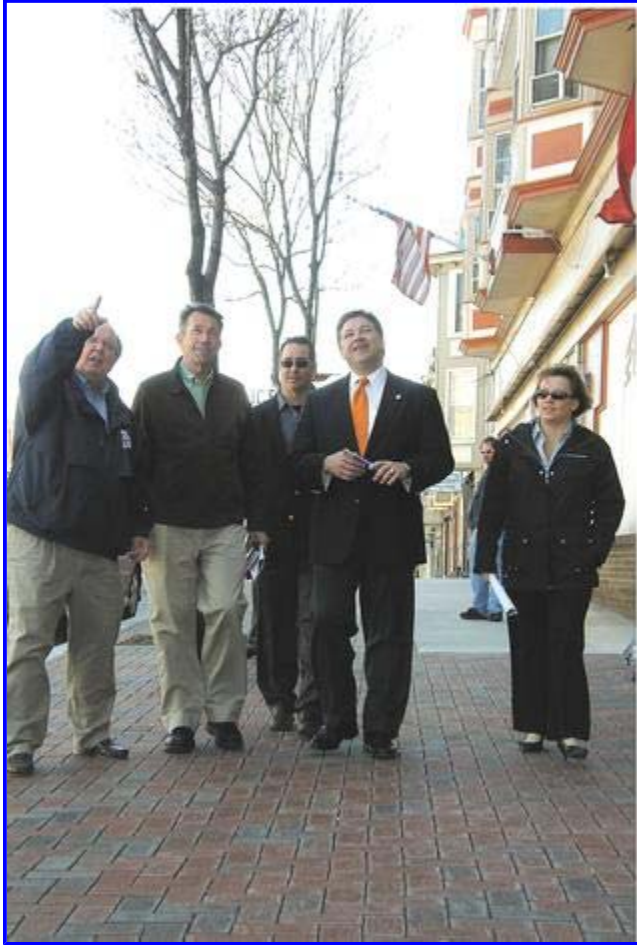


Congressman Bill Shuster tours downtown Waynesboro



By Denise Bonura/The Record Herald

Congressman Bill Shuster, second from right, receives a tour of downtown Waynesboro Wednesday with, from left, Pat Fleagle, Mainstreet Waynesboro Inc.'s director of economic development; Harry Morningstar Jr., chair of MSW Inc.'s design committee and local businessman; Craig Newcomer, president of borough council; and Carlene Willhide, executive director of the Greater Waynesboro Chamber of Commerce.

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By Denise Bonura
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Waynesboro, Pa. -

U.S. Congressman Bill Shuster said he is impressed with the way downtown Waynesboro is shaping up.

"It's one of the most impressive downtowns in a small town I've seen in the Ninth (Congressional) District," said Shuster, a Republican who represents central and western Pennsylvania.

Shuster and members of his staff were given a tour of downtown Waynesboro Wednesday by Pat Fleagle and Melissa Russ with Mainstreet Waynesboro Inc. and a number of borough officials and representatives. He visited some of the town's newest businesses — Think reInk and The Waynesburger at the corner of West Main and South Potomac streets — and some of its oldest — James Shoes and Collins Gun Repair on West Main Street.

The group walked along the modern brick sidewalks while Fleagle pointed out buildings that have benefited from facade grant money — the former Beck and Benedict warehouse, Furniture Market — and met with residents and business owners along Main Street.

"Many of these businesses you see weren't here two years ago," said Harry Morningstar Jr., chair of MSW Inc.'s design committee.

Shuster had a busy schedule Wednesday — he also visited Target Distribution Center in Chambersburg and presented a \$17,000 Federal Emergency Management Agency grant to the Waynesboro Volunteer Fire Department.

Hard work pays off

One highlight of the downtown tour in Waynesboro was a firsthand look at the results of some hard work. The group entered a model condominium at the former Beck and Benedict building owned by Craig Mahrle. Mahrle has hired contractors to remodel old storage space into six two-story condominiums across from the Rotary parking lot.

"I think a highlight of the tour was when we looked at the condos," Council President Craig

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to improve the town.

"He was impressed with the usage of the money. We gave a very good impression and that made me feel very good. That will help us with future endeavors if he knows Waynesboro's going to use it wisely," Newcomer said.

Shuster said after the tour he was impressed with the outcome of revitalization projects such as the brick sidewalks and said the borough "took a small amount of money and turned it into something impressive."

Future development

Shuster feels the borough is moving in the right direction and hopes to be a help in the future. He touched on the need to upgrade the town's undersized stormwater management system. The total project cost to alleviate flooding in Waynesboro is roughly \$6.3 million. Shuster added there are some grants available for the borough and said he would do all he can to help.

Russ was pleased with the positive attitude throughout the tour.

"Everyone involved was interested in all development we have in downtown," she said. "It was exciting to see so much involvement from the borough, the chamber, Mainstreet and Shuster's office. It was a great cooperative effort on all parts."

Russ feels one highlight of the tour was visiting Waynesboro businesses and "the entrepreneurial spirit that was exemplified by going into the stores."

Carlene Willhide, executive director of the Greater Waynesboro Chamber of Commerce, said the tour was an "opportunity to showcase how much we have accomplished" and "addresses potential needs for possible funding/support."

Willhide enjoyed visiting Marhle's properties and said the renovations are a "step in the right direction to make improvements to the backs of the buildings along Main Street."

Shuster is excited to return to the town when the trees are blooming along Main Street and plans to take the self-guided walking tour spear-headed by MSW Inc., the Waynesboro Historical Society, The Record Herald and the Franklin County Visitors Bureau that highlights Waynesboro's architecture.

On the Net

www.wbopa.com

www.house.gov/shuster

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