first Cruise-in of the year took place on Saturday, April 30th. A couple of new wrinkles included the music of “Elvis” to kick things off. The “Elvis” act was provided courtesy of the Classic Grill. Over 60 cars showed up to take part in the festivities so it was an amazing success! Bob Thomas said that he had about 50 or more visitors tour Schwartz tavern. He was exhausted but having people tour the museums is one our goals so DBi recruited the help of Kimberly Broughton and Ginger Ferguson from Citizens’ Bank & Trust and they did a great job promoting the tours and distributing a special flier that DBi created with coupons and special offers. Jane Barnes, the Blackstone Chamber of Commerce Executive Director, did her part as well, in helping steer folks to the museums and downtown shops. Be sure to thank Walter Mac and Louis DeNitto for their huge contributions to growing this event which is becoming quite a tourist attraction for Blackstone on the last Saturday of each month!

The flier below was distributed at the Cruise-in

Blackstone Herb Cottage, 104 N. Main Street

Gourmet burgers, flatbread pizzas, panini sandwiches, homemade salads and soups. Friday night and Sunday Buffet

\$1.00 off any \$10.00 or more purchase

Spencer Drug Store

\$3.00 COUPON

With a \$25 gift purchase!!!

Lucky 8's, 114 S. Main Street

Take 8% off all food orders. Family Restaurant in front and Sports Bar all the way in the back! Opening at 6pm

Watkins Jewelers 100 S. Main Street

Welcome Cruisers

25% off (with coupon)

Bulova, Citizen, Eco Drive, Seiko, and Pulsar watches Expires 5/29/11

Saturday 9:30a.m.-5:00 p.m.

Blackstone Consignment

15% Off all glassware, & pottery

201 S. Main Street

Blackstone INCORPORATED

Welcome to Blackstone!
Cruise-ins held monthly

In addition to the cars, today we have a special treat...ELVIS courtesy of the Classic Grill!!

Merchant Offers

% off

UP TO 10% OFF WITH QUALIFYING PURCHASES AND THE COUPONS HERE. SEE THE SPOONS FOR THE DETAILS.

VISIT OUR MUSEUMS

SCHWARTZ TAVERN

This is the oldest building in Blackstone dating back to the 1700s. An inventory was taken at the time of John Schwartz's death in 1807 and it is displayed in situ. Many of the period furnishings in the Tavern are matched to those listed on the inventory list which adds a very authentic feel to the place. Take a tour today!

THE MUSEUM HAS EXTENDED OPERATING HOURS JUST FOR YOU TO TAKE A TOUR BEFORE YOU GO TO THE TAVERN.

THE ROBERT THOMAS CARRIAGE MUSEUM

The Carriage museum has more than two dozen horse drawn carriages that have been restored meticulously to pristine condition.

Touring the Carriage museum will be a step back in time and the carriages help give a glimpse into what life was like when people rode to town or to their wedding in these very same vehicles.

VISIT OUR NEW SHOPS

trend., 108 N. Main Street

[Downtown Blackstone's newest and hippest retail store] invites you to stop in for refreshments while you shop!

Divinely Inspired Boutique

118 E. Broad St.

10% Off Bring coupon or mention Cruise-in

STORE HOURS: 10a.m.-6:00 p.m.

Little Shepherds Florist & Gifts

10% off all purchases! 116 S. Main Street

House of Fashions, 215-A S. Main St.

10% off already low prices!

UAVPRO RC World 120 W. Broad

All Cruise-in attendees get an owner authorized 10% storewide discount! See live demonstrations of our wide selection of remote control airplanes, helicopters, and monster trucks at the cruise-in. Located just down the block from Watkins Jewelry Store.

DBi creates fliers for each Cruise-in centered around special offers and the museums in an effort to increase foot traffic from the visitors to participating local restaurants and retail shops.

YOUR COMPLETE MAP OF THE BLACKSTONE HISTORIC DISTRICT compliments of Downtown Blackstone Inc.

- 1 Piza Hut
- 2 Unique Cuts
- 3 Johnny's Firm & Fitness
- 4 Edgerton Tire
- 5 Jackson Hewitt
- 6 House Of Fashions
- 7 Farmers Café
- 8 Acapulco's Mexican Grille
- 9 All About Hair
- 10 Oulton Attorney/Lee of Virginia
- 11 Walker Group
- 12 Monocure
- 13 Blackstone Consignment
- 14 Ollie's Computers/Walden & Walden
- 15 Vacant
- 16 Gravat & Gravat
- 17 Nelans & Nelans
- 18 Weight Watchers
- 19 Teehey & Teehey PC
- 20 Sullivan's Bistro
- 21 Vacant
- 22 Town & Country Cleaners
- 23 Divinely Inspired Boutique
- 24 J&L Renovations
- 25 Bewell's Hardware
- 25a Schwartz Tavern
- 25b Carriage Museum
- 26 Winn Furniture/Western Union
- 27 Reitz Dentistry
- 28 Vacant
- 29 Spencers Drug Store/Yanceys Fancies
- 30 Sullivan's Tavern
- 31 Herb Cottage
- Kim Moody's Designs/trend/Stewards hip
- 32 Solutions

- 33-35 Blackstone Emporium
- 36 Classic Grill
- 37 Blackstone Auto Parts
- 38 Family Dollar
- 39 Race-In
- 40 Slip-in
- 41 Green Automotive
- 42 Wrights Auto Supply
- 43 Jenkins Pure Gas Station
- 44 Mitchell's Restaurant
- 45 McDonalds
- 46 Brothens Piza
- 47 Bon Secours Family Practice
- 48 Hardees
- 49 Dr. Leroy Bradshaw Dentistry
- 50 Blackstone Antiques Mall
- 50 Hidden Creek Primitives
- 51 Sheffield Warehouse
- 51 HCC Personal Care
- 52 Citizens Drive-in
- 53 Just Sew Embroidery
- 54 Dominion Carpet Mtlk
- 55 Gemini Productions LLC
- 56 Olde Grapes Wine Shop
- 57 UAV Pro RC World
- 58 Odies
- 59 Gilmore Environmental
- 60 Downtown Blackstone Inc.
- 61 Fisher & Allman NYL
- 62 Blackstone Ballroom & Conference Center
- 63 Richard Cobb Ins.
- 64 Watkins Jewelers
- 65 Paul "Skip" Williams State Farm
- 66 Barbara Y. Gibbs & Associates
- 67 Lucky 8s Sports Bar
- 68 Little Shepherds Florist and Gifts
- 69 Citizens Bank Main Branch
- 70 Town Hall
- 71 Blackstone Police Department
- 72 BB&T Bank
- 73 Nash Insurance
- 74 Tennek Realty
- 75 Natonwide
- 76 Fran & Jamies Discount Center
- 77 Blackstone Realty
- 78 Connelly Financial Service
- 79 The Book End
- 80 Sanitary Barber Shop
- 81 Courier Record/Notto way Printing
- 82 Blu Sky Communications
- 83 Main Street Custom Cabinets
- 85 Flowers & Foliage of Virginia
- 86 Notto way Office Services
- 86b Vacant corner bldg
- 87 Vacant E moon
- 88 Bradford Heat & Air

DBi links downtown to V.U.M.A.C.

Welcome Blackstone Retreat!!

Exciting in-store specials offered wherever balloons are displayed downtown.

First Monthly Cruise-in: 

Saturday, April 30th from 4pm until 8pm at the corner of Tavern and Main Streets cars will be on display & an Elvis impersonator will entertain you courtesy of the Classic Grill. **FREE OF CHARGE!!**

trend, 108 N. Main Street 
 (Downtown Blackstone's newest and hippest retail store) invites you to stop in Thurs-Sat, April 28-30th for refreshments while you shop!

Blackstone Herb Cottage, 104 N. Main Street
 Gourmet burgers, flatbread pizzas, panini sandwiches, homemade salads and soups. Friday night and Sunday Buffet
\$1.00 off any \$10.00 or more purchase

Divinely Inspired Boutique
 118 E. Front St.
 Blackstone, VA 22624
 (434) 292-3230
10% Off
 ENTIRE PURCHASE
 Expires 5/2/11
 (Some coupons or services V.U.M.A.C. do not apply)
 STORE HOURS:
 10a.m.-7:30p.m. Friday
 10a.m.-6:00p.m. Saturday

House of Fashions, 215-A S. Main St.
 10% off already low prices!


Little Shepherds Florist & Gifts
 116 S. Main Street
 10% off all purchases!

More (over)

DBi seeks to link downtown to the visitors who frequent the Virginia United Methodist Assembly Center each year. To accomplish this, we have partnered with VUMAC and they have agreed to provide us a list of groups visiting the facility each month with suggestions as to which groups would be ideal to provide materials to lure them downtown to shop or dine.

The latest example of that was Blackstone Retreat which was in town from Thursday, April 28th through Sunday, May 1st. We were informed that a group of 225 were in town so within a week of finding out, we set out to secure as many special offers as we could from restaurants and retail shops to promote on their behalf. Of course, not everyone took advantage of this free advertising but for those who did, it seems to have paid off with increased foot traffic. We will continue to make this avenue available for all businesses in the area that wish to participate.

The images to the left show the front and back of a flier that was created and distributed at VUMAC. Note that many local shops gave special offers that were printed on this piece. If you own a business in the area and would like to take advantage of this, we would be happy to add your coupon to our next flier so that you can benefit as well.

There is no cost to businesses to participate in this ongoing effort. This is just one of the many opportunities that DBi initiates to promote businesses in the historic district. Don't hesitate to send us a notice via e-mail at manager@downtownblackstone.org or you may call the DBi office at (434) 292-3041 to have your offer added to our next flier.

Our office already has a list of visitors for May so we encourage as many restaurants and retail shops as possible to take advantage of this free service. Our mission is to provide leadership in developing and promoting downtown Blackstone as an inviting place to visit and shop, a productive place to work, and a profitable place to invest. This initiative simply fits into that mission.

Watkins Jewellers 100 S. Main Street
 Welcome Blackstone Retreat
 10% off our collection of fine sterling by British Designer Kit Heath

 Friday 9:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.
 Saturday 9:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
 (434) 292-3230

Clay's Garden Center, 1301 S. Main Street
 Clay's offers beautiful annuals and perennials, hanging baskets, vegetable plants with discounts given for large quantities on certain items. Gift ideas include Yankee Candles, Willow Tree Angels, pottery, and Virginia chimes. We also have fresh produce and vegetables! For bird lovers, we have a special blend of bird seed that the birds are loving! Come on by and meet our family at Clay's.
 Family owned & serving Blackstone for 17 yrs
 Store Hours are Mon - Fri 8:30AM - 6:00PM, Saturday 8:30-5:00pm and Sunday 1PM-5PM.

UAVPRO RC World 120 W. Broad 
 All Blackstone Retreat attendees get an owner authorized 10% storewide discount! Come by for live demonstrations of our wide selection of remote control airplanes, helicopters, and monster trucks. Located just down the block from Watkins Jewelry Store.

Lucky 8's Restaurant
 114 S. Main Street
 Take 8% off all food orders. Family Restaurant in front and Sports Bar all the way in the back!
 Opening at 6pm
 Thursday - Saturday

Spencer Drug Store 100 N. Main Street

\$3.00 COUPON
 With a \$25 gift purchase!!!
 (434) 292-3132

Upcoming Events

The next Chamber of Commerce Network Luncheon will take place at Mitchells Restaurant on Wednesday, May 11th at noon. The speaker will be Town Manager Philip Vannoorbeeck and the cost is \$10 per person which includes lunch. Come out and meet the new Town Manager!

The annual Town-wide Clean-Up sponsored by the Blackstone Rotary Club will be held on Saturday, May 14, 2011. All citizens of the town and surrounding community are asked to join together to clean up our streets and neighborhoods! Individuals, as well as civic groups, clubs, churches, and school children are encouraged to participate in “spring cleaning” our town, as we show our pride in our town! We will gather at Seay Park at 8:00 a.m. on May 14th for a morning of good, “clean” fun!

Save the Date! June 11th, 2011



Date: SATURDAY 06/11/2011

ANNOUNCES BLACKSTONE'S 2nd Annual Fly-in:

Wing Fling

Time: 9:00 am—4:00 pm

Location: Fort Pickett Airfield

Two fun things on the same day! Part I 9:30 a.m.—4:00 p.m. Wing Fling, Part II Texas Festival! Make a day of it in Blackstone on June 11th!

The first Annual Blackstone Chamber of Commerce Golf Outing will take place on Saturday, June 15th beginning at 11:00 a.m. at the Nottoway River Country Club!

BREAKING NEWS: COUNCIL VOTES 4-1 FOR GREEN SPACE

The design of the hole is an important issue to the future development of downtown Blackstone for many reasons. This space is in the heart of downtown and its design will determine its use. Its design will have an impact on the longterm future of downtown's image and it will serve as the icing on the cake topping off the improvements that have gone on up to this point. A public hearing was held on Tuesday, May 10th at 7:00 p.m. at Town Council to discuss the future design of the property known as “the hole”. After several citizens gave their input, the design that was presented and approved by Town Council last March, was once again voted in as the one that will be implemented thus ending the parking versus green space debate which had recently been resurrected!

Committee News

The Promotions Committee

The Promotions Committee continues to formulate final plans for the Concert Series. Meetings have taken place with local law enforcement regarding security and location. We will meet with the DBi Board with final recommendations before meeting with the necessary sub-committee and hope to present our final requests before the Town Council at its upcoming May meeting.

The Organization Committee

Thank you to all the residents who responded to our downtown survey. We will need two volunteers each month for 4-7pm at the Cruise-ins to direct visitors to the museums and to distribute brochures that list special offers from merchants. DBi will also be seeking help for at future events such as the concert series. If you are available and willing to help, please let us know. You can call (434) 292-3041 or send a message to manager@downtownblackstone.org.

The Design Committee

On Saturday, June 25th, nine Warrant Officer Candidates from Ft. Pickett will volunteer their efforts to paint tree grates throughout downtown. Also hanging baskets will go up soon and attention will be given to the urns on Main Street and replanting them with perennials.

Design Tip for the month:



Spring brings new growth! As blossoms peak through, so do the weeds! Help in our effort to keep downtown looking in tip top shape. Look around your building, and if you see any weeds growing, spray them with weed killer now before they grow tall and become unsightly.

The Economic Restructuring Committee

The ER committee wishes to thank those property owners who attended our meeting! We hope that you took some valuable information from the gathering. We will have follow up meetings with you as we work toward arriving at a unified vision for the future of downtown.

Business Spotlight: Kim Moody Design, trend, Stewardship Solutions

3 New Businesses in one convenient location at 108 N. Main Street!



Andrew & Kim [Parrish] Moody, who returned to Nottoway County last year after a decade of living in Harrisonburg, Staunton, and Orange, Virginia have recently “finished” renovations on 108 North Main Street (the former Cole’s Men’s Shop). The two have opened “trend.” a retail store for home goods, wedding and baby shower gifts as well as products such as Burt’s Bees, OXO, Umbra, and Woodwick Candles, and works by Virginia artists and craftspeople. trend. focuses on items that are distinctive and different than other shops in the area. As the tagline states, “trend. – fresh home goods for modern families.”

In addition to the store, 108 North Main Street will house the office and studio of Kim Moody Design, a premier Interior Design and Event Planning firm that has been in operation since 2004. Kim Moody Design travels around the state to serve bridal clients for full service event planning, or “weekend of” coordination, fresh flowers for weddings, as well as customized interior design services for both residential and commercial clients.

Andrew's bookkeeping and accounting company, Stewardship Solutions, will share office space in the building as well. Stewardship Solutions focuses on providing affordable bookkeeping services for individuals, families, and small businesses. Since the company was started, Andrew has been busy assisting clients with household, small business, farm, and rental property bookkeeping services.

BELOW ARE EXAMPLES OF ITEMS YOU WILL FIND IN trend.



In the three weeks that Kim Moody Design has been open downtown, the business has brought a number of 'out of towners' to Blackstone. Just in the last few weeks her clients traveling to Downtown Blackstone have included individuals from, North Carolina, Florida, Williamsburg, Alexandria, Richmond, Dinwiddie, Harrisonburg, Kenbridge, Brunswick, Farmville, and even the countries of Indonesia, and Australia!



2011 Fundraising Campaign progress to date

Downtown Blackstone Inc. is proud to report positive business and job growth in the Historic District since 2007! There has also been over \$3.7 million dollars in private investment downtown and the vacancy rate has been reduced by 68% in that time! Our impact is measurable, visible, substantial and ongoing! We promised to publish our donor list in the newsletter as well as on our website. As we continue to receive donations, we will update the list monthly. If you or someone you know would like to support this cause, please make note of the mailing address and e-mail address listed below.

Donations are tax deductible and can be made by check payable to D.B.I. (107 W. Broad Street, Blackstone, VA 23824) or use paypal online. Our website address is www.downtownblackstone.org. Donation levels are as follows:

Friend Of Downtown (Up to \$49)

Dan Clatterbuck, Judy Amos, David L. & Lily B. Varner, Leroy Cousins, Bill & Jackie Reid, Howard E. Halfacre, Robert William Buntin, Joan L. Bates, Bernice Booth, Sara G. Carson, James & Christine Oliver, George & Anne Green, Thomas P. Inge

Blackstone Supporter (\$50 to \$99)

Homefront Appliances, Jim & Christine Hasbrouck, Sally Beale

Downtown Advocate (\$100 to \$499)

Dunc & Myra Quicke, Shirley Wilkins, Lynn Shekleton, Joe Allman, Teefey & Teefey P.C. Spencer's Drug Store Inc., Florence F. Cummins

Blackstone Partner (\$500 to \$999)

S.B. Cox Ready-Mix, Inc.

Revitalization Benefactor (\$1,000 to \$4,999)



Revitalization Leader (\$5,000 or more)

Thank you one and all for your support! So far, we have received \$2,850 in donations in the calendar year 2011!

The DBi Mission Statement:

"D.B.I. will provide leadership in developing and promoting Downtown Blackstone as an inviting place to visit and shop, a productive place to work, and a profitable place to invest."

Visit us online at: www.downtownblackstone.org