



Summer Retreat Agenda | June 11 – 13, 2025  
City of Aiken Municipal Building | 139 Laurens St., NW | Aiken, SC

## Wednesday, June 11

Noon – 1:00 p.m.

**Main Street Lunch and Learn: Aiken Downtown Development Association**  
*EmmaLee Samms, Executive Director, ADDA Main Street Program*

Bring your own lunch and join us as we kick off the retreat learning about how the Aiken Downtown Development Association is structured. ADDA staff will share a pictorial presentation with insights into the program and challenges, both past and present, they face. (Main Street approach – Organization)

1:00 – 2:30 p.m.

**Main Street Mash-Up – Problem Solving from the Hive Mind**  
*Austin Watters, Coordinator, Downtown Florence Main Street Program*

Join us for a dynamic, collaborative problem-solving session where participants rotate between five themed tables, each tackling a key challenge for Main Street programs. Through guided discussion and idea-sharing, you'll build on the insights of others and help shape practical, community-rooted solutions that can be applied across Main Streets of all sizes.

2:30 – 2:45 p.m.

**Break**

2:45 – 3:45 p.m.

**Unlock AI: A Guide for Business**  
*Gibran Jones, Certified Lead Trainer, Meta*

Does AI scare your small businesses? Learn your pivotal role in cultivating responsible AI practices and solutions within today's ever-changing business landscape. By harnessing the potential of data, creativity, media and measurement, you will empower your businesses to triumph over obstacles and embrace a world of fresh opportunities. (Main Street approach – Economic Vitality)

3:45 – 4:45 p.m.

**Lights, Camera, Confidence: Telling Your Main Street Story**  
*Jenny Boulware, Manager, Main Street SC*  
*Jonathan Irick, Staff Associate, Main Street SC*

Step into the spotlight and strengthen your on-camera presence in this interactive, confidence-boosting session. Whether you're promoting your local program, advocating for support, or celebrating downtown success stories, effective video communication is a must-have skill.



Participants will pair up and practice being both interviewer and interviewee using real questions from Main Street SC. You'll walk away feeling more comfortable, authentic, and camera-ready—because your story deserves to be seen and heard.  
(Main Street approach – Promotion)

4:45 – 5:30 p.m.

**Break**

5:30 – 6:30 p.m.

**Pre-Dinner Networking Event**

Iron Gate Candles & Co. | 121 Laurens St., SW

Join your fellow Main Street directors for a hands-on, candle making and networking event. The gathering will include candle-making, charcuterie and drinks.

**Preregistration is required. The cost is \$35 per person.**

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**Thursday, June 12**

9:30 – 9:45 a.m.

**Welcome, Announcements and Introductions**

*Jenny Boulware, Manager, Main Street SC*

*Jonathan Irick, Staff Associate, Main Street SC*

9:45 – 11:45 a.m.

**Canva Tips and Tricks for Creating Quality Marketing Material**

*Leniece Lane, Small Town Soul*

Canva, the online design platform, is an easy-to-use tool for creating quality marketing material. Be sure to bring your computer for this hands-on session with instructions for mastering Canva, helping you create professional-level designs for print, social media and web marketing effortlessly. Learn to produce a month's worth of content quickly, freeing up time to focus on other business priorities.

(Main Street approach – Promotion)

11:45 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

**Lunch Sponsored by Berkshire Hathaway**

1:00 – 2:00 p.m.

**Revitalizing Online: Websites as Engines of Main Street Growth**

*Leniece Lane, Small Town Soul*

Creating a website for your community has never been easier, especially now with your Main Street SC template in Wix. The Wix platform is easy to use, easy to update and has a number of built-in tools such as AI-assisted content creation, auto sizing of image uploads, email marketing and newsletter development, just to name a few. Learn about all of these and more in this session.

(Main Street approach – Organization)



3:45 – 5:45 p.m.

**Walking Tour: Downtown Aiken**

*Aiken Downtown Team*

Wear comfortable walking shoes as we discover the projects and initiatives impacting downtown Aiken.

6:00 p.m.

**Dinner on Your Own**

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**Friday, June 13**

9:30 – 10:00 a.m.

**Conference Highlights**

Join fellow directors as they share their experiences and takeaways from the North Carolina Main Street Conference in Mooresville and the Main Street NOW Conference in Philadelphia. We'll share tips for making the most out of the 2026 conferences.

10:00 – 11:45 a.m.

**More than Just Sandbags and Hope: Mitigating Disasters on Main Street**

*Hannah Davis, Manager, Downtown Florence Main Street Program*

When disaster strikes, hope isn't a strategy and sandbags only do so much. This session will dive into practical approaches to help Main Street organizations plan for, respond to and recover from natural and human made disasters. We'll examine real-world examples, effective tactics and recovery strategies deployed in downtown districts and small businesses. Whether you're just starting your resilience plan or looking to shore up an existing one, you'll leave this session with actionable insights, creative tools, and a renewed sense of confidence that your Main Street program can weather and storm—and come back stronger.

(Main Street approach – Economic Vitality)

11:45 a.m. – noon

**Retreat Wrap-ups**

*Jenny Boulware, Manager, Main Street SC*

*Jonathan Irick, Staff Associate, Main Street SC*

Noon

**Adjourn and Shop!**