



**BOYNE CITY, GREAT AMERICAN
MAIN STREET, SUCCEEDS IN
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT
THROUGH COMMUNITY
COLLABORATION**

BOYNE CITY MAIN STREET

Narrative by Jordan Peck, Executive Director of Boyne City Main Street, and Michelle Cortright, former Boyne City Main Street Board Member, and Phil Eich, Storyville Social, as part of the Michigan Main Street Story Series

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

Boyne City Farmers Market

“In Boyne City, we have these little communities within the community, and the farmers market is one of them. The group itself and the vendors are very close and they help each other out. There’s a really good spirit and vibe, with a lot of really friendly interactions. A lot of people in town meet down here and they shop together. Then they’ll go get something to eat, walk around a little longer and hang out. The farmers market has truly become a community meeting place where people feel free and at home.

Another component to the success of our farmers market is the fact that Boyne City Main Street took it over. That brought the structure to meetings and communication and that really provided the foundation for this success that we see today.”

– Jordan Peck, Executive Director of Boyne City Main Street, and Michelle Cortright, former Boyne City Main Street Board Member

Boyne City, Great American Main Street

“Before joining Michigan Main Street, we had a Downtown

Development Authority that was not going well. There was a lot of angst and disagreements and such and we knew we had to do something differently in order to move our community forward.

So, we had a community member, Jody Adams, who is on our Main Street board, go out and research other ways to go about community building and development. She brought back a proposal: join the Main Street program. It was investigated, the City Commission approved it, and then we started the process of becoming a Main Street community, becoming one of the first in Michigan.

Main Street has been transformational for us. Certainly, new events have been incredible, but we've also done the nuts-and-bolts things like infrastructure, and redoing under the streets, the sidewalks, redoing all the roads, and more because we've got the funding mechanism to do those things.

When we received the Great American Main Street Award, we were exuberant! It was a fabulous acknowledgement of everybody's hard work. The recognition that little Boyne City can win that award! We'd applied a couple of years prior to winning it, and we just kept honing our programming and the applications and then we won. However, it was during COVID, and we didn't have a National Main Street conference that year, so we couldn't go out and strut our stuff, but we got it.

Main Street has been amazing and there is so much good yet to come."

– Jordan Peck, Executive Director of Boyne City Main Street, and Michelle Cortright, former Boyne City Main Street Board Member

The Heartbeat of the Community

"It's important to invest in your community and find where the pulse of your community is beating and try to sync up with what's happening in town, especially if it's something new. If you're starting something, start with as many people on board as possible, and really listen to what your community has to say. Listen to what their needs are and what they'd like to see. That's going to go a long way in building



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something that'll have sustainability.

A good example of that is we're looking at mapping our assets throughout our DDA. We're going to put a GPS coordinate where people are going to be able to go and find whatever it is, like the trees. That all happened because our community has somebody that absolutely loves trees, and we also have somebody that really loves spreadsheets. Those two people came and put their talents together, and it has spurred the idea for other departments in the city. We are looking at how we can also use these processes other places.

It's the people. You find the people who are in love with whatever they are in love with and ask them to do that. Look for those people that love their community in some special way and activate that. You'll come into contact with the person that loves coffee, or parks, or flowers and that's where you find the heartbeat of your community. Building off of that is easier because people are willing to help right away doing things they love.

The other point about that is we say yes. If somebody comes with an idea, we will look at it. Many of the amazing things have happened in this community around those interest groups. We believe in having a diversity of passions, interests and opinions and all that. We've got the trails, the dog park, and all these things that were spurred by an individual with a passion. With some work, it's become amazing.

Main Street is not a template. It's brought about by the personality of the community. It's grassroots with deep roots."

– Jordan Peck, Executive Director of Boyne City Main Street, and Michelle Cortright, former Boyne City Main Street Board Member

Boyne Thunder

"The Boyne Thunder Poker Run is one of Boyne City's signature events. For those that don't know, a poker run is not a race, but rather a boat show of sorts. The participants drive to five different locations and at each location they receive a card.



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At the end of the race, there's a winner based on the hand that they got as they randomly selected cards throughout the race. It's designed as a fundraiser and Boyne Thunder supports two local nonprofit charities: Challenge Mountain and Camp Quality USA. It's a great example of what an idea can do for not just a community, but for a region. Boyne Thunder is certainly not a local event anymore. It's a regional event. It's an event that impacts Northport, Elk Rapids, Harbor Springs, Petoskey, Charlevoix, Traverse City and all of the other bedroom communities in Northern Michigan.

The race has stops in some of the locations, but it starts here, and it ends here. It's a fantastic show with so much entertainment. It's grown into something that's really well liked. At the end of the day there is no denying that it's done a lot of good and has raised thousands of dollars for local nonprofit charities that help our kids up here in Northern Michigan.

It started because we had a woman in our community who no longer lives here

that proposed the idea to the Main Street board years and years ago. We investigated it and gave it a try. It's just grown astronomically over the years. This last one was the biggest that we've had. People estimate that 20,000 to 25,000 people are here over the weekend and coming in and out of Boyne City.

We really try to be out there and interact with the volunteers. The whole event is a giant machine. It's like chaos in its purest form, but it still somehow works.

The volunteers are from all over northern Michigan and we've talked with a lot of these men and women and they come because they love it. Some of them have been coming for 15 or 20 years and others it's their first year. There's a lot of energy and the volunteers love it. It's an active, wild, fun, crazy weekend for our community."

– Jordan Peck, Executive Director of Boyne City Main Street, and Michelle Cortright, former Boyne City Main Street Board Member

Community Driven Engagement

"It's not 'us and them' because we're all fundamentally working toward the same goal.

When transformation is inclusive, it works. When transformation leaves out segments of your community and population, you end up with long-term issues and unsustainable programs, because the buy-in isn't broad enough.

Change can be hard. It's hard for all of us. We don't want to lose the flavor of who we are and what our community has always been. We've found through a few bad transformational situations that education is the key. You need to educate people about whatever the topic is that you're dealing with before moving forward with it. Better ideas can come and they might be things you wouldn't have thought of."

– Jordan Peck, Executive Director of Boyne City Main Street, and Michelle Cortright, former Boyne City Main Street Board Member





Michigan Main Street Story Series



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