

City of Lawrence
Outside Agency
Bi-annual Report
2016

Reports on activity should be submitted electronically to Danielle Buschkoetter, at dbuschkoetter@lawrenceks.org. Reports on activities from January 2016 to June 2016 are due on July 15th 2016. Cumulative reports on activities from January 2016 through December 2016 are due on February 15th 2017.

Agency Name:

Reporting Period (please check one):

☒ January - June
(deadline July 15)

☐ January – December
(deadline February 15)

1. Give a brief narrative of the activities that were funded with City funds over the reporting period checked above.

Downtown Lawrence, Inc. has continued to expand its membership and engage with member businesses, collaborate with local organizations, and the community at large thus far in 2016. We have continued our tradition of producing and coordinating community wide events, most of which are free and open to the public, that encourage residents and visitors alike to spend time downtown enjoying the atmosphere and patronizing our local businesses. DLI also sponsors other local events and assists with marketing and advertising via earned media, social media, and traditional media buys. We continually promote downtown through a variety of media channels as a destination for shopping, dining, and entertainment and as a community gathering space. We support our member businesses and assist with business development, marketing, targeted initiatives and promotions in our role as an economic development organization. Our members are also afforded multiple marketing and advertising opportunities that are included as a benefit of membership; they are promoted online via our website, downtownlawrence.com, on our social media accounts on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, and on our printed map and directory as well as the large format map and directories located at 9th and Mass and in the Vermont St. garage.

DLI has continued to develop and grow our collaborative relationships and partnerships with other local agencies and organizations for the benefit of downtown as well as our city as a whole. We have facilitated discussions related to current building projects with developers, city departments and downtown businesses and with the Lawrence Farmers Market and business owners. We continue to work with the City on issues related to downtown parking including communications, signage, and bike corrals and we work with Lawrence Parks and Recreation, Solid Waste and Public Works to communicate with business owners and the public about street and sidewalk repairs, traffic pattern changes, beautification efforts and trash and recycling issues downtown. DLI maintains a close relationship and open lines of communication with Lawrence Police on issues of downtown safety and security; we are often the liaison between businesses and residents and police and work to facilitate positive and proactive discussions to ensure that our downtown is as welcoming, safe and inviting as possible. Our goal is to offer any visitor to downtown Lawrence the best experience possible, to make them feel welcome and encourage them to visit often.

2. Provide specific detail (and supportive documents, if needed) to demonstrate progress made toward your goals/objectives.
 - Continued membership retention and growth – 14 new members in the first half of 2016 and 197 members total.

- Started a Small Business Support Network committee including City staff, Chamber staff and member property and business owners to discuss ways to recruit and retain local independent retailers to downtown Lawrence.
- Started a Retail Events committee to focus on developing and expanding retail specific events as well as improved integration of retail businesses into large and small scale events downtown.
- Hosted the DLI Annual Members Breakfast April 12th with City Manager Tom Markus as guest speaker. We had the highest response to date, with over 80 members in attendance.
- Manage and promote DLI gift card program for participating DLI members that drives customers and ensures all funds are spent at participating businesses. DLI Gift Card is accepted at over 120 DLI member businesses. Program was implemented in mid-November 2015 and as of July 16, 2016 DLI has sold 2500 gift cards for a total of \$118,000 and has generated \$66,000 in direct spending in 2600 transactions at 112 downtown businesses. We are on track to surpass 2015's combined total sales of \$154,000 in DLI gift certificates and gift cards. All of this revenue is directly driven to participating DLI members.
- Helped facilitate successful relocation of Tuesday Farmers Market to Library Lawn Plaza from City parking lot in the 800 block of New Hampshire.
- Coordinated a promotional social media campaign for National Small Business Week May 1-7 featuring DLI member businesses.
- Promoted and helped coordinate the 5th annual Kansas Craft Brewers Expo in conjunction with Free State Brewing Co. and the Kansas Craft Brewers Guild. The event welcomed 1600 attendees from across Kansas and the Midwest and included over 40 Kansas and regional craft breweries. The event raised over \$28,000, split between DLI and the Kansas Craft Brewers Guild.
- Coordinating the Downtown Summer Film Festival "Dinner and a Movie" in conjunction with the Lawrence Public Library. In 2016 we are showing three films (1 each in June, July and August) at this free community event at the Library Lawn Plaza. We collaborate with more than 15 Downtown businesses to offer local food and drink for direct purchase, provide free popcorn courtesy of DLI, and door prizes donated by Downtown businesses.
- Coordinating and promoting the 57th annual Sidewalk Sale July 21st with over 100 participating businesses, media outlets and local non-profits. Marketing and advertising include television, radio, print, social media, and targeted online ads as well as live radio broadcasts on event day. Provide amenities to shoppers including free water, cooling stations, and porta johns.
- Continued our sponsorship with Lawrence Parks and Recreation for the Summer Brown Bag Concert Series. Promoting via our website, social media, and our weekly public e-newsletter.
- Collaborated on numerous Downtown and community events including: Final Fridays, Lawrence Farmers Market; St. Patrick's Day Parade; Downtown Men's Olympic Shot Put; Lawrence Busker Festival and Art Tougeau; Free State Festival; Tour of Lawrence; Kaw-Boom Festival, Watkins Museum Summer games program and Library Summer Reading program. Provide marketing and social media support as well as planning assistance.
- Producing a promotional music video with Lawrence Schools Foundation, eXplore Lawrence and DLI member Nordera Productions showcasing downtown, residents, community organizations, City departments and services to be used as a social media marketing tool for our community.
- From January 1-July 15, 2016 the DLI website, downtownlawrence.com, has had 93,000 page views, over 39,000 visits and over 31,000 unique visitors. Visitors are from 115 countries and all 50 states + DC.
- DLI Facebook page has nearly 30,000 likes, Twitter has 5,600 followers, and Instagram has 2700 followers. Social media continues to be one of our strengths and gives us incredible reach and engagement on behalf of Downtown as a whole as well as for our members. Our video of Senator Bernie Sanders' visit to Lawrence and Downtown Barbershop had over 1.5 million views and reached over 500,000 people. We have followers in 45 countries and all 50 states + DC and Puerto Rico. Also responsible for Downtown Lawrence Restaurant Week Facebook page with 750 likes.
- DLI weekly members' e-newsletter communicates information about events, promotions and initiatives, construction, street closures, development plans, etc. Weekly public e-newsletter highlighting community, downtown and member events, initiatives and promotions goes to over 2500 subscribers in

addition to 35,000 social media followers via Facebook and Twitter. We have moved to a weekly format from a bi-weekly format in the busy spring and summer event season.

- Increased marketing and promotion efforts via social media, print, television, digital advertising, and radio, which grow year over year
- Continue to implement and promote successful Downtown Quarterly Passport program for visiting groups, meetings, conferences, and conventions. Collaborate with eXplore Lawrence, area hotels and meeting and event planners, University of Kansas and Sports Pavilion Lawrence to provide Downtown Passport with over 25 offers redeemable for the quarter at participating member businesses for visitors. Ongoing program that is a member benefit at no cost to them.
- Continued collaboration with eXplore Lawrence to market and promote Lawrence as a destination locally, regionally, and nationally. DLI executive director and board past president are both members of the eXplore Lawrence board. Co-promotion for all DLI and Downtown events and collaboration on Downtown Business Directory and map, DLI printed map (nearly 20,000 copies distributed annually) and Downtown Passport. Continued collaboration on meetings and conferences to provide outside activities, event spaces, and events to offer visitors the best city and downtown experience possible.
- Continued collaboration with City of Lawrence, Lawrence Parks and Recreation, Lawrence Public Library, Watkins Museum, Lawrence Arts Center, The Chamber, Lawrence Farmers Market, Kansas Public Radio, the World Company, WOW!, Great Plains Media, Kansas Athletics, Lawrence Kids Calendar, Lied Center, Lawrence KS app.
- Maintain and update Downtown Lawrence kiosk including map, business directory and quarterly events calendar to assist downtown visitors at 9th and Mass as well as Downtown map and directory in the Vermont Street garage.

3. How have you impacted the citizens of Lawrence?

- Downtown Lawrence is an important aspect of the city as a whole. We are an important recruiting tool for KU as well as for the City and the Chamber when new businesses are looking to locate here. Our goal is to create and foster an exciting, dynamic, and relevant Downtown, and remain the heart of the city.
- Downtown Lawrence, Inc. serves to draw people from within and without the City to patronize and enjoy our Downtown Historic business district. We provide multiple free community events drawing attendees from across the region as well as special events aimed at particular demographics. Our goal is to provide the community gathering place for all of our citizens. By providing a gathering place and excellent opportunities for shopping, dining, and entertainment we provide a valuable public service that adds to the quality of life in Lawrence. It also improves and increases business and stimulates the local economy through sales and guest tax collections. Downtown Lawrence is the number one tourist destination in the state of Kansas according to Trip Advisor, and DLI is an important factor in that.
- We also assist many non-profit service organizations in the community via donations and publicity and promotion. We have formed a partnership with Just Food that has netted them \$9000 in the past six years. In addition, Downtown businesses consistently donate to organizations across the city to the tune of several hundred thousand dollars each year in goods and services – from event venues, to catering, to goods and services for silent and live auctions and outright cash donations. There is no more generous group in Lawrence than our Downtown business owners

4. What barriers, if any, have you encountered?

- Parking issues continue to present a challenge to business owners and downtown visitors and patrons alike. DLI is committed to working with the City on any new parking plans and programs including new signage that is being developed to direct visitors to free and low cost parking options off Massachusetts St. Communicating effectively and efficiently with the public about downtown parking remains a challenge and a priority. Feedback received from DLI member business owners and the public include requests for an improved and updated meter system (pay by phone or kiosk rather than the current coin only meters), improved payment options for garages (rather than pay by bill or coin only), better signage on the meters and garage parking kiosks that clearly indicates during which hours and days parking is paid vs. free. Parking continues to be compressed by

ongoing construction projects that limit on street parking and add to the congestion in surface lots and garages.

- DLI would like to encourage discussion and development of a long term parking plan that includes increased parking inventory and options.
- DLI is actively discussing ways to recruit and retain local independent retail businesses. We are aware that a diverse mix of retail, restaurants and entertainment venues, and residential properties make a healthy downtown and we are working to foster and maintain that.
- DLI continues to monitor and remain involved in the conversation surrounding both the E. Ninth project and a downtown grocery. We have very good lines of communication with stakeholders involved in both issues and are very pleased to be part of the discussion surrounding both. There are always issues that arise when dealing with a large group, in our case, an entire neighborhood and business district. We hear differing opinions about development and construction, street closures, traffic patterns, utilities work, etc. DLI works to increase communication with member and non-member businesses as well as with the public about what is going on Downtown. We have improved our communications and are striving to find new ways to interact with and engage more members of the community.

5. Review the line-item budget you provided in your application. How much of your allocation has been spent?

- 25%