



# Wisconsin Main Street Case Study

## Economic Restructuring

### Main Street Station Public Market

#### Adaptive Reuse Project

#### Viroqua

Finding new uses for large, white elephant buildings in our downtowns is a challenge. Downtown Viroqua's award winning 2004 project is one example of what a community can do with a structure that has outlived its previous use.

The 12,000 square foot building known as the historic Clark/Peterson Motors building served as an automobile garage in downtown Viroqua from the time it was built in 1912. From the early 1970's until 2002, the building was a GM dealership owned and operated by the Robert Peterson family. Feeling the need to expand to allow the family business to grow, Peterson Motors purchased a site to build their new facility on Viroqua's north side. Their downtown property was sold to New American Boulevard, LLC, a group of local developers.

In December of 2003, the Viroqua Historic Preservation Commission approved a Certificate of Appropriateness for the plans to renovate the building and it was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in January of 2004. The building's facade was basically left unchanged. An elegant "Main Street Station" sign spans the brick arch over the main entrance. Replacing the large commercial garage doors are bold, oversized red wooden doors that welcome people into the grand entry. Transom windows were placed over each storefront. The building is now anchored by three permanent storefronts: a smoothie's cafe, an interior design/gift shop, and a dance studio/art gallery. Beyond these businesses is 6,000 square feet of public market space in the area previously utilized as the maintenance and auto repair section of the automobile dealer. The interior has been completely rehabilitated with a fountain, street lamps, benches, and even a tree in the center. The rear garage door was left intact, and with weather permitting can be opened to a landscaped common area, also creating an open market feel. In the Public Market, vendors are arrayed along a large area in 8 foot by 7 foot, leased spaces. The surrounding interior walls have original and faux elements to simulate shops with brick, ivy-covered walls. Sun streams in from the reclaimed skylights, original to the building. To add ambience, musicians, street performers, magicians and other entertainers are encouraged to perform in the market free-of-charge. The building also has four 400 square foot secure suites that share the same heating/ventilation as the market. One of the goals of New American Boulevard, LLC is to create an entrepreneurial incubator. The building was purchased by New American Boulevard for \$400,000. Cost of renovation was \$350,000. Architect for the project was Gregory Splinter. Because of the appropriate restoration techniques used, the developers will benefit from historic tax credits.



*"La De Da" is one of the three storefronts that occupies "Main Street Station".*