



For Immediate Release

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**ORTONVILLE DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
Celebrates National Historic Preservation Month with a New Mural in Downtown Ortonville**

Ortonville, MI May 1, 2020 – Realizing they have an important role to play in the health of our businesses and the culture of our downtown, the Downtown Development Authority Board has launched a Public Art – Mural Program. This effort is consistent with the DDA’s strategic objective to reimagine and reinvent public and green spaces in Downtown Ortonville for people to connect and gather.

Historic preservation is central to the National Main Street program's purpose and is what makes historic and traditional commercial districts authentic places. As a Nationally Accredited Main Street community, the Ortonville DDA recognizes that our historic buildings and public spaces in Ortonville enrich civic life and add value to the community’s sense of place. Celebrating National Historic Preservation Month in May, this program will foster the revitalization of buildings in Downtown Ortonville by improving their visual appearance and bringing art to unexpected places.

“Our community is facing a very different challenge right now and it is difficult to know the short and long-term impact the COVID-19 crisis is having on our local businesses and our community culture”, said Courtney McClerren, DDA President. “However, at some point, we will pivot/return and stores will reopen, streets will fill, and activities will resume.” The program will launch with one mural in the center of Downtown Ortonville on the building at 437 Mill Street with a “Welcome Back to Ortonville” message and include Village historical references.

How did this all start? The DDA Board first adopted a larger placemaking initiative that included this public art mural project. A small task force of volunteers began working on research and planning for the first mural in January 2020. "When the DDA contacted me regarding implementing murals, I was beyond excited. I have been in the creative business for over 30 years and I knew who the perfect artist would be for this endeavor" said Melanie Nivel, Village Planning Commissioner & Mural Task Force Member. Focused on collaboration and a public/private partnership, the task force includes DDA representatives, community volunteers, local historians, Artist Kevin Burdick, Main Street Oakland County and Jason & Jeremy Kratt, property owners where the mural will be located. "It was a great collaboration experience that I was so appreciative of being part of. I’m very excited to hear what our community thinks of the mural. I hope this is the beginning of continued collaboration efforts on future projects" said Nivel.

After this public health crisis subsides, businesses reopen, and our community begins to venture out, our first mural will “Welcome” residents and visitors back to Downtown Ortonville. This mural will: build public excitement for visual arts in Downtown Ortonville, support existing businesses by creating an additional

reason to visit and linger in Downtown Ortonville, attract new businesses by creating an exciting and vibrant environment and increase local pride in Downtown Ortonville.

About Ortonville Downtown Development Authority

The Ortonville DDA is dedicated to promoting economic revitalization, supporting local businesses, and preserving the natural and historic heritage of the Village of Ortonville. We advocate a return to community self-reliance, local empowerment, and development of Ortonville's unique characteristics. The Ortonville DDA advocates for businesses and the community by assessing current needs, customizing resources to meet those needs, collaborating with community groups, developing special promotions, and providing technical expertise. To learn more about the DDA, visit www.ortonvilledda.org and follow us on Facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/ortonvillemi/>