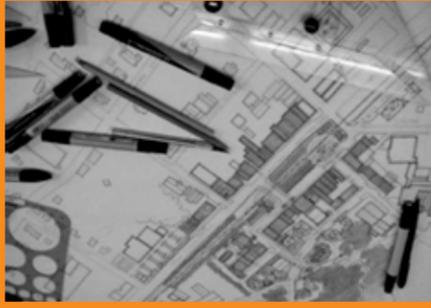


Detail of Evergreen,
Alabama plan



Marion, Alabama grand
opening of new business
in the historic downtown.



DesignAlabama
Mayors Design Summit



Monroeville, Alabama
town hall meeting

Evergreen, Alabama
town hall meeting.

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Urban Studio
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YourTownAlabama
yourtownalabama.com

Small Town Design Initiative
yourtownalabama.com/small-town-design-initiative

Alabama Communities of Excellence
alabamacommunitiesofexcellence.com

Alabama Engine
alabamaengine.org
205.307.6519

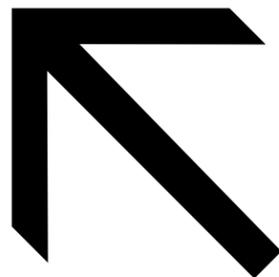
MainStreet Alabama
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205.910.8819
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Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.

MARGARET MEAD

An exhibition of placemaking in Alabama

We are helping communities identify those positive assets that can be the basis of a sound master plan for physical and economic vitality—creating distinctive opportunities for building higher quality of life, broader prospects in the community and—a better place to live. CHERYL MORGAN



IN 1985, A GRANT FROM the National Endowment for the Arts was given to the Alabama State Council on the Arts (ASCA) for the development of the Council's Design Arts Program. In conjunction with these funds, ASCA informed over 1,200 Alabama designers, in a variety of design disciplines, that program development was underway. These individuals were asked to provide input and other information concerning their work. From this group, an advisory panel was formed.

The advisory panel determined that an advocacy groups was necessary to educate the public about the importance of good design in Alabama. It was decided that a board of directors should be established and should be made up of both designers and non-designers, including community activists and business leaders. This is an important element in the organization's goal to bridge communication between design professionals and the general public.

In March 1987, DesignAlabama became incorporated. The following July, the board decided to produce a journal and the first issue of the DesignAlabama journal was published in January 1988.

In 1990, the organization developed the initiative known as the Alabama Community Design Program. This program aimed to work with small communities throughout the state, who did not have the funds or access to design professionals, to help create strategic and master plans for community development and downtown revitalization. With the resurgence of the Your Town organization in our state and the development of the Auburn University Center for Architecture and Urban Studies, we have handed over some of the responsibility of these programs, but continue to plan a supporting but active role in these types of initiatives.

Today DesignAlabama works from the capitol city of Alabama, Montgomery, and works as a statewide partner of the Alabama State Council on the Arts, to deliver a variety of design programming across the state. Gina Clifford currently serves as the Executive Director of DesignAlabama



THE AUBURN UNIVERSITY Center for Architecture and Urban Studies—Urban Studio—was founded in downtown Birmingham, AL in 1991 by Professor Dan Bennett, FAIA, Head

of the School of Architecture, and Associate Professor Franklin Setzer, AIA, Director of the Urban Studio.

The Urban Studio was created to provide a teaching and outreach venue for [what is now] Auburn's College of Architecture Design and Construction. Birmingham is an exceptional "teaching laboratory" and with Alabama's largest concentration of design and construction professionals Birmingham was also seen as a significant place for regular engagement between students, faculty and practicing professionals.

Professor Cheryl Morgan, AIA, joined the Urban Studio full time in 1997 and became Director in 2002 after founding director Franklin Setzer passed away.



RURAL STUDIO WAS FOUNDED in 1993 by architecture professors Samuel Mockbee and D.K. Ruth. Putting into practice their philosophy that everyone deserves access to good design, they led a group of architecture students to rural West Alabama to give them a hands-on, educational experience, designing and building for an underserved population. Since 2001 the Studio, under the direction of Andrew Freear, has evolved toward more community-oriented projects across four counties. With a triple focus of community, housing, and food, the multi-year, multi-phase projects—such as the recently completed Newbern Town Hall—continue the Rural Studio ethos of recycling, reusing, remaking and delighting in using local materials, while maintaining the belief that affordable, good design is important to all.

In establishing Rural Studio, Mockbee was convinced that architecture must have a strong ethical imperative to be meaningful. He believed architects should become leaders in bringing about environmental and social change, and called on them to place less emphasis on pleasing the rich and more on helping those who don't have access to design services but need them. Mockbee wanted to supplant the predominantly theoretical "paper architecture" that was taught in most schools with hands-on teaching methods that included implementing designs on-site. For this initiative, Mockbee posthumously received the AIA Gold Medal, the greatest accolade in American architecture.

Twenty years and 150 projects later, Rural Studio continues to educate citizen architects through a mixture of hands-on learning and a healthy dose of social activism. The Studio's rich existence in rural West Alabama is now rooted in building relationships and earning trust from their neighbors and friends in the community. Immersing themselves in West Alabama has afforded their students the

opportunity to apply their skills as designers, while also learning about the nature, history, culture, economy, architecture and community in this unique educational landscape.



THE FIRST YourTownAlabama workshop was in the summer of 1998. YourTownAlabama is an adaptation of a program created by the National Trust for Historic Preservation in 1991 with the goal of applying assets-based community planning and economic development strategies to the revitalization and preservation of small towns and rural America.

The principles are simple: how can you leverage your historic/cultural assets, your natural assets and your economic assets to create a plan that will help your community preserve and protect what makes you special/distinctive and competitive? The target audience is citizen-leaders and elected officials and since Alabama became the first state with its own YourTown program, over 1000 citizen-leaders have participated in this two and one half day hands-on workshop. Partners in the Your-Town program include: the Alabama Historical Commission, the state's regional planning commissions, the Alabama State Council on the Arts, DesignAlabama, CAWACO RC&D, the University of Alabama's Center for Economic Development and Auburn's Urban Studio.



THE SMALL TOWN DESIGN INITIATIVE (STDI) evolved from DesignAlabama's Community Design Program and was founded in 1999. Following the same assets-based planning methodology, STDI works with small towns and neighborhoods to develop illustrative master plans that can position these communities for competitive advantages as they work toward revitalization and economic development.



THE ALABAMA COMMUNITIES OF EXCELLENCE (ACE) program uses a comprehensive, three-phase approach to assist participating communities in planning and preparing for a more vibrant future. Throughout each of these phases, ACE partners from the private sector, government agencies and universities work with each

community to successfully achieve its goals. Currently 26 Alabama communities are participating in the ACE program.

Created in 2002 as a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation organized for the purpose of utilizing the collective expertise of its partner organizations, ACE provides participants with a "one stop shopping" type of experience—community development programs and tools needed to insure long term success found through one organization. ACE's comprehensive three-phase approach targets communities with populations ranging from 2,000 to 18,000. Communities are selected based on the level of local commitment to the ACE program and the community's capacity to support the ACE program.



AL INNOVATION ENGINE (Engine) is an initiative that is working to create large-scale, positive change and encourage economic development in rural communities throughout Alabama.

Engine is jointly funded by Auburn University and The University of Alabama and is founded on two beliefs: first, that the best way to identify community projects is to work with local community leaders; and second, that by connecting these projects at common intersections, they can be developed or combined to take advantage of the variety of existing assets such as people, culture, or natural resources found throughout Alabama. Other states have successfully incorporated these beliefs into economic development opportunities. Auburn University and the University of Alabama recognize that the state of Alabama has the potential to do the same and Engine represents an approach, process, and methodology to achieve that goal.

Many rural communities in Alabama are working in isolation to create opportunities for their residents. However, because of lack of access to resources they have trouble envisioning a different future for their areas. Engine's objective is to support communities within Alabama as they work together to realize the potential of their best assets: residents, local leaders, natural resources, and a rich history. Five organizational goals guide our work: we aim to (i) support asset-based development, (ii) identify regional frameworks, (iii) leverage natural resources and scientific research opportunities, (iv) educate communities, and (v) build partnerships.



THE ALABAMA HISTORICAL COMMISSION (AHC) brought the Main Street program to Alabama in 1982 and served as the state Main Street coordinating program, providing guidance, support, services and essential certification to existing Main Street towns. State budget cuts in 2003 and 2004 resulted in loss of staff and funding for Main Street at the state level and the program became dormant.

Main Street Alabama came back to life in 2009 and incorporated in 2010 to serve as state coordinator of the Main Street program. It follows a 30-year-old model for community revitalization that has seen great success nationwide.

A nonprofit organization, Main Street Alabama stresses public-private partnerships, broad community engagement, and strategies that create jobs, spark new investment, attract visitors, and spur growth. Main Street builds on the authentic history, culture, and attributes of specific places, to bring sustainable change.

In early 2009, the AHC contracted with the National Main Street Center to assess need for and support for a revitalized statewide Main Street Coordinating program. The goal was to reestablish a stronger program that could match the investment and success of neighboring state Main Street programs.

Main Street Alabama uses a proven model that has produced impressive revitalization results in many other states, the Main Street Four-Point Approach®. This method leverages local assets to revitalize their districts by leveraging local assets—from cultural or architectural heritage to local enterprises and community pride. The four points of the Main Street approach work together to build a sustainable and complete community revitalization effort.