

**Florida Main Street Community Recognition
Riverfront Park
Mayor Van Johnson's Remarks
Tuesday, September 6, 2011**

I want to thank each of you for joining with us as we celebrate the recognition of your city as a Florida Main Street community.

I also like to say many thanks to Historic Apalachicola, Inc., for their role in bringing Main Street to fruition and for hosting today's celebration.

Make no mistake about it... today is a very special day for the City of Apalachicola!

For the last few years, our city has faced many economic challenges and as we take the necessary steps to move beyond those challenges - the Main Street approach will give us the opportunity to fortify our downtown area as the economic soul of this city.

The approach will give us the prospect of revitalizing downtown Apalachicola within the context of historic preservation, to create jobs, stabilize, and expand the tax base, and to build a positive community image that would attract new business investments through the Main Street experience.

The concept of the program first surfaced over 9-years ago, when City Administrator Betty Taylor-Webb brought the idea back to Apalachicola after attending a Florida League of Cities conference in Daytona.

Since that time, many people have worked tirelessly over the last nine-years for the city to reach the milestone of becoming one of forty-five Florida Main Street communities.

As we use the Main Street approach to strengthen downtown Apalachicola, we must also expand opportunities for local entrepreneurs who have dreams of becoming their own boss and owning their own businesses. So that when we look back, we see a Main Street built by local citizens.

Furthermore, our uses for downtown must remain diverse. Not only is downtown Apalachicola a vital business hub, but it's a place of connection where people live and work, it is also our public square. It provides a space where we can come as citizens—whether it is to celebrate the birth of our nation or to hold a fundraiser to benefit our local fire department.

The only way we can truly grow this community is by working together and by balancing our public values.

Apalachicola... I salute you.