

Walter M. Gardner, Jr.
Mayor

Robert F. Davie Jr.
Town Administrator

TOWN OF WARRENTON
"Historically Great - Progressively Strong"
P. O. Box 281
Warrenton, NC 27589-0281
PHONE (252) 257-1122 FAX (252) 257-9219

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 23, 2013

CONTACT: Robert Davie
TEL: 252-257-1122
EMAIL: townadministrator@warrenton.nc.gov

WARRENTON ECONOMIC RESTRUCTURING EFFORT REWARDED BY N.C. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

WARRENTON, NC—One of North Carolina's smallest and most historic towns has been named winner of an Award of Merit from the N.C. Dept. of Commerce, Rural Economic Development Division. Warrenton, just one hour north of Raleigh, was recognized for downtown revitalization in the category of Economic Restructuring as a participant in the Small Town Main Street program.

Operated under the Commerce Department's umbrella, Small Town Main Street offers technical assistance with downtown revitalization to towns having populations under 7,500. The self-help program includes two years of free technical assistance and regular visits from Commerce staff.

Warrenton was selected as a participant two years ago, and since then town leaders and volunteers have focused on three core areas of Small Town Main Street: design, promotion and economic restructuring. The Economic Restructuring category for the annual award recognizes a local government, organization, individual or business that has accomplished a project resulting in the strengthening of downtown's economic assets.

The awards nomination form, prepared by Warrenton Town Administrator Robert Davie, highlights key successes in the economic restructuring effort. Among them are creation of a revolving loan fund, which helped establish two new businesses and create five new jobs; a grant program to help local businesses pay for installation of awnings and blade signs; building reuse through transformation of a former warehouse into what is now Robinson Ferry Restaurant and Spirits, which created about a dozen jobs; building reuse of a two-story building formerly used for storage into what is now Futrell Pharmacy and another commercial space downstairs, with office space and two residential lofts upstairs; and business recruitment, which so far has resulted in the creation of five new jobs and the opening of Coble Printing, Crown Cleaners and Futrell Pharmacy.

"With a population of just 864, the economic restructuring successes have renewed a vitality, enthusiasm and excitement reflected not only in the physical improvements and financial gains in Warrenton but also in the hearts and minds of its citizenry," said Town Administrator Robert Davie.

At a meeting held in Warren County that included visitors from Warren, Vance and Granville counties on Oct. 9, North Carolina Secretary of Commerce Sharon Decker stated the need for growth in small communities.

"The areas that need the greatest help are rural areas, there has been no net job growth in five years," Decker said.

Decker explained that the North Carolina Rural Infrastructure Authority will now be under the Department of Commerce in an attempt to achieve a greater focus on rural communities. In a change to previous operations, all types of state grants and non-monetary economic development assistance will be processed through the Department of Commerce. Warrenton's award will be given in January during the North Carolina Main Street 2013 Annual Awards dinner and program being held in New Bern.