

# **Downtown Blairsville – A Better Hometown Façade Grant Program 2008**

## **Program Goal**

The purpose of the Façade Grant program is to encourage redevelopment and revitalization of downtown businesses and properties. Specifically, the Downtown Development Authority would like to see property owners restore, beautify, refurbish and rehabilitate existing properties in the target area.

This grant program is funded by Appalachian Community Bank, Bank of Blairsville, Cadence Bank, and United Community Bank. The program will be administered by the Façade Grant Committee; which is comprised of the Program Manager of the Downtown Development Authority and a representative from each of the banks funding the program. The Downtown Development Authority Board of Directors will have final approval of grant applications.

## **Target Area**

The target area is all properties located in the DDA district. (See attached map area outline.)

## **Grant Amount**

This is a reimbursement grant of up to 20% of the total project with a maximum grant amount of \$1,500 per property per year. (Property owner will be reimbursed up to 20% of the project once it is completed.)

## **Program Guidelines**

- Property owners or tenants of DDA properties are eligible to apply. If a tenant is applying, a letter of consent, signed by the property owner will be required. Residential properties will also be eligible to apply. Public buildings are not eligible.
- Façade grants are available for **exterior projects only**: façade changes, paint, awnings, signage, sign improvements, window and door repair or replacement, outdoor lighting, cleaning and repair of masonry. All changes must comply with the Downtown Blairsville Design and Sign guidelines and the City of Blairsville sign ordinance.
- Self contracted projects will require an itemized list of materials with a labor cap of \$20.00 per hour. Contractors must supply a detailed written estimate; which must accompany the application.

- Project must begin within 45 days of grant approval and be completed within 6 months of start date. Work must not be started by or on behalf of the applicant prior to the date of the grant award; such beginning disqualifies an applicant for grant consideration. The grant will be paid upon completion of the project, final inspection by grant committee and presentation of paid invoices to the DDA.
- Grant applicants are fully responsible for all aspects of the project, any relationships with contractors and suppliers, and securing all necessary city permit approvals before project begins.
- The DDA office can provide design assistance and consultation through an affiliation with the Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation and the University of Georgia's School of Environmental Design. A consultant will meet with the business or property owner to discuss color selections, improvements, building upkeep and repair and make recommendations. The DDA also has a relationship with a local artist who will offer suggestions and renderings of specific properties, if desired.

### **Application Procedures**

- The applicant completes the application for review by the façade grant committee. The application must include a written description of the project the owner plans to complete, along with all necessary documentation.
- The façade grant committee will evaluate each application and make a recommendation to the DDA board. Limited funds are available for this program and applicant selection may be a competitive process. The DDA will make the final decision to award a façade grant.
- The applicant will be notified by phone and written notice as to the approval or denial of the grant. If an application is denied, the applicant is eligible to reapply the following year.
- The approved project must begin within 45 days of grant award notice and be completed within 6 months of start date.

### **Payment of Grant Awarded**

Payment of grant awards will be made as reimbursement for project expenses. All expenses must be documented. In order to receive reimbursement for the expenses the property owner must provide the DDA with paid invoices and a total of project expenses. Once the property has been inspected by the façade grant committee, the approved grant amount will be paid.