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Evers Campaign: ICYMI: “Main streets across Wisconsin are getting makeovers”

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MADISON, Wis. — Yesterday, TMJ4 reported that “Main Streets across Wisconsin are getting makeovers” because of Governor Tony Evers’ investments in small businesses. Across the state, small businesses ranging from flower shops to martini bars are filling previously empty storefronts and powering Wisconsin’s historic economic growth.

In Mayville, Fred’s Beds is utilizing Gov. Evers’ Main Street Makeover Grant to make crucial upgrades to the historic building. For the owners of Fred’s Beds, **“the future is sturdy (much like the furniture) as this husband and wife duo take their place in the community.”**

Last year, Gov. Evers signed nearly a half billion dollars in tax cuts for Wisconsin small businesses, and with his investments in small businesses, Gov. Evers is establishing Wisconsin as the small business powerhouse of the Midwest.

In Washburn, small business owners John Hopkins and Susan Lince wrote that **“our economy is only strong when our main streets are thriving. That’s why Wisconsin is in a better position than we were in 2018, thanks to Evers’ investments in small businesses.”**

Watch the TMJ4 segment on Gov. Evers’ investments in Main Streets here.

Read more below.

TMJ4: Main Streets across Wisconsin are getting makeovers

Main Streets, like the one found in downtown Mayville, are full of beauty and history, but their value can be overlooked when shops are boarded up and sitting empty. The Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC), the state's lead economic development agency, has a program working to keep Main Streets all across Wisconsin thriving.

They're offering $10,000 "Main Street Makeover Grants" and "Main Street Bounceback Grants" to help revive Main Streets.

Janine and Jeff Andes own Fred's Beds in Mayville. Their historic building needs upgrades.

"We want to keep it in as good of shape as we can, as well as improving visibility to our customers," said Janine.

Fred's Beds recently won the Main Street Makeover Grant, allowing them to start working to implement the cosmetic upgrades they're hoping to complete.

"We wouldn't be able to do the work that we're hoping we will be able to do without that extra grant and that extra help," said Janine. "[The grant] means the world to us because we need, and wanted, to do work to outside of the building, just to improve the facade and upkeep the building so it doesn't lose its value."

The grants are part of a larger mission by the WEDC.

"We've all seen those empty blighted buildings and it really stands out as an eyesore in a community, on a Main Street. So, to have them occupied, to have somebody move in there, put in some new furniture and a fresh coat of paint really revitalizes what otherwise could look like a missing tooth on Main Street," said WEDC Secretary and CEO Missy Hughes.

In Mayville, several businesses have received grants, including the Audubon Hotel, Open Door Coffeehouse, and Sweet Pea's – a local pie and ice cream shop.

The money comes from $50 million in federal funds, allocated by Gov. Tony Evers to help bring back Main Streets in the state after all of the pandemic-related challenges for small businesses.

So far, more than 2,400 businesses in 70 of Wisconsin's 72 counties have opened or expanded thanks to $10,000 grants helping to support small town economies and

bring small town dreams to life.

“Sometimes we talk about businesses as if they’re just this entity. But there are people behind that and there are business owners whose dreams are coming true,” said Hughes.

For the owners of Fred’s Beds, the future is sturdy (much like the furniture) as this husband and wife duo take their place in the community.

“You get people who come in that have lived here their whole lives and know what the city used to look like, and they can tell you stories about the history, that means a lot to me, and it makes me appreciate the area more,” said Janine.