

North Carolina Main Street Champions Recognized

Fuquay-Varina's Mayor Among Those Honored



FUQUAY-VARINA, N.C. – On Thursday, January 28, Mayor John W. Byrne was honored as a 2009 Main Street Champion at the North Carolina Main Street Annual Awards Dinner in New Bern, N.C. He was selected for this special recognition by the Fuquay-Varina Revitalization Association in appreciation of his exceptional contributions to the downtown revitalization process. Along with Champions from 33 other communities, Mayor Byrne received a certificate commemorating his designation, presented by N.C. Secretary of Commerce J. Keith Crisco, Deputy Secretary Dale Carroll, Assistant Secretary for Community Development Joseph D. Crocker, Division of Community Assistance Director Gloria Nance-Sims and Office of Urban Development Director Liz Parham.

Each of the state's active Main Street programs is given the opportunity annually to recognize a local Main Street Champion. The dedication and hard work of countless volunteers is required to make a local Main Street program successful, and the Main Street Champion designation acknowledges the extraordinary efforts of those persons who have played pivotal roles in the revitalization of their downtowns.

"N.C. Main Street Champions are valued leaders, and we honor them for their commitment to downtown and to their community," said Parham. "They are Main Street board members and volunteers, elected officials and city staff, downtown developers and small business owners. They are those individuals that give 110% to their community and then ask, 'What's next?'"

"We celebrate their individual contributions: to assess the needs of their communities and to develop innovative solutions, to identify opportunities and to implement positive change, and to enhance community capacity through the creation of public and private partnerships. Main Street Champions are downtown defenders, protectors and pioneers, and we thank them for their commitment to community," she said.

In recommending Mayor Byrne for this honor, the Fuquay-Varina Revitalization Association offered the following:

"In 2001, Mayor John W. Byrne was elected the 27th mayor of Fuquay-Varina with a vision to revitalize the downtown. Still serving as mayor, he has pursued that vision with vigor and great success."

Mayor Byrne was instrumental in working with Congressman David Price to secure a \$360,000 grant for Phase 1 of the Downtown Fuquay-Varina Streetscape Project, which was completed in August 2005, and recently helped secure an additional \$200,000 grant for Phase 2 of the project which began in January. He led Town Board efforts in winning a \$2 million Bond Referendum which will pay for Phase 2 Streetscape Improvements. Mayor Byrne has championed and supported the Downtown Master Plan and the Downtown Center City Plan, both critical to guiding downtown's future as Fuquay-Varina struggles to grow, yet retain its character and hometown charm.

Mayor Byrne has put his passion about revitalization and Fuquay-Varina into action, giving freely of his time. He serves as an appointed board member of the Fuquay-Varina Revitalization Association, president of the Historical Society and member of the Fuquay-Varina Centennial Committee. In addition, he is an active member of Capital Area Preservation.

Mayor Byrne has also made substantial personal financial investments in downtown. He and his wife, Pattie, spent several years restoring the Ben Wiley Hotel and the Fuquay Mineral Spring Inn, both listed on the National Register of Historic Places and designated as Wake County Landmarks.

For these reasons and so many more, it is with honor and gratitude that we salute Mayor John Byrne as Fuquay-Varina's 2009 Main Street Champion."

Mayor Byrne's wife Pattie, Town Manager, Andy Hedrick and his wife Cathy, and Fuquay-Varina Revitalization Board members, Curtis Holleman, Eric Christofferson, Ann Marie Amico, James Spidle and Executive Director Susan Weis all attended the award ceremony in support of Mayor Byrne.

Fuquay-Varina was named a North Carolina Main Street Community in October 2006. Main Street is a downtown revitalization program for smaller towns based on economic development within the context of historic preservation. The North Carolina Main Street Program, which provides technical assistance to its communities, is part of the Office of Urban Development in the Department of Commerce's Division of Community Assistance.

In 1980, North Carolina was one of six original states, selected from 38 that applied, to launch the work of the National Trust for Historic Preservation's National Main Street Center. The North Carolina Main Street Program began working with its five original cities – New Bern, Salisbury, Shelby, Tarboro, and Washington – in September 1980 and has since grown to include 61 communities across the state.