



MARION BUSINESS ASSOCIATION
 828-652-2215
 DISCOVERMARIONNC.COM

Facebook @ marionbusinessassociation-mba
 Instagram @ discovermarionnc



MAIN STREET

IMPACT REPORT

VISION/MISSION/GOALS

VISION & MISSION

Vision: Downtown Marion is the gathering place of McDowell County with a thriving downtown center of entrepreneurship and entertainment.

Mission: The Marion Business Association serves to strengthen the economic base of the City of Marion while preserving the historic character of the Downtown.

ECONOMIC STRATEGY & GOAL

Downtown Marion is the community gathering place with a thriving downtown center.

The goal is to have strong marketing & outreach for locals, visitors and new businesses with the objective of attracting people to Marion and McDowell County.

VALUE STATEMENT

The Marion Business Association champions the entrepreneurial spirit of our community through connections, collaboration, and innovation to enhance the quality of life for all citizens of our city.

blocks	16
parcels	178
parcel owners	152
public parking spots	374
1st floor storefronts	99
residential units	59
lodging units	2
restaurants	12
retail	11
vacancy rate	4%
property value increase 2020-2025	50%



INVESTMENT STATS

2024-2025

PUBLIC

\$998,000

PRIVATE

\$2,871,936

9 FACADE IMPROVEMENTS

1 BUILDING IMPROVEMENTS

1 NET NEW BUSINESSES

4 NET GAIN JOBS

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

\$8,451K VOLUNTEER VALUE

256 VOLUNTEER HOURS

The Marion Business Association team is fortunate to be supported by an incredible group of volunteers! Their dedication, passion, and love for our community shine through in the countless hours they give to make our projects and events successful.

Marion Strong

In the wake of Hurricane Helene, the MBA supported our business community. We helped over 40 businesses by connecting them with vital resources during a time of uncertainty, and together we continue to move forward as a resilient community.



New Branding Design

The MBA's new branding encourages exploration, connection, and adventure in Marion, "Where Main Street Meets the Mountains." This fresh look appears throughout MBA print and digital communications.



Downtown Beautification

The MBA has committed to enhancing the beauty of our Main Street Historic District. We are inviting local businesses to adopt-a-planter through our Marion in Bloom program to help keep downtown filled with colorful floral displays.



COMMUNITY

PROFILE - 2025

POPULATION
7,717

HOUSEHOLDS
2,712

MEDIAN HH INCOME
44,472

MEDIAN AGE
38.3 YEARS

"In the aftermath of Hurricane Helene, our strong community partnerships were key to our healing."

- MS Director Freddie Killough

DOWNTOWN DRIVE TIME MARKETS

	5 MIN	10 MIN	20 MIN
POPULATION	5,347	13,943	34,655
HOUSEHOLDS	2,268	5,817	14,039
MEDIAN INCOME	\$53,338	\$57,562	\$57,878



HELPING BUSINESSES THRIVE

- facade grants
- design services
- marketing
- gem grants

The Marion Business Association helps businesses thrive through programs that foster growth and long-term success. Our Growing Entrepreneurs Marion (GEM) program supports new entrepreneurs, while grants and consulting services strengthen businesses.

REDEVELOPMENT PROJECTS UNDERWAY!

A new chapter of growth is underway in downtown Marion with the development of a 100-room Marriott Hotel on the former Bank of America property on Main Street. This transformative project represents a significant investment in our Historic Downtown District, providing accommodations within walking distance of all that downtown has to offer. In addition to welcoming hotel guests, the project will feature commercial retail space, further supporting economic development. This project reflects Marion’s commitment to redevelopment efforts that revitalize and sustain the heart of our community.

PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES



- Livermush Festival
- WNC Bigfoot Festival
- Independence Day Celebration
- Sidewalk Yard Sales
- Mountain Glory Festival
- Marion Christmas Parade
- Ribbon Cuttings
- Christmas Festivities
- New Year’s Eve Celebration

The MBA stays connected with and promotes our community through a wide range of activities. Along with signature events like the Livermush and Mountain Glory Festivals, our social media campaigns, monthly email newsletter, and website showcase the people, businesses, and traditions that make our community unique.



DESIGNATIONS

- Accredited Main Street America
- Accredited NC Main Street Community
- Tree City Community



**NORTH CAROLINA
MAIN STREET**



NC Main Street is a Main Street America™ Coordinating Program. As a Main Street America™ Coordinating Program, NC Main Street is part a powerful, grassroots network consisting of over 40 Coordinating Programs and over 1,600 neighborhoods and communities across the country committed to creating high-quality places and to building stronger communities through preservation-based economic development.

THE IMPACT OF MAIN STREET

2024-25

IN OUR COMMUNITIES

THE RESULTS ARE IN...

Each year in July, North Carolina Main Street communities report the impact of their work to the North Carolina Department of Commerce. Main Street is the most impactful downtown economic development program in the state of North Carolina.

PUBLIC/PRIVATE INVESTMENT

\$6.1B 1980-2025
\$518M 2024-2025

NET NEW BUSINESSES

8,518 1980-2025
288 2024-2025

NET NEW JOBS

39,530 1980-2025
1,925 2024-2025

BUILDINGS REHABILITATED

8,419 1980-2025
293 2024-2025

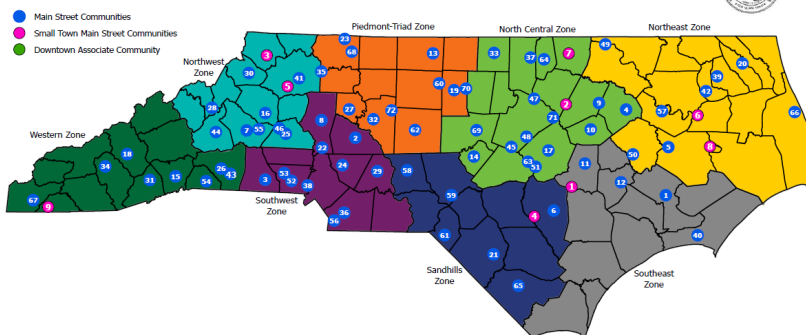
FACADE IMPROVEMENTS

9,440 1980-2025
364 2024-2025

VOLUNTEER HOURS

127,805 2024-2025
\$4.2M Time Value

North Carolina Main Street
and Small Town Main Street Communities



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MAIN-TO-MAIN TRAIL](#)

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