



Downtown business owner recognized as “Volunteer of the Year”

Volunteers come in all shapes and sizes; Hugo Kenemer is proof of that in downtown Ames. He is being recognized at the annual Main Street Iowa awards banquet, on Friday evening in downtown Des Moines, as the Volunteer of the Year for the Ames Main Street Cultural District (MSCD).

“The backbone of any Main Street organization is the people who are willing to put their shoulder to the plow and do the work that needs to be done,” said Bill Malone, MSCD event organizer. “Hugo is that person.”

Hugo has been a local business man in Ames for 18 years, and has done business in the MSCD for the past six years as the owner of Heroic Ink, 409 Douglas Avenue. He says he moved his business to the downtown area because he liked the clientele in the MSCD and he loved the character of the historic buildings.

“We are lucky to have Hugo as part of our committed volunteer base,” said Cindy Hicks, MSCD Executive Director. “His hard work and dedication to the community sets a great example for all of us.”

And while he is never without a big smile and a willingness to help, Hugo makes light of his volunteerism saying that he does it because his wife is so heavily involved in the community, and it is the only way he gets to see her on a regular basis.

“The MSCD has some really good events going on and we just like to be involved,” Hugo said.

Hugo may be humble about his contribution to the downtown community but Terry Stark, former MSCD Board President, isn’t. He calls Hugo an integral member of the MSCD volunteer groups.

“Hugo helped set up music stages, hauled equipment in his personal vehicle, set up event barriers, created more solid barriers when they were needed and generally helped wherever and whenever needed,” Stark said.

Malone adds that most of the work Hugo volunteers for is the dirty and labor intensive work that no one else wants to do.

“He and a small crew of his friends and employees helped with stage set up and tear down at both the Firefly event and Oktoberfest in 2013 and 2014,” Malone said. “Nobody ever volunteers for this type of work, except Hugo.”

The Main Street Cultural District was established on January 1, 2004. Its mission is to advance and promote downtown as the destination district in the heart of our community. To keep updated on MSCD happenings, become a fan of the Main Street Cultural District on Facebook, bookmark www.AmesDowntown.org, or contact our office at 515-233-3472. MSCD is an affiliate organization of the Ames Chamber of Commerce.