



Adapt. Evolve. Improve.

2015 ANNUAL REPORT

 **DOWNTOWN
SCHENECTADY**
IMPROVEMENT CORP.



DOWNTOWN SCHENECTADY IMPROVEMENT CORPORATION

Statement of Activities for the Years Ended December 31, 2014 and 2013

| | 2014 | | | 2013 | | |
|--|-------------------|------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| | Unrestricted | Temporarily Restricted | Total | Unrestricted | Temporarily Restricted | Total |
| Support and Revenue | | | | | | |
| City of Schenectady assessment revenue | \$ 220,000 | \$ — | \$ 220,000 | \$ 219,736 | \$ 264 | \$ 220,000 |
| Grants | 178,675 | — | 178,675 | 165,172 | — | 165,172 |
| Donations | 55,315 | — | 55,315 | 50,325 | — | 50,325 |
| Donated services | 24,439 | — | 24,439 | 33,178 | — | 33,178 |
| Ticket sales and booth fees | 11,498 | — | 11,498 | 8,764 | — | 8,764 |
| Marketing participation | — | — | — | 9,778 | — | 9,778 |
| Interest and miscellaneous | 17,308 | — | 17,308 | 15,426 | — | 15,426 |
| Total support and revenue | 507,235 | — | 507,235 | 502,379 | 264 | 502,643 |
| Reclassifications | | | | | | |
| Net assets released from restrictions – Satisfaction of program restrictions | — | — | — | 5,131 | (5,131) | — |
| Total support, revenue and reclassifications | 507,235 | — | 507,235 | 507,510 | (4,867) | 502,643 |
| Expenses | | | | | | |
| Program Services | | | | | | |
| Environmental enhancement | 312,018 | — | 312,018 | 289,669 | — | 289,669 |
| Business promotion and marketing | 172,810 | — | 172,810 | 222,091 | — | 222,091 |
| Facade program | — | — | — | 5,131 | — | 5,131 |
| Historic street sign project | 16,874 | — | 16,874 | — | — | — |
| Main street project | — | — | — | 253 | — | 253 |
| Total program services | 501,702 | — | 501,702 | 517,144 | — | 517,144 |
| Supporting Services | | | | | | |
| Administration | 19,532 | — | 19,532 | 23,505 | — | 23,505 |
| Fundraising and development | 32,062 | — | 32,062 | 44,627 | — | 44,627 |
| Total supporting services | 51,594 | — | 51,594 | 68,132 | — | 68,132 |
| Total expenses | 553,296 | — | 553,296 | 585,276 | — | 585,276 |
| Change in Net Assets | (46,061) | — | (46,061) | (77,766) | (4,867) | (82,633) |
| Net Assets, Beginning of Year | 616,964 | 46,264 | 663,228 | 694,730 | 51,131 | 745,861 |
| Net Assets, End of Year | \$ 570,903 | \$ 46,264 | \$ 617,167 | \$ 616,964 | \$ 46,264 | \$ 663,228 |

Message from the Board President and Executive Director

The Downtown Schenectady Improvement Corporation (DSIC) has matured greatly as an organization since 2001, when we first began serving downtown property owners, businesses, visitors and residents as a business improvement district. Today's DSIC plays an integral role in the success of Downtown Schenectady by offering a diverse program of outdoor cleaning & visual improvements, communications, promotions and community & business development.

As more people work, visit, live and invest in downtown, the DSIC continually adapts to support changes and trends. Much of our evolution has been aligned with major developments led by the Schenectady County Metroplex Development Authority working closely with the City of Schenectady, Schenectady County and other public partners, together with private investors. For example, new light poles installed during streetscape improvements on Erie Boulevard and Lower State Street inspired the DSIC to purchase dozens more hanging flower baskets, lighted holiday wreaths and banners. And to take advantage of the growing impact of social media, we added a part-time communications specialist and expanded our online presence.

The DSIC also embraces new ideas and challenges. When we received a suggestion to display *Hometown Heroes* banners honoring Schenectady service members, we enhanced our existing banner program. When several downtown businesses were impacted by a devastating fire, we quickly organized the *Taking Care of Business* fundraising campaign. Our staff may be small, but we are proud to work together as a team and with our downtown partners on efforts more suited to a much larger organization.

We invite you to read through this Annual Report to learn more about the DSIC and see the specific areas in which we have adapted, evolved and improved over the last year. As always, please feel free to contact the staff or board with any questions, comments or suggestions.

Richard Antokol
President, Board of Directors

James Salengo
Executive Director

Our mission is to promote Downtown Schenectady as a premier location for commerce, recreation and living by enhancing, facilitating and supporting economic and cultural growth.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Richard Antokol, President
Antokol, Reisman & Coffin

Chris Spraragen, Vice President
Schenectady Hardware & Electric Co.

Rudy Grant, Treasurer
Experience & Creative Design

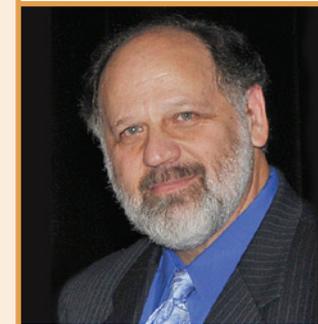
Heather Peterson, Secretary
Watson, Peterson & Company CPAs, PLLC

Austin Fisher
Fountains Spatial

Scott Johnson
Omnis Computers

Jack McDonald
John M. McDonald Engineering, PC

Joseph O'Connor
TW&A Construction Management



THE DOWNTOWN SCHENECTADY IMPROVEMENT CORPORATION

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Office Staff

James Salengo, Executive Director
Colleen Merays, Assistant Director
Gail White, Office Manager

Outdoor Staff

Joe Diamond, Supervisor
Rob Gannon
Matt Heins

The DSIC's outdoor program provides supplementary services throughout the year to ensure the cleanliness, beauty and safety of Downtown Schenectady. These efforts are made possible by the continued support of downtown property owners and an annual grant from the Schenectady County Metroplex Development Authority. DSIC responsibilities include:

Sidewalk Cleaning

Three full-time employees, 7 days/week

- Litter pickup, weeding, leaf clearing, gravel removal, power washing, select sticker & graffiti removal.

IMPROVE – The DSIC worked with Metroplex on refurbishing two pieces of mechanized equipment formerly used by LAZ Parking to help improve the efficiency of our outdoor cleaning program.

- Tennant 4300 ATLV Vacuum
- Tennant 6500 Ride-on Sweeper

Snow Clearing

The DSIC supplements city and property owner responsibilities by clearing snow at intersections, crosswalks, crossing signals and garbage cans.

Flower Baskets & Street Planters

ADAPT – Adapting to streetscape improvements in areas such as Erie Boulevard and Lower State Street, the DSIC increased the total number of hanging flower baskets and street planters throughout downtown for summer 2015.

- 308 hanging baskets (increase of 74 baskets)
- 46 street planters (increase of 8 planters)
- Second seasonal watering employee hired for increased maintenance

Hometown Heroes Street Banners

EVOLVE – The DSIC's seasonal street banner program took on new look this year with the launch of *Hometown Heroes*. Sponsored by businesses, organizations and individuals, the new banners honor veteran and active duty service men and women from Schenectady.

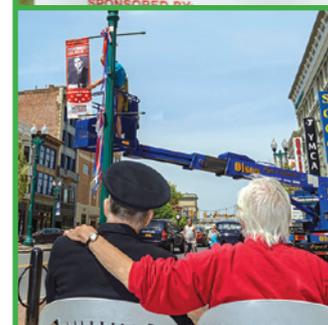
- May 15, 2015: Kick-off event at downtown's Veterans Park with honorees, sponsors, elected officials and partners. Special recognition given to WWII Veteran Charles Merriam, including the live hanging of his banner at State and Jay Street.
- 43 *Hometown Heroes* banners on display along State Street and around City Hall from mid-May through mid-November
- Online map of banner locations and honoree bios on DSIC website

Winter Holiday Decorations

Lighted wreaths, garland pole wraps, City of Schenectady Holiday Tree (sponsored by KeyBank and decorated by Experience & Creative Design).

ADAPT – With the completion of the Erie Boulevard reconstruction, the DSIC purchased and installed 18 new large lit wreaths and holiday banners on light poles along the median.

- 16 additional lit wreaths and 13 banners were purchased for installation along the newly reconstructed Lower State Street for winter 2015-16



Through its print and online communications, the DSIC raises public awareness of Downtown Schenectady's many positive developments, popular events and vibrant businesses. Highlights include:

Downtown Schenectady Visitor Guide & Map

IMPROVE – An expanded edition of the DSIC's *Visitor Guide & Map* was completed in fall 2014 to promote Downtown Schenectady dining, shopping, entertainment, events and attractions.

- 50,000 copies

Schenectady Dining Guide

IMPROVE – The DSIC and Chamber of Schenectady County partnered on a new 2015 edition of the popular *Schenectady Dining Guide*.

- 25,000 copies

Explore Downtown Schenectady

Through December 2014, the DSIC partnered with *The Daily Gazette* on a quarterly in-paper publication featuring stories on Downtown Schenectady businesses, events and trends.

- 40,000 issues per quarter

Promotional Kiosks

- Newly updated business maps are installed each summer in outdoor kiosks located on State Street between Erie Boulevard and Clinton Street
- The DSIC monitors the Jay Street Marketplace business directories and coordinates periodic updates
- **ADAPT** – With Metroplex's creation of the new Center City Walk between Liberty and Franklin Streets, the DSIC now coordinates the installation of seasonal promotions in the walkway kiosks

Downtown Schenectady This Week E-Newsletter

The DSIC's popular events e-newsletter showcases the wide variety of happenings in Downtown Schenectady each week.

- 2,500 unique recipients & growing

DSIC Website – www.downtownschenectady.org

The DSIC's website provides current news on downtown activities and developments, a calendar of events, an interactive map of downtown businesses, information on the DSIC itself and more.

Social Media

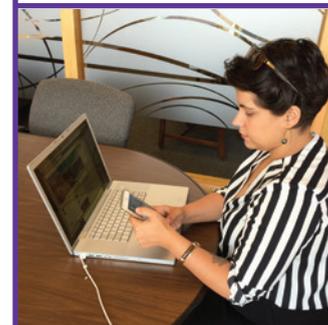
The DSIC regularly shares content on its social media pages to promote downtown events, businesses, economic development and DSIC activities.

- Facebook – 1,574 Likes (increase of 806 over July 2014)
- Twitter – 1,397 Followers (increase of 723 over July 2014)
- **IMPROVE** – The DSIC expanded its social media presence with a new Instagram account in fall 2014

EVOLVE – A new part-time communications specialist position focuses on content and strategy for all DSIC social media platforms.

Energize Your Business

This periodic communication targeted specifically to Downtown Schenectady businesses features timely notifications and promotional opportunities.



COMMUNICATIONS
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The DSIC's promotions are designed to support Downtown Schenectady businesses by connecting visitors, residents and employees directly with the district's many independent restaurants, shops and services. DSIC promotions over the past year included:

Travers Restaurant Week 2014

August 17-21, 2014 – 4th annual promotion, coordinated with the Chamber of Schenectady County. Ten restaurants offered multi-course meals for the fixed price of \$18.64, honoring of the first year of the Travers Stakes at Saratoga Race Course.

Wing Walk 2014

October 2, 2014 – 3rd annual promotion coordinated with the Schenectady County Visitors Agency at Proctors. A capacity crowd sampled chicken wings at participating restaurants and voted for their favorite recipe.

- 600 tickets sold
- 16 participating restaurants
- 2014 Winner –
20 North Broadway Tavern



Small Business Saturday 2014

EVOLVE – November 29, 2014 – The DSIC partnered with the Chamber of Schenectady County and Upper Union Street BID on expanded promotions for this national day encouraging people to shop locally.

- Nov. 24, 2014 – Kick off press conference at City Hall
- *Small Business Saturday* promotional items distributed to participants
- 40 local businesses offered special promotions

Downtown Schenectady's City Hall-iday 2014

EVOLVE – December 13, 2014 – With the focus on holiday shopping shifted to Small Business Saturday, the DSIC's 11th annual holiday event took on a new name and greater concentration on activities in and around Schenectady City Hall. Hundreds of visitors celebrated the season in downtown with kids' activities, live music, photos with Santa, horse & carriage rides and more.

Schenectady Restaurant Week 2015

February 23-March 1, 2015 – 10th annual promotion coordinated with the Chamber of Schenectady County, during which restaurants offered multi-course meals for the fixed price of \$20.15. Results include:

- 26 participating restaurants
- 12,870 meals served
- \$330,000 economic impact
- 17% increase in spending over 2014



Outdoor Season Kick Off

May 5, 2015 – To spotlight the beginning of the outdoor season in Downtown Schenectady, the DSIC partnered with Assemblyman Angelo Santabarbara and downtown businesses and organizations for a kick-off announcement and Cinco de Mayo toast on the patio of Mexican Radio.



PROMOTIONS
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The DSIC staff continues to foster important relationships within the Downtown Schenectady community, resulting in numerous professional collaborations, rewarding sponsorship opportunities and essential financial & volunteer support. Highlights include:

2014 Building Block Party

November 6, 2014 – The DSIC’s largest annual fundraiser took place at the GE Theatre & Wright Family Atrium at Proctors.

- 400+ attendees
- 22 restaurants providing food stations
- Building Block Awards presented to: Galesi Group, Nico’s Rooftop Tavern, Proctors Guild, Schahet Hotels and Stockade Association
- \$40,000 raised (10% increase over 2013)

Taking Care of Business Fundraiser

ADAPT – April 2015 – In response to the March 6, 2015, fire on Jay Street that displaced and temporarily shuttered several downtown businesses, the DSIC coordinated the *Taking Care of Business* fundraising campaign to assist with business recovery and/or relocation.

- April 1, 2015 – A fundraising event at Key Hall in partnership with Mazzone Hospitality attracted 400 guests and raised \$19,000
- Local philanthropists Neil & Jane Golub pledged \$25,000 in matching funds for all donations through April 10
- A total of \$51,200 was ultimately raised to assist affected businesses
- Beneficiaries were Bel Cibo, City Hall Barbershop, Esmeralda Jewelry, Executive Lounge, Persian Bite, Schenectady Safe & Lock Co. and Tara Kitchen. The Katbird Shop and Leva’s News & Lottery donated their share of the proceeds to the other businesses.

Historic Street Sign Project

The DSIC acted as fiscal agent for a project to bring historic street signs to the downtown’s Lower Union Street corridor and Union Triangle.

Union College Internship Program

Union College interns provided important assistance to the DSIC throughout the year in the areas of communications, promotions and research.



Chamber Ribbon Cuttings

The DSIC proudly represented Downtown Schenectady at the Chamber of Schenectady County’s many grand openings and ribbon cuttings within the downtown district.

Event & Program Support

The DSIC continues to provide financial, planning and/or labor support to a variety of community events and programs. Examples include:

- Chamber Business Awards Committee
- Chamber Gazette Holiday Parade Committee & Participation
- Edison/Steinmetz Statue Sponsorship
- Jazz on Jay Sponsorship
- Kids’ Arts Festival Committee & Participation
- Schenectady Ambassadors Committee
- Schenectady Day Nursery Summer Sizzle Staff Support
- Schenectady Farmers Market Staff Support
- Schenectady Greenmarket Staff Support
- Schenectady Pride Festival Staff Support



COMMUNITY & BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT
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Major Downtown Partners

at **PROCTORS**





143 State Street, Schenectady, NY 12305 | 518-377-9430 | www.downtownschenectady.org

