



Centertown Park in Bloom

Thanks to The Blue Ridge Garden Club who have provided the potted flowers in Centertown Park. Roslyn Reynolds with the garden club has assembled a weekly task force that will be cleaning up the Centertown Park weekly and they will handle the maintenance of the flowers.



Bedford Farmers' Market Operates Tuesday & Fridays from 7:00 AM until 2:00 PM. The Bedford County Farmers Market in Forest is on Saturday from 8-1



The deadline for getting information included in the next newsletter (October-November issue) is October 15, 2011. Provide any information to Sergei Troubetzkoy at sergei@visitbedford.com or call him at 540-587-5682.

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Centertown News



August-September 2011

Bedford, Virginia

30th Annual Centerfest Will Offer Many Changes

Volunteers have been working for months on plans for this year's Centerfest, exploring a number of new layouts and activities that will change the look and feel of the event. The committee has been meeting on a regular basis to discuss ways of infusing new life into the event, and their efforts will result in many refinements that will give the festival a new look. One of Virginia's oldest and largest street festivals, features artists and crafters, handmade items, live music of all types on more than four outdoor stages, tons of great food, activities for the kids including pony rides, Alpacas, face painting and a giant slide, non-profit, political, and other types of organizations, and great local merchants, too. A great event to come out and enjoy. Vendor space is still available.

Some of the key changes planned for this year's Centerfest include the following:

- There will no longer be a stage blocking the southern end of the railroad bridge on Bridge Street. Instead, people will be encouraged to walk across the bridge to activities being planned at The Bower Center for the Arts on the other side of the bridge.
- The Bower Center will host official Centerfest events for the first time, providing Centerfest with the opportunity to have an indoor venue for festival activities.

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30th Annual Centerfest Will Offer Changes

- Vendors along Bridge Street will be in the center of the street where they will not be visually blocking storefronts. Stores are encouraged to set up tables in front of their stores to encourage people to come inside. There is no charge for Centertown merchants to do set up displays outside of their business.
- Food vendor spacing will be expanded when possible to try and avoid pedestrian traffic. Bottled water will be for sale elsewhere so that people simply wanting beverages will not have to wait in a line behind people purchasing food.

EVENTACULAR Seminar Offers Suggestions for Centertown Merchants

Bedford Main Street, Inc., in conjunction with Virginia Main Street, The Virginia Small Business Development Centers, The Small Business Administration and George Mason University Mason Enterprise Center sponsored an informative workshop, **TEAM EVENTACULAR – Towns, Events & Merchants Partnering for Profits** on August 8 led by entrepreneur Marc Willson. The workshop, held at The Bower Center for the Arts, was followed by one-on-one consulting sessions for the remainder of Monday, August 8 and the following day where Mr. Willson offered advice to merchants and restaurateurs on how to better market their respective business.

KEY THINGS TO REMEMBER ABOUT SPECIAL EVENTS SUCH AS CENTERFEST:

- Most festivals are intended to introduce new and return visitors to the downtown and to bring out the local citizens.
- Most towns market these events above and beyond what the individual merchants can afford on their own.
- Although many people who attend festivals do not make purchases on that day, mainly because they don't want to carry packages around, studies show that many RETURN to shops afterwards to purchase items that they saw during the festival. Festivals act to introduce many who do not normally come into the area to what you have to offer.
- Whatever you do, do not close your business during a festival. It sends the wrong message to potential customers. You need to encourage them to come into your place of business by setting up a table showcasing your most popular items/products at your entrance, handing out coupons, holding a raffle or drawing. Whatever promotion you plan, do it in a way that encourages them to come inside your business.



Support the World's Best Little Town!

Bedford Main Street is always in need of volunteers, and could use your support for Centerfest on September 24th, from 10am until 6pm, and again during the live outdoor concert in the Farmers Market from 7-10pm. If you can help, please call: 540-586-2148.



LIBERTYFEST A SUCCESS DESPITE WEATHER

Despite rain during the first two hours of this annual event, this year's LIBERTYFEST on July 4 managed to be successful with Bedford Main Street, Inc. making a small profit. Crowds finally showed up as the rain ended. Thanks to the vendors and volunteers who helped to make this a success.

Do you know?

■ **July & August are two of the biggest months of the entire year (October is also huge) for tourists, yet many businesses close for vacations or cut-back on their hours during this key season!**

■ **Did you know that 70% of sales to tourists are done AFTER 6:00 PM?**

You don't have to work longer hours, just consider changing your hours to accommodate more visitors AND locals. Open later in the day and stay open into the early evening hours. Be open the same amount of hours, just different ones. If you are open from 9:00 AM until 5:00 PM, people who work for a living cannot do business with you!

Mr. Willson discussed ways in which businesses located in small downtown areas can use special events and festivals as a way to market their business to the thousands of people who come to such events. He explained that many merchants do not take advantage of festivals which bring thousands of potential customers by their place of business simply because they do not necessarily see sales on that actual day. It is important, he explained, to introduce such people to a downtown area as a place to return to shop and dine, and that many that come to festivals do not come that day to shop or dine in the area's business, they are coming to enjoy the festival.

Taking advantage of thousands of people walking by your place of business who may never have experienced that downtown is important, and if they are treated in a hospitable fashion and find the area interesting, they will return. Having your business closed sends the wrong message to these people and they are more likely not to return if they find many businesses closed. Mr. Willson suggested ways to entice potential customers into your place of business. First of all, be open. If possible, place a small table at the entrance to your business to attract attention and to serve as a festive gateway into your business. Have an activity at your table such as a raffle and/or have some of your most appealing products outside for sale, possibly food samples if you are a restaurant, as a way to lure them inside. Make them come inside your business to pay for any items for sale outside, you want to force them to see what is offered in your business. If you have something such as a raffle, you can use this as a way to capture information about potential customers by getting their e-mail address, and perhaps offer festival coupons to encourage them to spend money either that day or perhaps at a later time.

ARE YOU A MEMBER of BEDFORD MAIN STREET, Inc.?

SUPPORT OF BEDFORD MAIN STREET, INC.
SUPPORTS CENTERTOWN BEDFORD— KEEPING
LOCAL DOLLARS LOCAL!

Some of what Bedford Main Street, Inc.
does for you, for the community & for your business-

- Encourages visitors and locals to shop & dine in Centertown through advertising, co-operative promotional opportunities, the website, 2nd Fridays, billboards along Rt. 460, the Bedford Farmers' Market, seeks new businesses for Centertown and fosters the development and operation of special events.
- Offers opportunities for business owners/operators to learn from marketing and operational experts at workshops offered through Bedford Main Street, Inc.
- Offers to a forum to express concerns and/or to seek assistance. Business owners and operators are welcome to attend merchant meetings and to become active members of the Board and/or various committees.
- All Board & Committee Members volunteer their services to help Centertown Bedford. Your participation is encouraged!

Please accept the enclosed contribution to support the work of
Bedford Main Street, Inc. FRIEND (Individual) : \$25 - \$99

CONTRIBUTOR (Business) \$100 - \$175

SUPPORTER: \$176 - \$250 DONOR : \$250 - \$499

SPONSOR: \$500 - \$ 999 Other: _____

Make checks payable to "Bedford Main Street."

Bedford Main Street, Inc. • P.O. Box 405 • Bedford, VA 24523

Centertown in the News... Centertown in the News...

"Mom & Me" Exhibit- Art on Depo



Art works by Perri Mason and her Mom, Erni Heaser are on display throughout September at Art on Depo as "Featured Artists."

The Wonders of Age – Beulah Witt

Opening September 9, paintings by Beulah Witt at Goose Creek Studio.



Bedford Country Store

What was once the Bedford General Store is now under new ownership and is now The Bedford Country Store.



309 Winery & Restaurant

offers lunch and dinner Wednesdays through Sundays. Wine and crafted beers, daily specials and cheese or chocolate fondue!

Floors & More;

Shooters Family Billiards & Arcade

Jann and Bob Sloper have moved to Bedford and re-started Floors & More, and Shooters Family Billiards and Arcade.



The Bedford Social Club had determined that Thursday is "Date Night" in Bedford and they are offering deals like a bottle of wine, appetizer, 2 salads, 2 entrees and a dessert to share. all for 50 bucks...every Thursday.



SOME CENTERTOWN BUSINESSES NOW HAVE SUNDAY HOURS

As mentioned in the last issue of this newsletter, Bedford Main Street, Inc. is encouraging businesses to be open on Sundays and into the evening hours.

- Bedford Country Store – Serving Breakfast & Lunch, open
- 309 Wine serving lunch and dinner, open 11:00 AM – 7:00 PM.
- Bower Center for the Arts – Opening Sundays beginning in September from 2:00 PM until 5:00 PM.
- North Bridge Antiques – Open.
- Court Street Pizza on Bridge – open for lunch.

If your business is interested in expanding your hours, let us know so that it can be included FREE OF CHARGE in the brochure produced by the Bedford Welcome Center on businesses that are open on Sundays!

2011 EVENTS in Centertown that are sponsored by Bedford Main Street, Inc.

Friday, September 2: Bedford Farmers' Market, 7-2:00.

Tuesday, September 6: Bedford Farmers' Market, 7-2:00.

Friday, September 9: Bedford Farmers' Market, 7-2:00.

Friday, September 9 - **2nd Friday 5:00 – 8:00 PM. Art, Music, Food & fun in Centertown. Many businesses have extended hours.**

Tuesday, September 13: Bedford Farmers' Market, 7-2:00.

Friday, September 16: Bedford Farmers' Market, 7-2:00.

Tuesday, September 20: Bedford Farmers' Market, 7-2:00.

Friday, September 23: Bedford Farmers' Market, 7-2:00.

Saturday, September 24: **30th Annual CENTERFEST**

Tuesday, September 27: Bedford Farmers' Market, 7-2:00.

Friday, September 30: Bedford Farmers' Market, 7-2:00.

Tuesday, October 4: Bedford Farmers' Market, 7-2:00.

Friday, October 7: Bedford Farmers' Market, 7-2:00.

Friday, October 14 - **2nd Friday 5:00 – 8:00 PM. Art, Music, Food & fun in Centertown. Many businesses have extended hours.**

Friday, November 11 - **2nd Friday 5:00 – 8:00 PM. Art, Music, Food & fun in Centertown. Many businesses have extended hours.**

Saturday, December 3 – **Christmas Parade** (snow/rain/sleet date: Sunday, December 4)

Friday, December 9 - **2nd Friday & Christmas Tree Lighting. 5:00 – 8:00 PM. Art, Music, Food & fun in Centertown. Many businesses have extended hours.**

Fridays, December 9, 16 & 23: - **Carriage Rides in Centertown. 6:00 PM- 9:00 PM**



Hearthside Quilts

Electric Company Has New Owners

George and Sue Wachob of Vermont are the new owners of The Electric Company, and their company *Hearthside Quilts* is moving into the building and existing businesses will remain including The Artisan Café, Paw Wash, Book Nooky and eight resident artists. The building was sold by Patti Siehien and Al DeWeese who have owned the building since purchasing it from the City in 2007 and renovating the long-vacant structure.

Hearthside Quilts has operated in Vermont for thirty years and the Wachobs have owned it for the past 14 years. Hearthside Quilts is primarily a mail order, telephone and Internet businesses specializing in manufacturing and selling ready-to-sew, pre-cut quilt kits. Many of their more than 200 designs are unique to their company.

www.hearthsidequilts.com.



BUY LOCAL

Thousands of miles

Fresher!

Centertown Bedford's

Farmers' Market

June 10 – October 28, 2011

Washington & Center Streets

TUESDAYS & FRIDAYS

7:00 AM - 2:00 PM