

# Main Street Moberly, Inc



## A Tale of Three Merchants

By Tom Shay

Once upon a time there were three businesses that were owned by local families and had all opened about the same time. All of the businesses were in the same community but did not compete with each other because of their locations and product mix. There were several things they shared in common, however.

The three businesses enjoyed their best years when neighborhood businesses were just coming onto the retail scene. The businesses were well known by many people in the community and drew their customers from larger trade areas than most similar stores. One of the biggest challenges each faced was what to do as mass merchants enlarged their realm of influence. While each of the three businesses continued to grow for many years, none of the owners looked around the community to see the changing retail landscape.

All were started by couples who eventually brought their children into the business. After their children completed their schooling, they came back to work in the family business and eventually succeeded their parents in operating the business. The second generation did not enjoy the same success as their parents, however, and eventually closed their family businesses.

Each of the three members of the generation demonstrated the same great personal skills with customers and vendors that their parents had shown over the years. Each worked hard, long hours every week trying to maintain their businesses. Why did they fail?

One observation that could be made is that Jeff, Jerry, and David may have spent too many hours in their stores. None of the three made any effort to visit the competition, be it other independents or mass merchants. They had little or no idea what the competition was doing.

David had perhaps the best clue given to him about the need to visit the competition. During an interview with a newspaper about the closing of his business, David said, "we always take good care of our customers.

They come here often. We have a reputation for carrying all kinds of unique products. We know this because our customers say that if they can't find it anywhere else, they know can find it in our store."

Unfortunately, David took this as a compliment. He never stopped to wonder, or investigate, why customers chose to shop first in another business and came to his store as a "last resort." The hint was there; David just did not hear it.

Jerry observed that his area of retailing was changing. His father had operated the business during a time when customers would buy a product and then come back to have it serviced or repaired as necessary. As with many businesses, service and repaired operations can be very lucrative.

Over the years, the type of products Jerry's business sold required fewer repairs; many customers simply began to discard products instead of getting them repaired. The store was also challenged by mass merchants that sold similar products at lower prices.

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## **A Tale of Three Merchants Continued**

Few customers understand that the products being sold by a mass merchant are not the same as those offered by a local business. The manufacturer is leveraging its name and reputation by offering a product of lesser quality. Unfortunately, shoppers can rarely distinguish the differences in the two products. All they see are two items that look identical but have very different prices.

While Jerry and his father both knew this, they did nothing to educate their customers about the difference in product quality. They simply kept their doors open and took a beating in sales and profit until all of their reserve money was spent. Jerry closed his store and took a job with another independent business where providing service and repair were still options.

A look at Jeff and his family business shows that they never quite understood how to operate a retail business. Customers could always rely on seeing the same two cars parked near the front door; they were the vehicle of Jeff and his father. Shoppers had to walk past the owners' cars just to get in the front door. The floors were always dirty; dust was everywhere; ceiling panels were missing; and at least a quarter of the lights were always turned off. Yet, the family always seemed busy working, just not doing things that would make an impression on the customers.

### **The “Do as We Have Always Done” Syndrome**

Three short stories of three families and their businesses. All three examples might be found in any town; at least one of them is likely to be in every town. Because Jeff, Jerry, and David were all second-generation owners of a family business, we might expect them to have an advantage over others because they had been around parents with many years of retail management experience. Research has shown that coming from an entrepreneurial background accounts for up to 40 percent of the success of those who make a “go” of a small business. Each of these three store owners appear to have suffered from the “do as we have always done it” syndrome. This is an “illness” that can affect individuals, businesses, and even Main Street communities. Just like a doctor asks the questions about a patient's symptoms, let's ask some questions to see if we have a patient/business with a problem.

When was the last time your retailer gave their store interiors a new look? This question could apply to a business owner's office or the store itself. The same could be asked of the Main Street district: when was the last time the flowers in the planters were changed or streetlights checked to make sure the bulbs work?

How about determining the customer base? Has the business owner, or Main Street district for that matter, engaged in research to determine who the customers are, where they live, and what their spending habits are? This does not require an outside consulting firm. Colored straight pins, a map of the area, and a few well-thought-out questions can go a long way toward determining who the primary customers are. The result will be a business with products and services that target the right customer. For the Main Street district, this means holding events that will have better attendance and spending less money on media that doesn't target the ideal customer for the district.

While there can be other components that factor into the challenge, let's stop with education as the third need. When was the last time retailers in your district exposed themselves to components of education? Perhaps the easiest form of education comes from reading business-oriented books. The Main Street program could work with the local library to ensure they have current books by authors who speak specifically to small business owners. Main Street staff should also read these books. After all, you can't really give someone ideas to improve their business unless you understand the challenges and opportunities they are facing.

Another aspect of education is attendance at events. The small business owner should attend trade shows, conferences, and continuing education events that are geared toward their specific trade. They should also attend all events sponsored by the Main Street program, as well as any educational events produced by Main Street in conjunction with local colleges, SCORE, and small business development organizations.

For the Main Street staff, attending state and national training and conferences should be a regular occurrence. While some will say they can't afford education in tough economic times, saving money by forgoing education is like trying to save time by stopping a clock; the idea does not make sense.

Our communities already have enough versions of Jerry, Jeff, and David; we don't need any more. We need to provide the education and assistance they need to change and become assets to the commercial district.

## Community Calendar of Events – April 2010

### May 1, 2010

- Southern Midget Racing Series at Weekly Racing Series at 24 Raceway starting at 7 pm.
- 5K Run Walk -Bark in the Park 5K Run/Walk in Rothwell Park starting at 8:30 am. For more information call 263-6757

### May 2, 2010

- Mini Train will run in Rothwell Park from 1-5pm, weather permitting.

### May 3, 2010

- Relay for Life of Randolph County will have Committee meetings at 5:30 pm and Team Captain meeting at 6:30 pm at Gratz Brown Elementary.

### May 4, 2010

- Moberly Women's Connection invites all area ladies to attend an evening Business Expo at the Heartland Banquet Center from 6:30pm-8:30pm. Area businesses will be our guests as they give us an up-close look at their specialties. Our inspirational speaker will encourage us with her story of Hope in this topsy-turvy world. For reservations and complimentary nursery please call 660-777-3449.
- Knitters, Crochet-ers, any needlework or craftspeople meet at the Moberly public library from 9:30 -11:00 a.m.. All are welcome to join this delightful group of creative individuals.

### May 7, 2010

- Main Street Moberly-Mothers Days Sales event and Diaper Drop

### May 8, 2010

- 24 Raceway Mom's Day Weekly Racing Series at 24 Raceway starting at 7pm. Hobby Stock Mechanic's Race.
- Main Street Moberly-Mothers Days Sales event and Diaper Drop

### May 9, 2010

- Mini Train will run in Rothwell Park from 1-5pm, weather permitting.
- Run for Her Life 5k -2nd Annual Run for Her Life 5k. Starts at Moberly Radiology and Imaging at 9am. For more information visit [www.turkmri.com](http://www.turkmri.com)

### May 11, 2010

- Moberly Public Library Knitters, Crochet-ers, any needlework or craftspeople meet at the Moberly public library from 9:30 -11:00 a.m.. All are welcome to join this delightful group of creative individuals!

### May 15, 2010

- 24 Raceway ASC Tour (Wingless Sprints) at 24 Raceway starting 7pm.

### May 16, 2010

- Mini Train will run in Rothwell Park from 1-5pm, weather permitting.
- Sunday's 24 Raceway Car Show starting at 9am. Full car show with trophies.

### May 17, 2010

- Relay for Life of Randolph County will have Committee Meetings and Team Captain Meetings at 6:30pm at Gratz Brown Elementary.

### May 20, 2010

- Moberly Public Library Poetry n' Punch meeting at the Moberly public library at 6:00 p.m. Public invited to attend.

### May 22, 2010

- Mini Train will run in Rothwell Park from 1-5pm, weather permitting.

### May 25, 2010

- Moberly Public Library Knitters, Crochet-ers, any needlework or craftspeople meet at the Moberly public library from 9:30 -11:00 a.m.. All are welcome to join this delightful group of creative individuals!

### May 29, 2010

- 24 Raceway Gary Scott Memorial Special starting at 7pm at 24 Raceway.
- Great Splash at the Moberly Aquatic Center starting at noon.

### May 30, 2010

- Mini Train will run in Rothwell Park from 1-5pm, weather permitting.

## May 2010

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						<b>1</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> Cinco de Mayo	<b>6</b> Promotions Meeting 8:am	<b>7</b> Diaper Drop For Safe Passage	<b>8</b> Diaper Drop For Safe Passage
<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b> Design Meeting	<b>12</b> Eco & Org Meeting 8 :am	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b> Armed Forces Day
<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> Board Meeting 8:00 am	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>30</b> Memorial Day	<b>31</b> Memorial Day Observed					

## ECONOMIC RESTRUCTURING AND ORGANIZATION COMMITTEE REPORT

This month we have been working on designing our new web site. We have selected a new logo which will freshen up our image in the community. Those community contacts include the web site, signage, advertising, email, newsletter, banners, and more. The web site will have many more photos than previously. All members will have a link to an individual 'profile' page, which will include your business info, including hours, inventory lines / services, and photos of exterior and interior of your business. Diane is visiting all the members to obtain this info, so be ready! Not a member and want to be included? Join today!

We have been able to reduce some office expenses, including a new set-back thermostat that our landlord so generously installed.

Also, we have set some tentative dates for fundraising events for the year.

June TBA – eat downtown / support Main Street

July 24 – serve breakfast at the airport fly-in

September 18 – Piccadilly Auction

October 3 – downtown home tour

There are several new businesses in place or coming soon. If everything happens as expected, our Reed Street occupancy rate will improve to 93%, which is excellent for a town of our size. Keep thinking of other businesses we can invite to relocate! Rent per square foot is a bargain in downtown Moberly! Business recruitment is a job for all of us! A vibrant downtown helps Y-O-U-R business and also helps maintain property values.

## DOWNTOWN MOBERLY NEEDS A SLOGAN!

A slogan is a memorable motto or phrase used as a repetitive expression of an idea or purpose. The word slogan is derived from the Gaelic *sluagh-ghairm* (*sluagh* "army" + *gairm* "cry"). Often a slogan's simple nature serves as a social expression of unified purpose.

When used repetitively, slogans can become associated with a particular source for a good or service that is offered for sale. Here are some examples:

Main Street of the Midwest (Mexico)

Our Well-Rounded Square (Clinton MO)

It all starts here ( Lee Summit)

The Magic City (City of Moberly)

Discover the District (downtown Columbia MO)

So, downtown Moberly needs a slogan of it's very own! That's why we're having a slogan contest. Anyone can enter (except the members of the Organization Committee, who will be the judges). And you can enter more than one slogan! Just submit them in writing to Diane at the Main Street Office. You can also email them to [mainstreet@mcmsys.com](mailto:mainstreet@mcmsys.com) The deadline is May 11<sup>th</sup>. The winner will receive a gift bag full of items from our Main Street Moberly members. If two people submit the same winning slogan, whoever submitted it first will be the winner. So start those creative thoughts and enter early!

## Main Street Moberly is getting "Behind" Safe Passage with our Diaper Drop.

Friday & Saturday - May 7th and 8th

Reminder—All participating downtown members need to be preparing for the diaper drop, with window displays, coupons and other items needed to make this a huge success for Safe Passage.

If you have any questions or need more information, please contact the Main Street office at 263-5251 or email me at [mainstreet@mcmsys.com](mailto:mainstreet@mcmsys.com)



## Maurices—Small Town Charm Photo Shoot in Moberly Downtown



## PEOPLE YOU SHOULD KNOW

**Name:** Elvina (Enyeart) Cunningham



**Business Affiliation:** KWIX, KRES, KIRK Radio

**Age:** 53, although age doesn't mean much to me.

**Job Description:** CSR Manager/Special Events Coordinator. I try to keep 5 Customer Service Representatives busy finding sponsors for local events, county fairs and festivals and sporting events. I also coordinate the events in our 14-county listening area that we are covering with on-air exposure. Some say that I run Adult Daycare!

**Years lived in Moberly:** I do not live in Moberly, but rural Huntsville. I have lived in Randolph County since I got married back in 1975. My heart is definitely in Moberly.

**Original Hometown:** Keytesville, Missouri

**Education:** Graduate of Keytesville R-3 School and an Associates in Business from MACC (formerly Moberly Jr. College)

**Community Involvement:** Main Street Moberly, Crossroads Baptist Association, Tourism and in the past...University Extension and Community Betterment. I take pride in being part of the Huntsville First Baptist Church and serving God through my work with the Church. Also belong to the MRS Sorority in Huntsville.

**Professional Background:** Currently CSR Manager at KWIX, KRES, KIRK. Back in the mid-70's I worked at Commerce Bank until the birth of our first child. I became a stay-at-home Mom. As our children got older, I worked as a Substitute Teacher at Westran from 1980 through 1993, and then worked at North Park School as a Teacher's Aid for 5th Grade and then the LD/BD program. It was while working with the BD (Behavior Disorder) class that I realized that it was time to change careers. In July of 1994, I took a position as a CSR at KWIX and KRES and the rest is history. I've worked my way up from the low man on the totem pole to the Manager of the CSR Department.

**A local businessperson I admire and why:** David Shepherd. David has an ability to know what is going to happen before it happens and is just a good, sound businessman.

**Why I'm passionate about my job:** I believe in the power of radio when done right. Radio Gets Results!

**If I weren't doing this for a living, I would be...**a full time volunteer. Craig (my husband) says that I'm a full time volunteer now. I would love to help feed people and do cleanup in areas where disasters have hit. I'd also love to do Mission work through the North American Mission Board.

**Biggest career obstacle I've overcome and how....** Finding time for me! I'm still trying to figure out how to make time for myself. Oh well...I'll have plenty of time for myself when I retire.

**A favorite recent project:** Serving as TeamKID Director at Huntsville FBC. It is so rewarding to see 80 plus children come running into Church on Wednesday evenings full of hugs, laughter and just happy to be there. They sing their little hearts out, frantically thumb through Bibles trying to be the first to find a Bible Verse and then when you hear a child say...."This is the best day ever!" as they are leaving, you know that God has truly blessed. Wow...makes me tear up just thinking about that one.

**What people should know about this profession:** It's a challenge to sell dead air. When a business plants the seeds and cares for them, they will reap the benefits. You can't reap the benefits, if you don't plant the seeds. Just like a plant, it takes time to nurture a business. Exposure, repetition and/or consistency are key to the success of a business. Somehow, a business must let people know that they are out there. You can't wait for someone to just happen to drive by.

**What I do for fun:** Family and Church activities. I love my family and my church family. I love preparing and delivering food on Saturdays for my son who is not married, a niece who is at MU and elderly people in our church. It's often the little things in life that bring the most satisfaction.

**Family:** Craig, my husband of almost 33 years. Children..Christy and her family...husband Doug Tanner, her step-son Alec, and gorgeous daughters Abbi and Annie. Nathaniel (Nate) is my middle child and not married. Casey is the youngest and married to Katie. They have a 9 month old beautiful little girl..Payton. I have 3 sisters...Elda, Linda and Larinda and my parents are Elvin and Mary Ellen Enyeart, who live north of Keytesville.

**Favorite place in Randolph County:** Other than home...Huntsville First Baptist Church

**Accomplishment I'm most proud of:** Family and the fact that God allows me to be a servant here on this earth.

**Most people don't know that I would like to do is.....**sky dive. Craig says that there is no reason for a person to jump out of a perfectly good airplane.



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The MACC Singers were in downtown on Saturday, April 10, to serenade and promote their spring concert "It Takes A Whole Village". The concert is Friday, May 7, at 7 p.m. at the MACC Auditorium. Adults \$5, Students \$3. Proceeds of this concert will benefit the Mr. Holland's Opus Foundation.

