**South Carolina General Assembly**

125th Session, 2023-2024

**S. 726**

**STATUS INFORMATION**

Senate Resolution

Sponsors: Senator Reichenbach

Document Path: LC-0242VR-GM23.docx

Introduced in the Senate on April 13, 2023

Adopted by the Senate on April 13, 2023

Summary: Florence 2023 Great American Main Street Award

**HISTORY OF LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS**

 Date Body Action Description with journal page number

 4/13/2023 Senate Introduced and adopted (Senate Journal‑page 4)

View the latest  [legislative information](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/billsearch.php?billnumbers=726&session=125&summary=B)  at the website

**VERSIONS OF THIS BILL**

[04/13/2023](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess125_2023-2024/prever/726_20230413.docx)

A senate RESOLUTION

to recognize AND honor the City of Florence and the Florence downtown development corporation on Downtown Florence Main Street’s receipt of the prestigious 2023 Great American Main Street Award and to congratulate the program on the achievement.

Whereas, the South Carolina Senate is pleased to learn that the Downtown Florence Main Street program is one of three winners of the prestigious 2023 Great American Main Street Award (GAMSA), which recognizes communities for their excellence in comprehensive preservation-based commercial district revitalization. The award is sponsored by The Hartford and winners are selected by a national jury of community preservation professionals and leaders in the fields of economic development; and

Whereas, Downtown Florence Main Street is being recognized for developing innovative and forward-thinking approaches to creating community buy-in through representative leadership and inclusive programming. Established by the City of Florence in 2002 to foster downtown revitalization through a partnership with the Florence Downtown Development Corporation, Downtown Florence Main Street has amassed $300 million dollars in public and private reinvestment to encourage the creation of 91 net new businesses and rehabilitate 79 buildings and structures; and

Whereas, Downtown Florence Main Street’s success demonstrates the power of creative approaches to engaging stakeholders, creating a strong culture of volunteerism, and fostering pathways to increased downtown housing, while championing the preservation of historic community assets. Locals and visitors of the eight blocks comprising Downtown Florence find there exceptional local dining, award-winning entertainment venues, whimsical public art, and buildings rich in architectural heritage; and

Whereas, prior to revitalization, the area suffered for decades from a negative public perception fueled by empty storefronts, racial divides, and the practice of demolishing neglected, yet culturally significant, buildings for new construction. Even with the revitalization efforts that began in 2002, it was not until 2011 with the program’s implementation of a community-informed revitalization plan that lasting, effective improvements took root. The plan has generated over 100 units of new housing in the past decade; and

Whereas, one notable, catalytic Downtown Florence Main Street project was in partnership with the City of Florence to increase access to healthy foods and create economic opportunities for the food, artisan, and warehouse-based businesses by establishing a newly zoned overlay district. The initiative included the support and development of a foundational process for the City Center Market and Kitchen, a municipally owned commercial kitchen and market facility that supports over 20 food-based entrepreneurs and over 40 farmers market vendors. In addition, partnerships with the City of Florence and others to anchor a downtown grocery store have helped eliminate a USDA food desert; and

Whereas, Downtown Florence Main Street also has been intentional in its efforts to bridge divides. In 2019, a data-backed and strategic approach helped ensure that the board of directors mirror the community of the Main Street District, while the newly installed North Dargan Street Mural is the latest in the organization’s efforts to honor the legacy of Black entrepreneurship, enhance the downtown’s African American Historic Business District, and foster community trust. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the Senate:

That the members of the South Carolina Senate, by this resolution, recognize and honor the City of Florence and the Florence Downtown Development Corporation on Downtown Florence Main Street’s receipt of the prestigious 2023 Great American Main Street Award and congratulate the program on the achievement.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be presented to Hannah L. Davis, Main Street program manager at Downtown Florence Main Street.

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