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Main Street in Rocky Mount named Great Main Street In-the-Making

Rocky Mount, N.C.-Anyone who has enjoyed the classic charm of a Main Street knows intuitively when it's a "great" place. Often, it acts as a gathering place for residents and visitors, as well as functioning as the cultural, historic and economic hub for the community. Successful Main Streets are not created overnight. They take years of planning and developing partnerships to achieve a common vision.

The citizens of Rocky Mount will be pleased that Main Street has officially been recognized as a "Great Main Street In-the-Making" in the 2016 Great Places in North Carolina awards program, sponsored by the North Carolina Chapter of the American Planning Association (APA-NC).

A Main Street In-the-Making is a street that is still being planned or developed, but has great potential for success. Rocky Mount's nomination highlighted the Douglas Block Plan, Streetscape Plan and Downtown Master Plans as key to capturing the community's vision for Main Street and identifying appropriate implementation strategies.

City staff forged many partnerships with a wide range of stakeholders to begin implementing the vision for Main Street. Over the past 14 years, the city has invested \$50 million in revitalization projects in the vicinity of Main Street coupled with \$10 million in private funding. These efforts led an expert panel of judges to choose Rocky Mount's Main Street as this year's Great Main Street In-the-Making. Rocky Mount is the only community to receive this particular award this year.

The expert panel noted Rocky Mount's "work over the last 20 years that has accelerated recently." Said one panel member, "Rocky Mount realized the benefits of sound planning and collaborative efforts to attract private investment on all scales."

The Great Places in North Carolina awards are designed to help celebrate great communities throughout the state and were given in both Professional's and People's Choice categories. The Professional's category includes a detailed nomination process that requires in-depth descriptions of the work and partnerships that went into creating the main street. Every great main street has a story, and this contest allows those involved to tell that story.

"All of these 'Great Main Streets' represent excellent examples of community-based planning at its best," said John Morck, president of APA-NC. "Through this program, we celebrate great places in our state and the local partnerships that have worked collaboratively to make these places great."

An expert panel selected three other North Carolina main streets for recognition in the Professionals' Category. From the nominations submitted, the panel recognized Main Street in Waynesville, Center and Broad Streets in Statesville and Trade and Matthews Stations Streets in Matthews as "Great Main Streets." In addition, the panel selected Main Street in Rocky Mount as a "Great Main Street In-the-Making."

In the People's Choice category, where the winners were chosen by popular vote in an online contest, Pitt County's County Home Complex won "People's Choice: Great Place for Healthy Living." The Southeastern Building in Greensboro was recognized as the "People's Choice: Great Historic Rehabilitation."

In addition to being featured on the GreatPlacesNC.org website and the NC Chapter of the American Planning Association website, winners receive marketing materials to use in their business and economic development efforts, an award at a special local recognition event to be held this summer in their community, and will be recognized at the upcoming APA-NC Annual Conference to be held in Asheville in September.

The program's goal is to celebrate Great Places in North Carolina, recognize the hard work and partnerships that created them, and provide examples of successful places to the rest of the state. This year marks the fifth year the program has recognized great places across the state. Building on the success of the previous four years' Great Places in North Carolina initiatives, APA-NC is pleased to recognize these great communities in North Carolina. To learn more about each of the selected communities, visit www.greatplacesnc.org where a photo gallery and list of the winners will soon be available.

About APA – NC

The North Carolina Chapter of the American Planning Association is an organization of 1,500 professional and citizen planners dedicated to preserving and creating great communities throughout North Carolina. The annual conference for the APA – NC will be Sept. 13-16 in Asheville, N.C. For more information, please visit www.apa-nc.org.

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