



*"Satchmo and the Duke" on Byassee Music & Sound Building. Marion IL
Photo Credit: Union Street Arts, 2020.*

Request for Artists- Marion Mural District

City of Marion, Illinois



REQUEST FOR ARTISTS

PERMANENT MURAL ART IN DOWNTOWN MARION, ILLINOIS

The City of Marion seeks proposals from artists for 10 permanent murals to be installed on historic buildings located in downtown Marion. An award of \$1500 will be given to each concept selected. The City of Marion has submitted for funding this project through the National Endowment of the Arts. Funding to execute the mural concepts will be dependent on grant funding and scale of work.

PROJECT DETAILS

CONTEXT: Located within the 2-block radius of Tower Square Plaza is what is known as the Marion historical district in downtown Marion. The City's creation of 10 permanent public art installations within a 2-block radius of Tower Square Plaza in rural Marion, IL is part of the City's Downtown Revitalization Plan. Art selection will be open to anyone, with preference given to local and regional artists (scoring rubric on page 2). This project will be located near the City's poorest neighborhoods- allowing all walks of life- live theatergoers and tourists, to sheltered citizens to be exposed to thought-provoking art only experienced in metropolitan areas.

WHY NOW: In 2019, Marion's first new mayor was voted into office since 1963. Mayor Mike Absher is an entrepreneur that campaigned on a vision of addressing blighted areas, a downtown revitalization plan, and re-creating a culture of community for our next generation. In 2019 the City developed plans for economic development and creative placemaking for Tower Square Plaza (the heart of downtown). This plan had overwhelming support from the community. Proof that our City is ready for change to downtown is evident. As a result of this revitalization plan, 3 dilapidated downtown buildings have been purchased by private investors and an upscale steakhouse has committed to moving into one of the buildings by next year. The Mural project fits into the larger civic vision for the downtown revitalization plan.

The Marion community is ripe with a tide of cultural change that has been shifting substantially over the last 18 months. The community is eager to "get back to the roots" of our city and provide diverse and rich cultural expression in public art, community engagement and live theater. The community is thirsty for walkable streets and an uplifting atmosphere to socialize.

In 2020, the vision of a downtown mural district unfolded with a robust committee of city officials, community leaders, and artists. The City, in partnership with Little Egypt Arts Association, applied for a \$200,000 grant from National Endowment of the Arts to erect 10 murals. Funding will be announced in April 2021. But the City did not stop there. A city-lead initiative paved the way for 3 large-scale murals in 2020 before weather paused the team.

INCENTIVE: This is a juried competition with an award amount of \$1500 per selected mural concept. In addition, all mural concepts submitted will be on exhibit at the Little Egypt Arts Association during the official mural ribbon cutting and arts festival planned for fall of 2021.

Greater, however, than incentives of money or popularity is the opportunity to be on the ground floor of revitalization in the Marion historic district. Murals are some of the most visually appealing, tourist-drawing elements of a vibrant historic district. The artists who design the murals that brings new life to our old downtown will always have our deepest respect and gratitude for joining in our efforts of envisioning a promising future for generations to come.

AWARD AMOUNT: \$1500 per building. No limit on artist's number of awards. No limit on the number of proposals.

SITE DETAILS: In the details provided herein, each RFA includes the following:

- Photograph of building
- History of building
- Current owners and occupants
- Owners preference/theme
- Suggested size of mural

ELIGIBILITY: This opportunity is open to all artists. Blind Jury: All proposals will be striped of identifiable information and be given an assigned number. Once the jury has scored, the proposal will be re-matched with the applicant.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

- Completed application form (pg. 4.)
- Design proposal for the site submitted in a high-resolution, full-color JPEG or PDF format, preferably superimposed on the building. Hand-drawings or digital drawings will be accepted in high-resolution digital format. (Details on pg. 4)

TIMELINE

February 1, 2021: Announcement of RFP

~~**February 28, 2021:** Deadline for submissions~~ **March 7, 2021:** Deadline for submissions

March 15-31, 2021: Scoring

No Later than April 30, 2021: Awards announced

The timeline thereafter for building preparation and mural painting will be dependent on weather, grant funding and other circumstances. Grant funding will be the depending factor on whether the art installations will be painted by a volunteer-lead team or by commissioned artists. All awardees will have the option to execute their own artwork.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: A virtual meeting will be held to discuss the RFA in detail. This is an opportunity for Question and Answer for all artists.

February 4, 2021 at 11:00 AM CST. Register here: <https://tinyurl.com/marionmural1>

February 10, 2021 at 5:30 PM CST Register here: <https://tinyurl.com/marionmural2>

February 17, 2021 at 10:00 AM CST. Register here: <https://tinyurl.com/marionmural3>

SELECTION PROCESS

The jury will apply the following criteria when selecting artist(s).

Artistic merit (55 points) The inherent quality, creativeness, and excellence of a proposed artwork together with the strength of the artist's concept and design capabilities are the highest priorities of the public art program. Freehand and digital art will be accepted.

Marketability (15 points) It is in the City's best interest to encourage art that attracts tourists and encourages interactivity. Concepts that are interactive in nature or interpreted as "instagrammable" are given preference. Historical and Marion-themed artwork should still appeal to those not familiar with the narrative.

Theme (10 points) Artwork must be compatible in scale, material, form, and building owner's preferences. Although not required, it is encouraged to do additional research and/or contact the building occupants for more information for guidance.

Technical feasibility (10 points) The proposed artwork is feasible in construction and installation including color scheme, complexity, and scale.

Residence (10 points) Those living in the 62959-zip code receive an automatic 10 points. Those living in the zip codes starting with 629; 628; 622; and 624 receive an automatic 5 of the 10 points.

Intellectual plagiarism will automatically be disqualified. All artworks must be original to the artist submitting the proposal. Blind Jury: All proposals will be striped of identifiable information and be given an assigned number. Once the jury has scored, the proposal will be re-matched with the applicant.



APPLICATION

PERMANENT MURAL ART IN DOWNTOWN MARION

Applicant Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

E-Mail: _____

Links to other Mural work
(website, FB, IG, *optional*) _____

Number of Proposals submitted
with this application: _____

1 application (this page) can be submitted for multiple proposals. (ex: 5 proposals for 1 building; 3 proposals for 3 different buildings, etc.)

ATTACHMENTS: Each proposal must include the following items:

- High-resolution, full-color JPEG or PDF format, preferably superimposed on the building. Digital and hand drawings will be accepted.
- Name of Building (located in Building Packet)
- Title of Artwork
- Short Description of Artwork (1-2 sentences)
- Short explanation of why you chose this artwork for this building. (short paragraph)

AGREEMENT: By submitting this application, you agree for use during art exhibition.

DEADLINE: Submissions must be received by 11:59 PM on February 28, 2021.

SUBMISSION: E-MAIL APPLICATION & SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS TO:

Allison Hasler

ahasler@cityofmarionil.gov (cloud storage links are accepted for larger files)



BUILDING PACKET

PERMANENT MURAL ART IN DOWNTOWN MARION, ILLINOIS

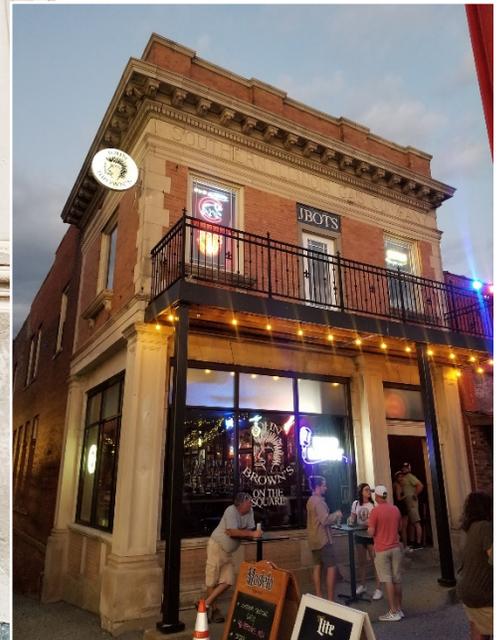
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7. City Hall
8. Civic Center
9. Perfectly Posh Boutique
10. Back of Tower Square Pizza

1. JOHN BROWN'S ON THE SQUARE | 1000 Tower Square Plaza

- **Dimensions:** 10' w x 20' h
- **Owner:** John and Missy Brown
- **Occupants:** [John Brown's on the Square](#)
- **Building Material:** Brick
- **Preferred Themes:** diversity, music, love, fender guitars, interactive- Ideal location for "selfie" art or interactive art.
- **Side of Building:** North side of building; Paradise Alley walkway

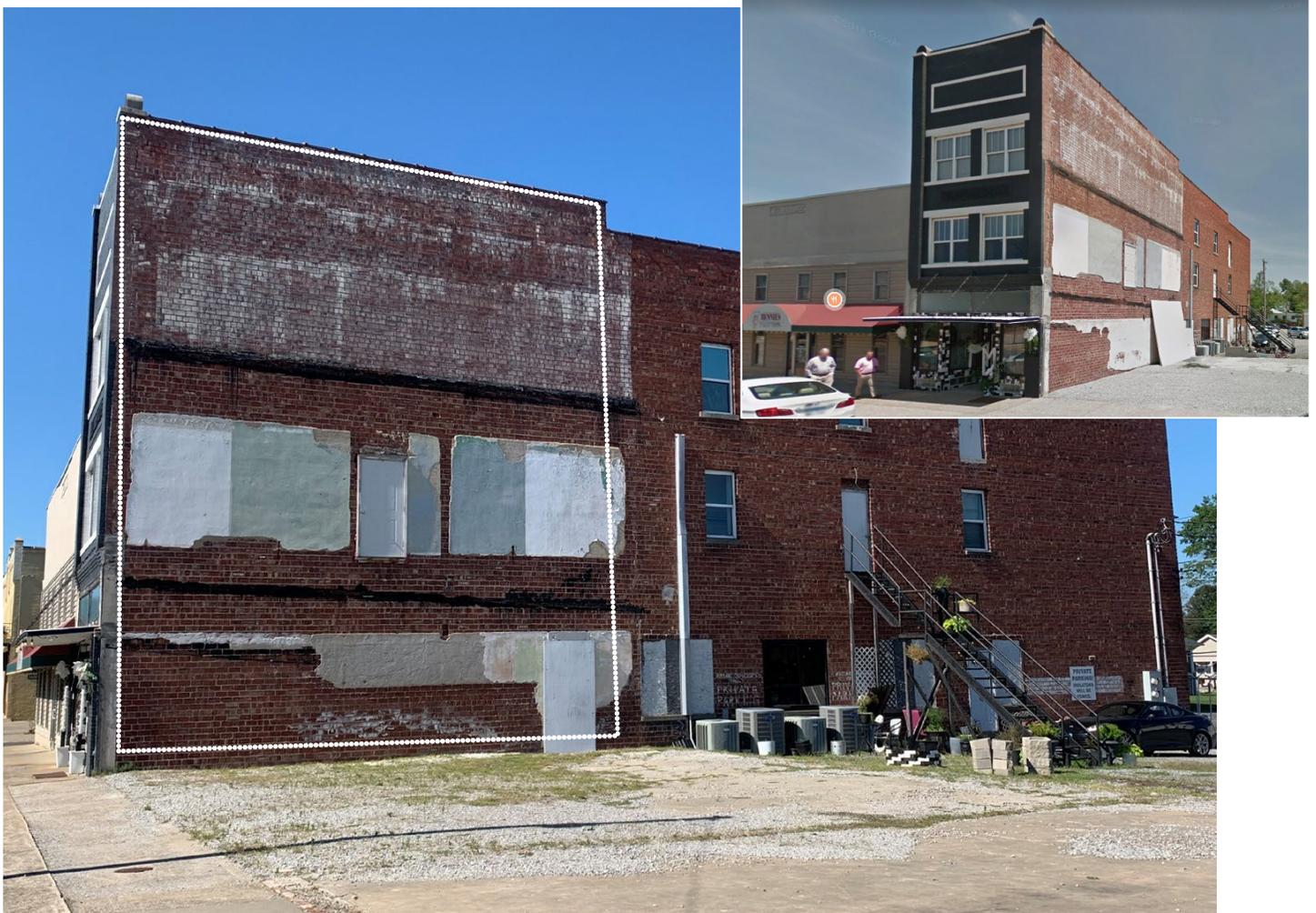
The building was erected in 1923 as The Southern II. Gas Company. It is a 3-story building approximately 26 w x 70 deep. It was later the Greyhound bus station and Speeds Confectionary and Café, with quarters for the drivers upstairs. It became a tavern in 1963 called Tony's, then Chick's in the early 80's. John and Missy Brown purchased the property in 2007, when it became John Brown's on The Square, a bar and live music venue. This popular hangout has a big city feel in a small-town neighborhood pub.



2. M BOUTIQUE | 307 North Market

- **Approximate Dimensions:** 38' W x 40' H
- **Owner:** Steve and Connie Ashe
- **Occupants:** [M Boutique](#) (owned by Meredith Ashe)
- **Building Material:** Brick
- **Preferred Themes:** dark backdrop to match face of building, modern/geometric, feminine, high contrast colors, modern floral. M Boutique brand colors are black, white and pink.
- **Side of Building:** South side of building
- **Notes:** Boards will be removed and ready for painting. Second floor door will remain and a catwalk will be added to connect to the other staircase.

This building was built in 1903 as The Williams Hotel and remained a hotel until the seventies. The building is home to M Boutique, owned by Meredith Ashe. A family-owned building, M Boutique opened in 2007 featuring fashion apparel and unique gifts and accessories. The upper level is a 3-apartment complex. The building on the south side of M Boutique was demolished in 2016. This lot will become a parking lot, making this mural one of the most visible murals in the city. The second story door will be reconnected by a catwalk to the apartment's stairs shown in the picture.



3. CROWN BREW COFFEE CO. | 107 E Union St

- **Approximate Dimensions:** 45' x 25'
- **Owner:** J. Michele LLC
- **Occupants:** [Crown Brew Coffee Co.](#) (owned by Josh Benitone and Jared Gravatt)
- **Building Material:** Brick
- **Preferred Themes:** Catering to young adults, match the interior ambiance; clean; instagrammable; interactive; No people; No historical
- **Side of Building:** South side of building

This building was built in the early 1900's. The building has mainly been bars throughout the years. There were also rumors that the upstairs was used as a brothel. Currently it is occupied by Crown Brew Coffee company. Crown Brew is a third wave craft coffee company. The lower level was completely remodeled with a warm, welcoming, and high-quality ambiance that matches the quality of coffee and customer service. Many young artists and photographers use the interior of the building for an attractive backdrop in photographs and workspace. It is the owner and occupants desire to have a complimentary mural that can be used for photo backdrops.

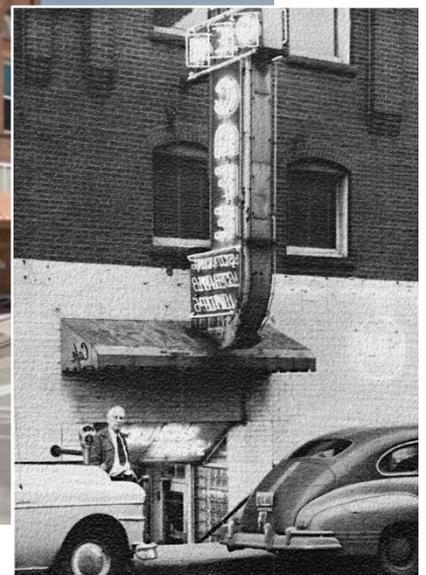


4. THE GOODALL BUILDING | 200 Tower Square

- **Approximate Dimensions:** 26' x 14' or more. The unpainted brick on the lower front of building will be painted white to blend with the rest of the white painted brick. Any of this space is recommended for the mural.
- **Owner:** Jeff Mayer
- **Occupants:** No occupants. Currently under construction/restoration.
- **Building Material:** Brick, painted white
- **Preferred Themes:** Building owner would like historical reference that would appeal to non-residents and residents alike. Historical reference to the building, downtown Marion, or the City of Marion. This would be one of the more prominent murals as it faces the main downtown crossroads. Note: Continued construction may result in 2 additional windows outlined in the exposed brick as seen in the picture.
- **Side of Building:** West side of building

Francis Marion Goodall (a.k.a. Frank) purchased the ground on the northeast corner of North Market Street and the public square in 1872 at a cost of \$1,600, and erected a substantial brick structure in 1873. It was the only first-class hotel in Marion, a two-story building (50x75 feet) above the basement. The corner room was used for a store. In the 1880 census lists Goodall as a tobacconist. It was in this year that the partnership of Frank Goodall and David R. Mohler formed the Goodall and Mohler Cigar and Tobacco factory which occupied a location in the northeast corner of the square.

The original Goodall building was destroyed by fire with all its contents on December 8, 1898. It was replaced with another building which was erected in 1900 on the ruins of the old. The replacement building still stands today. From 1916-1965, the Gem Café served as one of the local hot spots to eat and meet for decades. When the owner passed away on September 11, 1965, the restaurant was sold to Wayland Sims and the name changed to "The Uptowner."
(from [Marion IL Historic Preservation](#))



5. THE SWINFORD BUILDING | 1203-1205 Tower Square

- **Approximate Dimensions:** 10' x 10' up to 30' x 10'
- **Owner:** John Wheaton, Wheaton Property Group, LLC
- **Occupants:** [Swinford Publication](#) / Marion Star (owned by Bill Swinford)
- **Building Material:** Brick
- **Preferred Themes:** Incorporate the star from Marion Star, visitor's center for the city- interactive, visitor focused.
- **Side of Building:** North side of building

The building's historic name is the Cline Building. The fact that the Cline name is etched in the stone above the 1203 Tower Square side of the building lends credence to belief that it was built around 1901, when John Cline moved his drug store from another building on the square. The building survived a fire in 1964. It currently houses the offices of the Swinford Media Group (officially Swinford Publications LLC), which has been located at 1205 (the north side) for the past five years. The 1203 side, until recently, was the location of Sandi's Sewing Center, but the business closed when Mr. Wheaton passed away in 2019. The building continues to be owned by the Wheaton family and the Swinords are planning to expand to the 1203 side as they seek to further serve the community. The upstairs rooms are gutted with plans for renovation being considered.



6. BENNIE'S ITALIAN FOODS | 309 North Market

- **Approximate Dimensions:** 20' x 20' up to 40' x 20'
- **Owner:** John and Lynn Hill
- **Occupants:** [Bennie's Italian Foods](#) (owned by John and Lynn Hill)
- **Building Material:** beige Stucco
- **Preferred Themes:** No preference. Suggestions: Complimentary to interior design, Fun incorporation of exhaust vents, interactive, colors that are complementary to Bennie's brand.
- **Side of Building:** North side of building

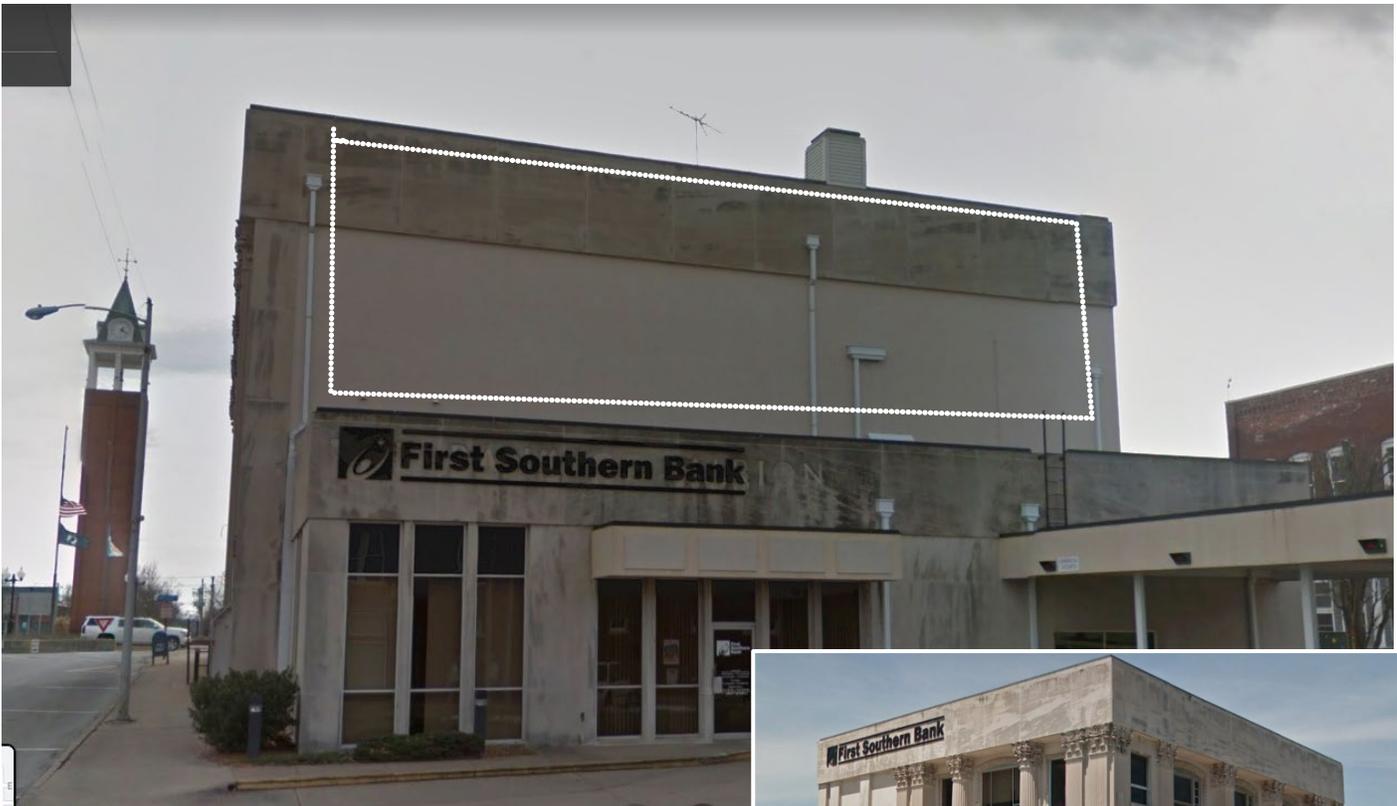
This building was built in the early 1920's and originally housed Williams Furniture. It is currently inhabited by Bennie's Italian Foods which has a rich history in Marion of its own. Bennie's was originally started by Bennie Mazzara who had a tamale cart on the square. He continued to grow his business and eventually also had a horse drawn Ice Cream Cart as well. He then developed the business further into an actual restaurant that lived on the 400 block of N. Market. It was purchased by John Hill and Family in 1983. They expanded two times in the 400 N. Market location and eventually outgrew the space. In 2001 John Bought the former William's Furniture Store building and transformed it into what is now the home of Bennie's Italian Foods nearly doubling its size and capacity from the old location.



7. CITY HALL (future home) | 300 Tower Square

- **Approximate Dimensions:** 70' x 20' est.
- **Owner:** [City of Marion](#)
- **Occupants:** future home of City Hall
- **Building Material:** Beige Stucco
- **Preferred Themes:** an “Ode to the City”, inviting for visitors, pride in City, a “welcome banner”
- **Side of Building:** North side of building

The building was built in 1917 under The First National Bank (incorporated in 1891). When the Great Depression hit in 1930, all 15 banks in Williamson county closed their doors, including the First National Bank. In 1937, the Bank of Marion opened in its place. In 1972, the bank expanded and purchased the C.W. Hay building next door. Most recently, First Southern Bank housed the building. In 2020, the City of Marion approved to purchase the building and will move City Hall into the building- while First Southern Bank will downsize their location to the drive-thru facility.



8. MARION CULTURAL AND CIVIC CENTER | 309 North Market

- **Approximate Dimensions:** 160 ft. x 20 ft.
- **Owner:** City of Marion
- **Occupants:** [Marion Cultural and Civic Center](#) (City of Marion)
- **Building Material:** Beige Stucco
- **Preferred Themes:** a celebration of the arts, diversity, culture; a nod to famous performers that have played there. Contemporary, abstract, colorful.
- **Side of Building:** south side of building

The Marion Cultural and Civic Center (MCCC) was built in 2004 following the fire that destroyed its former building in 1997. MCCC was formerly held in the historic Orpheum Theater built in 1922. The beautiful connection between the Orpheum Theater and MCCC is the facade of the Orpheum was pulled from the ashes and reconstructed behind glass as the entry to MCCC. This effort to maintain the history allows patrons to still walk through 100 years of entertainment history when entering the new facility. MCCC now holds national touring concerts and shows, but still caters to local cultural development by hosting local theater companies, dance recitals and concerts. Entertainment in MCCC features all types of cultural entertainment from concerts of all genres, to circus and spectacle shows, to dance and musical theater.



9. PERFECTLY POSH BOUTIQUE | 305 West Main St.

- **Approximate Dimensions:** up to 80' x 40'
- **Owner:** Perfectly Posh Boutique, LLC
- **Occupants:** [Perfectly Posh Boutique](#) (owned by Tresa Storto)
- **Building Material:** Beige Stucco and brick
- **Preferred Themes:** urban, attractive backdrop, “instagrammable” backdrop for photography. Colorful and cheerful.
- **Side of Building:** East side of building

The building was built in the late 1800's much like many of the downtown. The building has been a furniture store, a bar, a Harley-Davidson shop, and church before the current owner purchased the church and reconstructed the bottom level as a boutique clothing store. The Perfectly Posh brand utilizes the outside of the building as a backdrop for many of its showcased apparel. They have also used neighboring murals a few blocks away as a backdrop to their marketing photos.



10. TOWER SQUARE PIZZA | 1207 Tower Square Plaza

- **Approximate Dimensions:** free reign, up to 50' x 50'
- **Owner:** Kevin and Daniel Tondini
- **Occupants:** [Tower Square Pizza](#)
- **Building Material:** Beige Stucco and brick
- **Preferred Themes:** Tribute to Italian immigrants of late 19th and early 20th centuries into Williamson County to work in the mines, tribute to southern Illinois heritage, culture, history, northern Italian immigration.
- **Side of Building:** North side of building

The building was erected in 1903 as the Marion State and Savings Bank which housed City Hall on the second floor. This building also served as the Police Department on the north in and the downstairs served as the City Jail. The city officially took over all the building in 1915 after the bank moved to another location. The upstairs then became a youth center through the 40s and 50's. City Hall moved in 1993 to a larger building, leaving the building unoccupied. Kevin Tondini, a Marion native and son of northern Italian immigrants, purchased the building and reconstructed the lower level into a restaurant.

