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Press Inquiries:  
Vanessa Coria  
757-340-7425

[vanessa@themeridiangroup.com](mailto:vanessa@themeridiangroup.com)

**Say Cheese! Wellington, Ohio Wins National Main Street Title**

*\$25K “America’s Main Streets” cash prize to fund revitalization grants to “Paint the Town Proud”*

**VIRGINIA BEACH, Va.**—June 3, 2019—[Independent We Stand](#) is pleased to recognize [Main Street Wellington](#) as the \$25,000 winner of the 2019 “[America’s Main Streets](#)” contest. The village of Wellington — population 4,895 — is the second Ohio community to claim the title in recent years. Nearby Bridge Street in Ashtabula was the 2018 winner. Now, Herrick Avenue in historic downtown Wellington will benefit from America’s vote, topping the 232 entrants to take the grand prize.

Formerly known as the “Cheese Capital of the World,” Wellington has a proud history in the cheese trade dating back to the 1800s when the village was home to more than 40 cheesemaking or storing facilities and shipped cheese all over the world. There are still recognizable signs of Wellington’s cheesemaking heyday at the west end of Herrick Avenue on the Horr-Warner Cheese Company building. The “CHEESE” sign on the building will be restored with the “America’s Main Streets” cash prize.

“We know the Herrick Avenues of America help build a sense of place in their communities and are home to countless small, locally owned businesses,” says Independent We Stand co-founder Bill Brunelle. “They are also, often times, rich in history. Independent We Stand wants to help draw attention to these special places and recognize their economic impact. This contest is a chance to share those stories.”

Formed in 1998, Main Street Wellington is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) of business owners, property owners, professionals and community members committed to revitalizing the Wellington historic district while preserving its unique character. From inspiring the iconic painting “The Spirit of ‘76” by Archibald Willard to bearing witness to the Oberlin-Wellington Slave Rescue, which many believe fueled the beginning of the Civil War, Herrick Avenue and the village of Wellington are rich with American history.

“We are proud of our heritage and of our recent business growth and embrace the opportunity for additional growth and improvement,” said Jenny Arntz, director of Main Street Wellington. “We believe so much in the Wellington community and are touched by its support in the ‘America’s Main Streets’ contest. The impact of this honor and prize will be visible and greatly appreciated by many.”



Main Street Wellington will use the “America’s Main Streets” cash prize to continue its existing “Paint the Town Proud” program, created in 2018 to spruce up downtown. The program offers paint and supply grants to businesses to refresh their facades. There are also plans to safely paint and repair the “CHEESE” signs and add more signage downtown to help celebrate the history of Herrick Avenue while also directing visitors to free public parking so they can enjoy local shops, restaurants and events.

As part of its ongoing mission to promote small businesses, Independent We Stand created the “America’s Main Streets” contest to promote the important role main streets play in building economic success for their communities.

For a look at a list of this year’s 10 semifinalists, visit [mainstreetcontest.com](http://mainstreetcontest.com).

To see a full list of contest prizes, click [here](#).

#### **Presenting Sponsor:**

[STIHL Inc.](#), America’s [number-one selling brand](#) of gasoline-powered handheld outdoor power equipment, is the founding sponsor of Independent We Stand and the presenting sponsor of “America’s Main Streets” contest. The company follows a unique distribution strategy in the handheld outdoor power equipment industry, choosing never to sell products at big box stores, but instead remain loyal to its 9,000+ authorized local STIHL dealers nationwide.

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#### **About Independent We Stand**

[Independent We Stand](#) is a nationwide movement of independent small business owners whose mission is to inspire other small business owners to better understand and celebrate their locally owned status while educating consumers about the importance and strong economic benefits of supporting them. The Independent We Stand movement is sponsored by [STIHL Inc.](#) [STIHL products](#) are sold through more than 9,000 [authorized local STIHL dealers](#) from coast to coast – not big box stores. Associate sponsors include [Nationwide Marketing Group](#), [PPG](#) and [Do it Best Corp.](#)

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