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Interview with Lynn Rickard, Downtown Manager, Heritage Centre Association

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Lynn Rickard

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Interviewer: Trudy Andrzejewski

Interviewee: Lynn Rickard, Downtown Manager, Heritage Centre Association

Date: 22 February 2012

Location: 102 S Main, Heritage Centre Association Office

TA: This is Trudy Andrzejewski interviewing Lynn Rickard. It is Thursday, February 22 at about 11:30 AM and we are at 102 S. Main at the Heritage Centre Association. Okay, so how long have you worked at Heritage Centre Association (HCA)?

LR: This is my fifth year. I started in 2007 as an interim downtown manager. Was doing that for about three months and then went through the interview process and was named the permanent manager that year.

(Interview paused as patron enters office. Conversation continues between patron and Rickard for about three minutes re: parking on Main Street, mail. New recording)

TA: Okay, so how did you get involved here with HCA?

LR: Ted Rice. I had actually, previously I had worked full time for the Nazarene University and I worked a lot of hours. I was the students account officer for the adult and graduate studies program and I had children at home. But my husband was working at home and I was working there to get benefits. And then my husband got a full-time job in Columbus so he wasn't at home. I needed to, I wanted to be able to be home more (*laughs*). I needed more flexibility. And so anyway, I resigned from the Naz and when I met, I talked with Ted and told him that I wasn't working there anymore he thought I would be perfect for the design chair for the Heritage Centre. So, that's how he initially approached me and he invited me to a board meeting, because they were losing their design chair and he was thinking I'd be interested in getting involved on the board because we lived just five blocks from downtown at the time. And I sat right across from John Marsh who was the manager at that time. And I remember, I can picture, sitting there thinking, "I can do his job" (*laughs*). "I don't think he's enjoying himself, I could do that" (*laughs*) And, here I am. He resigned maybe just a month or two after that and that's when Ted approached me and asked me if I would be interested. And it was very part-time at the time, um, I think I was paid for maybe 20 or 22 hours a month at that time. But I put in a whole lot more. I probably put in the same amount that I do now, but I became full-time in May of 2009. So, two years after working, or being paid part-time, I then got a full-time salary because they had to have that, as a requirement of the Main Street program. Because we became an official "Main Street" was in May of 2009.

TA: Official through the National Trust, or...?

LR: Through Heritage Ohio, and Ohio Main Street. And we became members of the National Trust as well as Heritage Ohio and then after a year and a half as an Ohio Main Street then we received our national accreditation. That was just, the evaluation a year ago. So yes, that was quite an accomplishment, that was pretty exciting.

TA: So can you talk a little bit about the mission of the HCA?

LR: Well, the mission is to promote downtown Mount Vernon. The economic, social, development, the community. But ultimately, to promote downtown.

TA: Were there reasons behind why it started becoming an issue that downtown needed to be promoted instead of naturally being...

LR: Well, actually, the HCA, it evolved out of Downtown Merchant's Association. And in 1992, officially I guess it was '93 that they were incorporated and it evolved from a merchant's association into a community organization. It's not just downtown merchants that are involved. In fact, the majority are not even located downtown. But it's not just businesses, it's individuals and families, so but with the development of what is that, east, the Coshocton Road development, and businesses were moving out. The larger department stores were moving out, and so they needed to bring attention to downtown and focus on it. Right now, our vacancy rate is extremely low. And people don't, unless you come downtown and stop, and look, people don't realize we are very vibrant. We're full downtown, we've had new businesses come in, we've had businesses expand. Talking with several merchants, recently it's my understanding from them that last year they had the best year *ever*. One, I think she's been in business three or four years now, one's been in business I mean they've been there fifty years. But they're doing very well. This community has been very generous. But it's a constant education of the, the public, the need to buy local. And people just don't, I think it's just ignorance. I don't think it's intentional. I mean, people want to save money, um, and they can only you know spend so much. But if you don't come see what you've got, for instance, Herald's Appliances, people just automatically, they're going to go to Lowe's or whatever unless they stop and take a, take the time to compare prices. Phil will beat any prices out at Lowe's. And oftentimes, it's his posted price. But he's, that's the beauty of shopping local too is that they will take the time. You know, Lowe's isn't going to, the price is the price. Um, but and he's aware of that and he buys from a very big, like a national buyers group and so he can offer really, just as much if not more than- if he doesn't have it in the store, he can get it. Just like Paragraphs, you know, people automatically, it's just the convenience of going online, going to Amazon. I mean, you can go online and buy stuff from Paragraphs now. But, she'll beat those prices. And you're keeping your money in your community. Because all these businesses, they give back so much to the community with, I mean. For instance, our Food for the Hungry, we, this was the second year we assisted, I coordinated the businesses, there were 29 businesses that donated items for a silent auction. And then those items, and they were in the shops for a couple of weeks, so it was a way to bring, trying to bring people downtown, come and see what we've got. And then it went to the gala out at Kenyon. This was the first year for that. And they're planning on doing it again next year, um. But it was over, it was close to 11,000 dollars that were raised and it all went to the community. It all went to Food for the Hungry, which is supporting their neighbors. And they, the merchants were excited about being involved with that. They appreciated me and the HCA coordinating that because they couldn't've done that themselves, it wouldn't've happened. It was exciting to see the, their interest in being involved in that. Plus for the community events, for First Friday, and I know that

all kinds of, all these different places that are doing fundraising, organizations, the school groups, they donate to all these things on a regular basis.

(Mailman enters through front door; Lynn says "Thank you.") (8:43)

TA: So, what would you say draws people most to Main Street verses shopping elsewhere? I mean, you talked a little bit about it in terms of the local businesses.

LR: Well, the variety. I think is big and well, the local, knowing that it's staying local, these are their neighbors, these are the people that you get to know. There's the customer service aspect, you know the people when you walk in are going to be the same people every time. And there's a lot of different things. I mean, there's still some things you've got to go elsewhere but for the most part, the people who are really community-minded especially, if they can get it downtown, or buy it locally, they're going to do that.

TA: So do you think people really only come downtown when they need to buy something, and there's not really the loitering, people just coming downtown for the sake of...?

LR: Well I think there's certainly people that, you know, it's a regular habit to come down, get their coffee. There's some many different restaurants, different types of restaurants, you know – the High Restaurant just opened up on the Square, have you been there yet?

TA: No I haven't.

LR: Um, and he's completely renovated, brought that back to the a lot of the original with taking out the drop ceilings and restoring the tin ceiling and taking up the carpet and revealing this incredible tile, little tiny tile-designed floor. And it has the counter top and all the stainless steal and, it's just, it's a diner, it's really cool. It's right there on West High, on the Square, um and he bought that whole building actually and he's renovating a lot of it, and um, but. And just good food. And I think that even if people aren't working downtown people will come down and go to the restaurants and when people, you know when they meet, let's just... Just like, I know there's a couple guys and, well the one guy just started renting space, and office space down here. He was working out of his home. Um, and he could continue to do that but he decided he wanted to be down, you know, here in downtown and he, it's the type of business where he meets on a regular basis, one-on-one with people. And there's these great places to go and in the summertime you know, in the Square, even just sitting on a bench. Um, or you know the new Bakers Brother and Sips, Alcove. There's just all kinds of places to meet.

TA: Yeah I think that one of the things I've been toying with, especially after working with the Main Street Center I feel like sometimes its nostalgia, sometimes, it's hard to figure out if it's nostalgia that attracts people to Main Street or if it's like, other things. Because I don't know how realistic it is, like you come down and see all these familiar faces that you see, but it sounds like it's true?

LR: Oh, absolutely. Well, and plus you can, you can park and you can go to lunch and then you can go pick up some candy at the shop at the Woodward, and you can, or you know, do some shopping, pick up a couple of gifts or whatever. Walk through the gallery at the Schnoemeryer (*spelling?*) Gallery at the Buchwald Center. You can park your car and do so many different things. Whereas, you know, you go out to Coshocton Road and you've got to drive from one place to another. You can't just wander. Window shopping.

TA: And can you talk about a little more how physically, it's also different? Like the atmosphere of Main Street versus Coshocton.

LR: Um, oh yeah well, of course they did the streetscape, I think it's maybe been eight years now. With the you know, trees and bushes and flowers. That actually, this spring, that's all going to be re-done. That's something that the HCA is coordinating and there is a fund that was set-up years ago, it's the Walter Rudin fund, and that money is for downtown beautification. So anything to do, anything that falls under that, we can utilize those funds. So that's one of the things. In the warm months, the growing months, we have the hanging baskets, um, we also maintain those. And it just, I don't know, the banners. It just, I don't know, adds a lot and it's, the benches and we have bike racks, so. We have been for several years now and before to this, we're getting closer and closer to connecting to the bike trail system, so connecting downtown to that. And then with Foundation Park and the riverfront, there's so much potential for creating a bigger and better destination. (14:42) So it's really, it's a tourism thing as well. There's a lot of great parks in the area. Great places to stay and a lot of theater and arts groups. So, um, when I go around the state, for these trainings and other networking with Main Street managers and when I meet people and tell them what I do, it's all the time, I get the same reaction, it's, Oh we love Mount Vernon. What a quaint town. People love it. It's, I think the people that are from here don't realize, I mean some of them obviously, some of them do, but a lot of people, it's people from outside, we absolutely are attracting people from all over, so. Mhmm,

TA: I'm interested in like, the street dynamic, like walking down the street and seeing people, or just standing around, or sitting on a park bench, or...

LR: Yeah, I wish there were wider. Really, when you look at it the distance from the front of the building from the east to the west side, it's pretty close. I mean, I can see in across the street pretty well, especially if I put my glasses on (*laughs*) You know. I don't have my glasses on and I can read, "Find Us on Facebook," so it's pretty close. Compared to some towns that I drive through and that I visit, I don't think it's the most narrow but boy, I hadn't really thought about it. Well I guess I have a little bit when I go to places and I visit, I do notice like in Delaware, there's a lot more space in between, you know, from the buildings across the street and wider. Plus parking along there, there's a lot of places you go and there's angle parking. There's no way we could accommodate that. We'd lose more, we'd have even narrower sidewalks, so.

TA: Okay so, on a day like today, how many people would you see walking around Main Street?

LR: I have no idea. (*pause*). I've never really, uh, a lot. Um, some days are more than other obviously. Um, I do get a lot of people stopping. A lot more than when I was around the corner, on the side street. You know, which, it's amazing. I think it's more just, the people I'd see, I mean, I'd see plenty of people going by but I think mostly they were like, they had parked on the side and they're on their way somewhere. The people along South Main Street, I think more and more those people are just wandering. You know, just, not in a hurry, just downtown shopping and seeing what's out.

TA: What about maybe, a Saturday in the summer. Would you say that...

LR: There busy! Of course, we have our Farmers Market, every Saturday May through October and that is 9 to Noon every Saturday on the Square. And, I think, you know, that's become pretty well known. It's really grown over the years. I'm not sure how long they've been doing it, um, probably ten years I would guess, I'm really not sure. That was something that the OSU extension runs though. But we did start, last year was the first full season for the Makers Market, that is local crafters, it has to be homemade items. Yeah, soap is there, anything that's not edible. Because at the Farmers Market you can't have those kinds of things. So, there's so many artists, talented people in Knox County, we, we were fortunate, the city works really well with us and in front of City Hall is where it has started, so, on the sidewalks, on the perimeter of the square. The Farmers Market is on the inside and you know, in years to come hopefully we'll see crafters all the way around but for now it's just in the infant stages. But I've been down several times for that because we, the HCA, the only thing that can be sold, the only one that can set-up there that's not a handmade item is the HCA. Because when we're up there, we're raising, for instance this past summer we were up there promoting our Rubber Duck river race. And so we were selling duck entry packets. But all that money is to the benefit of downtown, because that's what we do. Is all for the benefit of downtown. So any funds that are raised for the Heritage Centre is gonna be to that benefit. So and because we were part of developing and establishing the Makers Market, we're in the contract, so, um. But there's a lot of people that come down and the shops open up, um, they know that the market brings people down and so it's to their benefit to be open. Oftentimes people make, you know, they may close at three o'clock but the busy time is the morning and the early afternoon for shopping on Saturdays. More and more people also on Friday, on First Fridays, you know we have the first Fridays May through October on the Square in the evenings, and we have the live music and all kinds of activities, children's activities and family activities, the shops stay open. And there have been a few places that have, um, stayed open for the First Fridays throughout the year. Typically, those were art galleries and they would have each First Friday they would have new display. And there's an organization, Kudos Art Gallery, it's a co-op, the went around, I think it's either twenty or twenty-two different artists that got together and they opened up this little shop and they have gone around and their about thirteen maybe fourteen different businesses, different shops that plan to stay open until at least eight, some of the until nine, every first Friday of the year, and not just in the summer months. So I think things are gonna continue to get more and more active in the evenings, and when the schools, when then university opened up in that 200 block, uh, Paragraphs bookstore, they started, they changed their hours to be open a little bit later, til seven o'clock at night typically, whereas a lot of places, you know, they're done at five o'clock. Or six. And as much as

we'd like to control that and have everybody have the same hours or at least more people stay open late, it's not a mall, you know, the properties are individual, they're owned by all different individuals as well as the businesses so it's up to them but we try to work together and organize these things, so. Um, I'm looking forward to seeing more, more shops extend their hours. It gives the public a chance to get in. That, that was one of the things when I first, I'll always remember this, when I first started this job, and I went around meeting people and I had somebody say to me, Oh, those businesses downtown, they cater to the unemployed. Have you ever heard that? Yeah, well, I was like, What, what are you talking about? And they said they open at nine and they close at five. That's when the people that are employed are at work. So, you know, when people get off work they can't come down and see what you've got. That's why First Fridays were nice, you know, where people would stay open later and give people an opportunity to come in, you know, and but I think it's to their benefit to stay open later.

TA: Absolutely. And I think that that's like an historically-minded business hour for a shop.

LR: Yes.

TA: Because it would be when the men would go to work at the women, the housewives would, they had the day where they could come shop, and that has probably changed a lot, right? Like, women, most women work now. And so there really aren't the same shoppers available at those times. And it's just interesting that it is kind of a slow process. It would be kind of unfortunate to have to cater your own personal schedule of working at the business, to be open later, I mean you don't want to miss dinner at home.

(Sneeze, "bless you") So it's an interesting thing. Um, okay so out of, like summer season right now, are there people walking around on Friday nights or no?

LR: Yeah, you do see that still even though, because there are a few shops that do stay open, but of course the restaurants, and as I said earlier there are several art and theater groups. There is often live entertainment going on at The Place at The Woodward, or Sips will have live music in there. Wine Stein in a new place that opened up, you know, so the typically, you know the places that are gonna be busy are of course the restaurant-type, the tavern type, like Flappers and, but there's other things. With these theater groups doing, doing dinner theater at the Alcove or doing the Chautauqua's and that's in the middle of the week, on Thursday nights. And that's grown, that's been a great success, that's at the place at the Woodward.

TA: Who is it that comes down here? Like, age groups or locals verse tourists? (27:40)

LR: You know what, all age groups. Um, really all age groups. I mean, of course the Escape Zone is another organization that opened up a space downtown.

TA: Do kids actually go there?

LR: Oh gosh, yeah. Oh yeah. A lot, I mean, they are busy there are Friday nights. It's just a Friday night thing. Um, unfortunately there are some merchants that don't appreciate what they're doing because they view it like they're bringing trouble-makers downtown.

Because the thing is, is kids, the trouble makers around, they know there's stuff going there, they know there's kinds going in and out of there but they can't... the people that run the Escape Zone, they have a sign-in. And when the kids sign-out, they cannot come back in. They can't go in-and-out, once they leave, they cannot come back in in a night. And so there is some loitering that goes on and some kids, but the police have been, they've got typically a foot policeman that comes around the police have definitely improved on that. But then some of those theater groups, they're high school productions. There are kids in high school that are writing these productions and putting them on, you know, with the players at The Place at the Woodward. Um, and there's children involved in the dinner theater productions and of course Alcove tends to bring for dinner the older crowd, the Chautauqua's, I think it's typically an older crowd but it's typically all age groups, it's not just the older, um. But I really think it's a huge game. Tavasi (*spelling*), it's another one, it's a young children's group entertainment, that they practice at the Place at the Woodward and they have shows there so the parents come down and while the kids are practicing there and the parents are stopping in shop or going and getting coffee at Sips or whatever. So, it's all age groups.

TA: Very cool. I'd like to hear a little bit more about First Fridays, um, how does the community respond to that?

LR: They love it (*laughs*). They, see, it's grown by leaps and bounds the past five years that I've been doing this. It's just seems like it's gotten bigger and bigger. The cruise-in has grown hugely. There's a cruise-in during every Friday Friday, where these guys come down with their old cars. And some are new, some are newer cars, they're just cool cars, you know. Um, and trucks, and last year we tried to get motorcycles. We tried to have a motorcycle cruise-in. We wanted them to line-up down South Main Street. And in September we had maybe seven than came down, and then we were hoping that maybe more would come in October. Mid-Ohio Suziki Honda was out Sponsor for October. And so we were hoping to work, you know, they have a big email list so we were trying to draw people down. But we're gonna try that again this year and hopefully get the word out. They're not into anything organized, typically, they just wanna come and park and hang out. The cruise-in we have a registration table, and we have door prizes, they do a fifty-fifty drawing. We had, in the past, we would get excited if we had fifty cars. And in July we had 107. And we were so, we were like oh my gosh we'll never do that again! Well, the following month we had 122. So, and that was the ones that registered. Not everybody registers. Sometimes they just come and park for an hour and take off, but.

TA: How many people are typically down here?

LR: I, you know, I've asked people how do you, I don't know how to gauge that. Um, and I've never had anybody, you know, that officially knows how to do that. I mean, I've tried to, there's some kind of formula to do that, but, definitely in the thousands. Um, I couldn't tell you obviously exactly. But we had a lot of people. That square gets filled up. And that's one of the benefits of being a member of HC, organizations, nonprofits organizations, they can come out at no additional fee and set-up a table and get their information out to the community. It's a good way to, you know, for the community to see what all we have available. But there's no, we don't allow any selling because the point of First Fridays historically was to bring people downtown to see what the

merchants had to offer. So the hope is that people will come and shop and maybe spend money downtown. I know several businesses that they're, they're here until the last person leaves, you know, and they do very well at First Friday. And then there's some that realize they're gonna get a lot of people coming through, but they may not be buying that night, but they come back. You know, they see what's there and get ideas and they can know they can come back and get that later. So, but it's very busy.

TA: In the time that you've been here, has Main Street changed at all? What changes have you seen?

LR: Oh several changes. I mean, as far as the businesses and well, of course the 200 block has totally changed with, there's, maybe a couple that have remained the same- the La Paloma, is the same, but everything else is different. With the Nazarene University renovated the two big buildings, um, bringing in the Schnoermyer Gallery. It's added that art piece to the south side of the, cause it used to be all up on North Main. It was like, that was where all the art stuff was, the galleries, now we've got Red Z gallery down there and J D Hudson, he does a great business down there, an antique store. And that's where Paragraphs has now relocated and expanded. And there COTC just opening up, that building had been empty for a long time, it used to be the theater. And they've renovated that. And they are wonderful partners and supporters of HCA. Every First Friday in September, and this will be the fourth year, there's been college night, back-to-school night, whatever you want to call it. But the students come down and they want to get involved, um in higher education institutions help sponsor that. New shops have come in, some have gone. But right now I know of just two empty spaces and the one, where Candyland, right next to the Alcove – Mark Ramser owns that. And unless someone approaches him with something great and he couldn't say no, right now he's just, and he's been really great. He and Susan both have the means to purchase these properties and hang on to them until the right thing comes along. So there is some businesses that, I'm not gonna name names, but that I would like to see move out, only because I think that it's important to maintain a retail, I think that the first level should be retail, and then the offices, you know, the upper levels would be offices and service-type businesses. I'd like to see more of that but eventually I think that'll happen. But then there's organizations like Creative Foundations, it's a service organization, they have clients that have some kind of mental disability, but they've created, kind of a little gallery in there and their windows, it's kind of an art therapy aspect and they do a lot of great things and it's a great service to the community. But at the same time, I think that there's people that really enjoy going in there and seeing the art. It's unique.

TA: It's a fun space. Very colorful. Um, I just have a couple more.

LR: You're fine.

TA: Thank you. Um, so if people maybe aren't on Main Street on a Friday night, where in the community do you think people spend time after work?

LR: Home? (*laughs*) No. If they're not downtown they must be home! No. Well, there's all kind of stuff. The schools have lots of different things that go on. Gambier is a great draw. You know, the Kenyon Inn, the Village Inn. Live music, I think people like going

where there's live music. And there is a lot of live music that happens down here. But there's other great places in the community and of course with the Party on the Patio, they have great music and some of the bands they get there we get here for our First Fridays. But, you know, and the theater or, I know people that do their grocery shopping on Friday nights, you know? Or, unfortunately, Wal-Mart, oh let's go to Wal-Mart (*laughs*) I hate Wal-Mart.

TA: Me too, I've only been there once this year, I try to hard not to go. Because you're right, you can get so many things in these stores that you don't even realize you can. I challenged a lot of my friends to try and compare things and then I would go out and try to find it somewhere else. Like, candles... When you think back to the historic idea of Main Street, like Pitkin's Corner, and people always around, how do you feel about the comparison between then and now?

HS: Well, I didn't grow up here, and there's certain things well. Let me just say one thing, I really miss the Corner Grill. That was a shame when that was torn down. I actually wish I couldn't bought the place, I would've turned it into an Irish Pub, called McDuffy's Tonight. "Where you going? We're going to McDuffy's Tonight!" (*laughs*) Anyway, that's my maiden name. Um, and it was just, the Corner Grill, you know the neighborhood pub, and I loved that feel. Flappers can be like that, I like that, the Library at the Alcove can be like that, but it's just different I would love to see, like a deli and food, like a grocer. I've talked and talked to Steve at Lannings, "you should open a place, it would be great to serve the students that are down here, just a little deli, people can come in and get a good sandwich". High Restaurant, they do have a place like that where you can come in and just order a sandwich. And I haven't done that yet, I always just get their gyros, they're really good. Um, other than that, well, maybe more clothing because I used to go to The Secret Closet for quite a bit but personally I just feel like if you're buying consignment, it better be a good price. And, that's all there is to it. As a business owner, first of all you need to know your clientele. And don't be greedy. I don't know. Um, so I would like to see, you know, a nice women's clothing shop. They used to have the Colonial Menswear. I've heard people miss that. That's where I used to go for my son for Tuxes, they had Tuxes there. (43:54)

TA: Where was that located?

LR: Sips. And then the shoe shop, People's Shoes was next door, that's where the Shop at the Woodward is now, where Paragraphs had been for years.

TA: Do you have any other thoughts on Main Street as a public space, or?

LR: It's a great space. I love it. Well, and it wasn't until I started working down here and, well because I worked full-time, well and before that I was home raising my kids, before then they were little. I did come down here for pie. (*laughs*) There was a place, Sweet Williams, it was a restaurant where Bay Leaf is now, and yeah, Corby's aunts made the pies. And when we first moved here, I didn't know it at the time but I was pregnant with my daughter Colleen, she'll be eighteen in August. And, I had their coconut cream pie and it was so good. I would scrape pennies to come get a piece of pie to go. And it came to a point where it was like, okay, I need to find out how to make this, I need to find out

how to start making my own, because it was just crazy. But, it was, yeah, it'd be kind of nice to have a bakery that did more I mean, like cheesecakes... The Pink Cupcake is great, but they only do so many things. They're pretty limited in their products. I would like to see more pies and cheesecakes, and I like that kind of stuff. Of course I love cupcakes too but, cake is good (*laughs*).

TA: Um, just I guess a closing question, do you think that most people in the community feel comfortable with Main Street? Like, most local people, do they feel like this is a good area?

LR: I think that, more and more, the information's getting out, people are realizing, and First Fridays have been a really good thing for that. Bringing people down, I think people look forward to that and just the whole community aspect of it, because people come down because they know that they're gonna see people they know. Especially the early, like in the spring, people are anxious to get out and see their neighbors and it's just fun. And they don't have to spend money, they can come down and it's just a party, it's a big block party. And it's growing, too, we're trying to draw people down and it's not just the Square. But the Square is, there have been some people think that oh it needs to move, because when they first started First Fridays it would move from block to block, First Fridays is way too big to be accommodated by just one block. Especially with all the cars, the number of cars that come down and the activities plus you know with the band, we bring a trailer for the stage, and it's a park. It's set-up for a party but then we try to draw, we asked the merchants to use the opportunity to use the crowd being downtown to draw them into their stores, so we try to encourage them to do sidewalk sales, something that's going to attract attention and draw them into their store. With the art displays at the Buchwalkd Center, that's another way people are drawn down. Paragraphs typically has a different author in there signing books, and of course Red Z Gallery relocated down there from the short North. And they always have. North Main Street. The very short North. And then you know with the Buckeye Candy Building. Someday, I mean, who knows when, but that is going to be just a great venue for something. The right thing is gonna come along and that riverfront is gonna get developed and that is gonna be a prime space. I hope to see someday, those arches opened back up, wouldn't that be cool? But you know, we've done several different things during First Fridays. The first years it started we tried to have entertainment inside there that was additional to the music on the square, and have different art displays, we had an art auction in there one First Friday, we tried to do after-parties from 9-11 or something and Susan brought in a DJ, you know, but it was a handful of people. Well, more than a handful, maybe and armful. Um, and then we have utilized it for a rain venue as well but, last year... (*interrupted by semi truck driving by*)

End Interview.