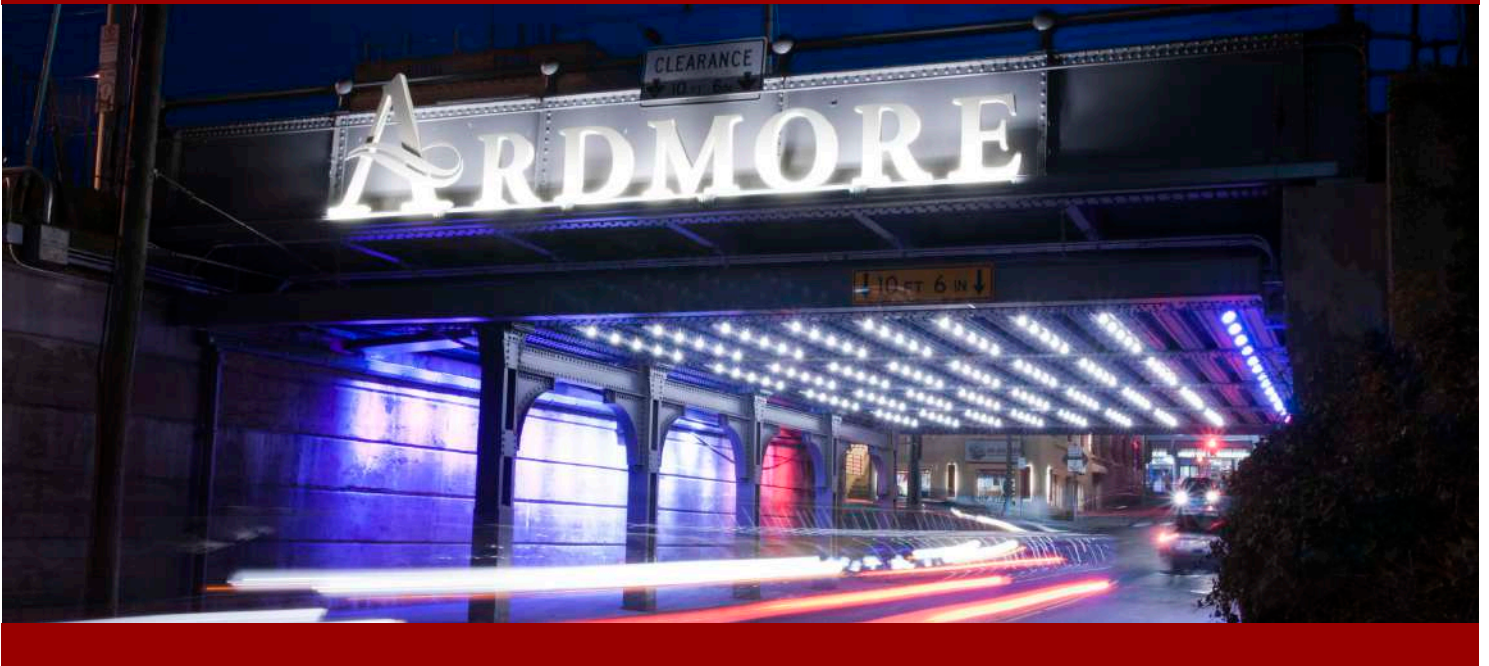


Ardmore Business District Authority The Ardmore Initiative Annual Report

2011



contents

- Welcome to the Ardmore Initiative
- Organization
- Business Recruitment and Retention Activities
- Streetscape
- Design
- Financial Information
- Spotlight on Ardmore
- Marketing
- Sponsors, volunteers, partners

Our **MISSION** is to create and maintain a thriving, economically viable downtown business district for the benefit of merchants, residents and visitors alike and to serve as advocates for the district's commercial property and business owners.

The Ardmore Initiative envisions Ardmore as a vibrant, pedestrian-friendly downtown center with a diverse mix of businesses and restaurants.

WELCOME TO THE ARDMORE INITIATIVE

The Ardmore Initiative (AI) is a business district authority created by Lower Merion Township in 1993 to represent and promote the interests of commercial property owners in downtown Ardmore. The Ardmore Initiative administers façade improvement grants, provides Streetscape amenities and promotes the commercial district. It also funds and coordinates a "Clean and Green" program to maintain a welcoming and pleasant downtown. AI produces several community events to entertain residents and enhance the visibility of Ardmore and its businesses to visitors and shoppers. The Ardmore Initiative offers its businesses a variety of print and online marketing opportunities including newsletters, website and calendar listings and group advertising with local media.

The organization's primary source of funding is from a special assessment on commercial properties within the boundaries of Ardmore's business district, which generates approximately \$175,000 annually. Fundraising and grant activities generate an additional \$50,000-\$75,000 annually. These revenues are used for a multitude of purposes including economic development, business recruitment and retention, marketing and promotions (including special events and publications), as well as for sidewalk cleaning services, streetscape amenities and beautification, and oversight and funding of façade improvement programs.

A recognized National Trust for Historic Preservation Main Street program, the Ardmore Initiative was named as one of the top ten performing programs in Pennsylvania in 2008-09 by the PA Downtown Center. The Ardmore Initiative was also instrumental in Ardmore being named a Classic Town by the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission in 2009. These designations showcase Ardmore as an already vibrant, sustainable and livable small town, poised for growth.

In 2009, the Ardmore Initiative created the Ardmore Community Development Fund, a 501-C-3 non-profit organization to provide programs and services that enhance the quality of life in our community, and to support not only the work of the Ardmore Initiative but that of other civic and community groups working to create and maintain a vibrant Ardmore.

ORGANIZATION

A 14 member Board of Directors comprised of local property and business owners, residents, professionals, and representatives from Lower Merion Township oversees the organization. In addition to their financial contributions, Board members and community volunteers dedicated over 1,234 volunteer hours, valued at \$24,177, (based on Pa. value of \$19.60 per volunteer hour). The Board is run by an Executive Committee consisting of Chairperson, Vice-Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, and immediate past Chairperson.

The staff consists of a full-time Executive Director, 2 part-time administrative assistants, and a part-time person responsible for sidewalk cleaning. The Executive Director is responsible for overall operation of the organization including securing and managing grants, fundraising, marketing, special event execution, compliance with all reporting requirements, oversight of the volunteer Board of Directors and committee members, and for maintaining relationships with Township government, our stakeholders and community partners. The part-time administrative assistants are responsible for book-keeping, office and program management and support to the Executive Director. AI also sub-contracts a Marketing Director on an as-needed basis.

2011 ended with a reduced vacancy rate of approximately 5%.
15 new businesses opened in the downtown Ardmore commercial district and 2 closed or relocated outside of the district.



BUSINESS RECRUITMENT & RETENTION

The Ardmore Initiative works to assist downtown businesses through a variety of events and marketing activities, to identify and attract a strategic mix of businesses to downtown Ardmore, and to promote commercial properties. We provide marketing support to our businesses, assist them with Township permit and other issues, provide developers with information regarding commercial properties, serve as advocates for new and existing businesses, and provide brokers with material to support leasing activities.

Business/Property Owner Investment: In 2011, business and property owners representing 44 properties within the downtown business district invested over \$1.1 million in improvements to commercial properties. (data based on LMT permit activity)

In addition, 2011 saw an increase in owner-occupied buildings including:

- Optical Unique, 45 W. Lancaster Ave
- Tired Hands Brewing Company, 16 Ardmore Ave
- Taste of Olive, 22 W. Lancaster Ave
- Gerhard's Appliance, 204 E. Lancaster Ave

Community Development Block Grant: In 2011, the Ardmore Initiative applied for and was awarded a \$50,000 grant from Lower Merion Township to create a Business Assistance Fund. These funds come from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. This new grant provides a valuable tool for our Business Recruitment and Retention efforts and will allow us to help a new or expanding business with start-up costs, fit-out expenses, equipment purchases, computer or software purchases, employee training and marketing expenses.

CNN Money Magazine named ARDMORE as number 45 on their list of *100 Best Small Towns in America for Families*

September 2011

STREETSCAPE

We continued seasonal planting in 50 merchant flower containers and continued regular sidewalk cleaning and leaf collection. Pots were replanted with Spring/Summer annuals, Fall mums and Winter evergreens, creating a warm and colorful welcome for our downtown visitors. Six (6) plaques recognizing Clean & Green donors and volunteers were displayed in downtown flower and tree beds.

DESIGN

With funds from the PA Department of Community and Economic Development, façade grants totaling \$22,079 were disbursed to the following businesses/property owners.

Firinji: \$910
 Bina Wellness: \$699
 Janice Martin Couture: \$1,554
 Salon 31: \$1,850
 Gymboree: \$5,000
 Property Owner Steve Gaylon: \$1,598
 Property Owner Walter Brutsch: \$390
 McCloskey's Tavern: \$5,000
 Taste of Olive: \$3,406
 Greenable: \$1,672



FINANCIAL INFORMATION

2011 Financial Performance

Revenues

Assessment Revenue	171,142
Fee for Service	1,500
Fundraising Events, Sponsorships & Contributions	49,633
Interest Income	2,237
Miscellaneous Revenue	136
Reimbursed Program Expenses	4,988

Total Revenue **229,637**

Expenses

Business Support & Advocacy	105,064
Economic Development & Marketing	37,282
Fundraising & Special Event Expenses	7,143
General & Operating Expenses	50,531
Miscellaneous Expenses	100
Streetscape	21,340
Training & Professional Development	884

Total Expenses **222,344**

Net Income (Loss) **7,293**

In addition, \$22,079 in façade grants was disbursed to 10 property owners/business owners with funds received in a 2008 New Communities grant from the Pa. Department of Community & Economic Development.

ARDMORE ARRIVALS IN 2011

Blossom Wellness Boutique

Chairloom

MainLine Music

Gerhard's Appliance

Golden Bowl

Greenable

Gymboree

Happenstance

J2 Salon

Optical Unique

Pet Valu

Simply Reflexology

Stash Knits

The Grand Review

Unleashed Pet Spa



Taste of Olive, Ann Marie Casey Photography

MONDAY is the most popular day of the week on AllAboutArdmore.com avg. 2,900 hits/Day
DECEMBER was the most popular month in 2011 with over 50,000 page views

SPOTLIGHT ON ARDMORE

- **Downtown Dollars:** This successful 2010 AI program continued to shine a spotlight on Ardmore in 2011. The Ardmore Initiative received a "Townie" Award from the Pa. Downtown Center for best retail promotions for the Downtown Dollars program. The National Trust for Historic Preservation requested and published a "How-to" guide written by the Initiative's Executive Director providing even more national exposure for Ardmore.
- **Clover Market:** AI was instrumental in bringing the Clover Market, the Main Line's only outdoor vintage and antiques market to downtown Ardmore. Held monthly in April, May, June, Sept., Oct. and Nov. in Schaufele Plaza, the Clover Market brought hundreds of new shoppers into our town.
- **Tim Briggs' GreenFest:** The Ardmore Initiative partnered with Pennsylvania State Representative Tim Briggs to produce GreenFest on Rittenhouse Place on Sunday June 5, 2011 (to coincide with and cross-promote the Clover Market). Thirty-three (33) organizations, and 42 hours of volunteer time resulted in a community day celebrating the environment. Hundreds of residents enjoyed kids' music, kids' activities, electronics recycling, shredding, plant sales and exchange, as well as learning about environmentally friendly companies, products, services and practices.
- **Classic Towns Trolley Tour:** In July, Ardmore was selected out of 21 towns as a destination for the DVRPC Trolley Tour. The day included a walking tour of the downtown as well as an opportunity for the Executive Director to share highlights and answer questions about recent happenings in Ardmore.
- **Ardmore Bridal Block Party:** On September 16th, Ann Marie Casey Photography, in collaboration with the Ardmore Initiative, presented the first ever Ardmore Bridal Block Party. Brides were given the red-carpet treatment by our many wedding-centric businesses and were able to see all that Ardmore has to offer the newly engaged couple.
- **Taste of Ardmore:** The third annual Taste of Ardmore Food & Fashion Event presented and hosted by Ardmore Toyota in November 2011 showcased the variety of cuisines offered by Ardmore restaurants and the breadth of fashion, accessories and salon services available at our local businesses. 38 retailers and salons, 13 restaurants, 27 volunteer models and 4 canine models participated and over 300 guests attended the event. Thanks to the support of 11 sponsors, 16 in-kind sponsors, and raffle donations from 38 businesses, over \$20,000 was raised to support the Initiative's projects and programs.
- **Oktoberfest:** The Ardmore Initiative supported the efforts of McCloskey's Tavern, Gillane's Tavern and John Henry's Pub to present the first ever Ardmore Oktoberfest. Over 1,000 visitors enjoyed a celebration of German heritage, good beer and great food on Saturday, September 24th.
- **Holiday Celebration:** Shreiner Tree Care again donated a holiday tree in Schaufele Plaza, Santa arrived on a fire truck, and carolers from 6:8 Community Church and Regina Angelorum Academy filled the streets with the sounds of the season.
- **First Friday Main Line** continues to showcase the arts in unexpected places. The Ardmore Initiative is proud to support this volunteer-driven, non-profit organization under the capable direction of Sherry Tillman.



Taste of Ardmore, Ann Marie Casey Photography



Ardmore Oktoberfest, Phil Doherty



Ardmore Bridal Block Party, Ann Marie Casey Photography

MARKETING

One of the main goals of the Marketing Committee is to brand Ardmore as an already great place to work, shop, own a business, and live, and further, to make Ardmore a destination for consumers. Events attract shoppers from throughout the region and are a regular draw to downtown. Advertisements, press releases, newsletters, e-blasts and timely web updates increase brand awareness and help Ardmore to maintain a consistent presence in the community.

- **Creation of 3rd annual Main Line Today Ardmore supplement:** This supplement reached 204K readers of Main Line Today Magazine. An additional 2,500 copies were distributed at Ardmore Initiative and First Friday Main Line events as well as at the Clover Market.
- **Ardmore Dining Guide** was updated and an additional 1,500 copies were distributed.
- **Guide to Resale Shops** was updated and 300 distributed via our businesses, at special events and at Clover Market.
- **Brochure for Self-Guided Walking Tour of Historic Ardmore** was updated and distributed in the Ardmore Initiative office and to visitors of the Classic Towns Walking Tour.
- **E-blasts and newsletters:** We continued our outreach to the community-at-large via bi-weekly E-blasts to over 1,000 subscribers and our quarterly print newsletter to over 600 recipients.

Advertising: We continued our print advertising campaign with the Main Line Times Newspaper and also increased our online presence with a monthly ad on MainLineTimes.com and targeted pencil ads promoting important AI events. We also ran ads with Main Line CEO Magazine, Main Line Today Magazine, Bryn Mawr Film Institute and Main Line Neighbors.