



ANNUAL REPORT



WWW.VISITVENICEFL.ORG

CEO'S MESSAGE

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

I cannot thank you enough for your support this year. 2023 was the year to trying new things at MainStreet! We launched an ecommerce site, reinstated the Venice Sharks Tooth Festival, and breathed new life into your dining experiences with fun cocktail competitions! In addition, the Board of Directors tackled a new strategic plan for the organization for 2024-2026. As we drafted this report on our accomplishments and projects in progress, I hope you will be as pleased as I am with our successes. Without your support, we would not be a thriving organization, with many bright initiatives on the horizon!



- Kara Morgan, CEO Venice MainStreet

MISSION

Venice MainStreet, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization committed to preserving and enhancing the character, beauty, and economic vitality of historic downtown Venice and surrounding areas.

Vision: To enhance the vibrant Venice community by bringing activities, cultural connections, and regional and national interest to Venice through advocacy, partnerships, and volunteerism.

STAFF

Kara Morgan, Chief Executive Officer

Michelle Harm, Community Engagement Coordinator

Bekah Horsley, Marketing Coordinator

Lysa Locke, Events Coordinator



2023 BOARD OF DIRECTORS



President Tracy Silver
Venice Wine & Coffee Co.



Vice President Jeannie Gomes
Hotel Venezia



Secretary Becky Leake
Englewood Bank & Trust



Treasurer James Haas
Twist Boutique and SunBug



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Cindy Lodge
Community Volunteer



Tom Mattmuller
Community Volunteer



Helen Moore
Michael Saunders & Company



Hector Pescio
Made in Italy



Laurie Sparr
Sarasota Memorial Hospital
Venice Campus

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

ECONOMIC VITALITY

Becky Leake, Chair

Doug Blaire

Andrew Britton

Ronnie Fernandez

RJ Nafziger

Nick Pachota

Jean Trammell

DESIGN

Norhala Houck, Co-Chair

Jean Trammell, Co-Chair

John Collier

Christy Nuttall

Aimee Odette

MARKETING

Cindy Lodge, Chair

James Haas

Bekah Horsley

Laurie Sparr

Jean Trammell

OUR FOCUS



ECONOMIC VITALITY COMMITTEE

Focuses on capital, incentives, and other economic and financial tools to assist new and existing businesses, catalyze property development, and create a supportive environment for entrepreneurs and innovators that drive local economies.

MARKETING COMMITTEE

Positions the downtown commercial district as the center of the community and hub of economic activity, while creating a positive image that showcases a community's unique characteristics.

DESIGN COMMITTEE

Supports a community's transformation by enhancing the physical and visual assets that set the commercial district apart.

ORGANIZATION COMMITTEE

Involves creating a strong foundation for maintaining a sustainably revitalized district, including cultivating partnerships, community involvement, and resources for downtown.

A TARGETED APPROACH

Advocacy- Ensuring downtown is a priority

Marketing- Putting downtown on the map

Real Estate- Promoting available commercial spaces in district

Business- Empowering small businesses and entrepreneurs

Communications- Delivering district news and updates

Placemaking- Creating a sensory experience of downtown

Partnerships- Establishing critical stakeholder relationships

Events- Hosting signature events and collaborating with other nonprofits

2023 Development of Strategic Plan 2024-2026

MISSION: Venice MainStreet is committed to preserving and enhancing the character, beauty and economic vitality of historic downtown Venice *and **surrounding areas.***

VISION: To **enhance** the vibrant Venice community by bringing activities, cultural connections, and regional and national **interest** to Venice through **advocacy, partnerships, and volunteerism.**

OUR GUIDING VALUES: We achieve these by focusing on

- Economic Vitality
- Historic Preservation
- Mutual Respect
- Beneficial Partnerships
- Meaningful Community Connections

STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITIES: FY2024-2026

I. Grow and expand the demographic diversity of our board and committees to better meet the changing needs of our community.

II. Expand our physical boundaries to better strengthen our brand and build revenue.

III. Strengthen our identity to build revenue and resources beyond events.



OUR 44 EVENTS

20 Venice MainStreet Signature Events

- **15th Annual Downtown Venice Craft Festival**, in partnership with Howard Alan Events, January 28-29
- **22st Annual Downtown Venice Art Classic**, in partnership with Howard Alan Events, March 4-5
- **St. Patrick's Day** promotion, March 17
- **Eggstravaganza** in partnership with Lions Club of Venice, April 8
- **Sharks Tooth Festival**, April 22-23
- **Spring Sidewalk Sale**, May 19-20
- **30th Annual Downtown Venice Craft Festival** in partnership with Howard Alan Events, June 17-18
- **Christmas in July**, July 14-15
- **14th Annual Venice Art Classic** in partnership with Howard Alan Events, September 2-3
- **Wine Walk**, September 7
- **"I Had a Bloody Good Time in Venice"** cocktail promotion at participating restaurants, Sept 15- Oct 15
- **Venice Beach Party**, September 30
- **Children's Halloween Parade** in partnership with Lions Club of Venice, October 31
- **35th Annual Downtown Venice Art Festival** in partnership with Howard Alan Events, Nov. 4-5
- **Movies in the Park** in partnership with VIPA, Freebirds, Nov. 8
- **Barstool Open**, Nov. 11
- **The Mayor's Hometown Christmas**, Nov. 24
- **Movies in the Park** in partnership with VIPA, The Muppets Christmas Carol, Dec. 6
- **"Grandma Got Rum'ed Over by a Reindeer"** cocktail promotion at participating restaurants, Dec. 1, 2023-Jan, 12, 2024
- **Christmas Walk**, Dec. 7

24 Friday Night Gazebo Concerts

- January 13 - Assisted Living Band
- January 27 - Patchouli & Terra Guitarra
- February 10- Music by Rick Chapman
- February 24 - Steve Arvey
- March 10 - Harbor Drive
- March 24 - Doug Burns
- April 28 - Swinging Bridge
- May 12 - Nick Fiasco
- May 26 - Joe Mullan
- June 9 - Jane Bond
- June 23 - Shindig Band
- July 14 - Sara Nelms
- July 28 - Larry & Jeannie
- August 11 - George McVey River Road
- August 25 - Latitude 26
- September 8 - Robert Garcia
- September 22 - Outsiderz
- October 13 - Lonnie Beck
- October 27 - The Seamus McCarthy Band
- November 10 - Rocky Rick
- November 24 - Mayor's Hometown Christmas, First Baptist Church Choir, Union Missionary Baptist Church Choir, The Venice Chorale
- December 8 - Joshua Reilly & Mercy McCoy
- December 22 - The Venice Chorale



120,000+

Estimated 2023 downtown attendance
at Venice MainStreet events

2023 ECONOMIC VITALITY

COMMITTEE ACTIVITY

Venice MainStreet continued its participation in **Margin & Mission Ignition**, an opportunity from The Patterson Foundation to strengthen our mission impact through earned-income strategies. In 2022, The Patterson Foundation matched \$37,500 in startup capital toward our new earned-income plan launched in 2023.

The Economic Vitality Committee and VMS staff implemented the business plan to launch the online marketplace, **ShopVeniceFL.com**, on February 16th to support our local business and nonprofit partners. They are the featured vendors on the platform.

The Economic Vitality Committee also worked to reinstate the **Breakfast with the Mayor program**. With City of Venice Mayor Nick Pachota, now serving on the Economic Vitality Committee, the breakfast program welcomed participants on February 22 and September 7 to discuss topics of public safety and the City's future plans for the historic Seaboard district.

Committee work also included monthly reports on business activities in the district, check-ins with the State of Florida Main Street program, and assisted staff and other committees with surveys and the strategic planning process.



Becky Leake, Chair

Doug Blaire

Andrew Britton

Ronnie Fernandez

RJ Nafziger

Nick Pachota

Jean Trammell



2023 MARKETING COMMITTEE

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Strengthen Venice MainStreet Brand Awareness

Implement multi-prong approach, leveraging social media, outreach, and other techniques, to enhance people's familiarity and interest in the Venice historic district to increase our consumer base.

- **Updated Venice MainStreet mural** at Sarasota-Bradenton International Airport
- **Created “MainStreet Welcome Ambassadors”** to enhance engagement with our business partners (to launch in 2024)



Cindy Lodge, Chair

James Haas

Bekah Horsley

Laurie Sparr

Jean Trammell

Increase Earned Income Opportunities through Ad Sales and Events

Pursue steady income streams with robust ad sales, fundraising initiatives, and diversification of events.

- **Added new events**, such as the Bloody Mary and rum cocktail contests, Barstool Open, Sharks Tooth Festival, and Movies in the Park, to reach broader segments of our community

Support Data-Driven Decisions through Feedback and Evaluation

Assess the value and impact of Venice MainStreet work through a system of qualitative and quantitative measures.

- Conducted broad-based **business partner survey** to gauge our performance and inform our strategic planning
- **Analyzed e-newsletter participation** by business partners to enhance our marketing efforts
- **Incorporated ROI measures** into our Sarasota Airport advertising



Installation of the new SRQ Airport mural was completed on September 22, 2023

2023 MARKETING

STAFF ACTIVITIES

- Launched **new Venice MainStreet Signature Events page on website** to list all upcoming events hosted by our organization.
- Launched **new Sharks Tooth Festival website and event**, which was acquired by VMS in 2023.
- Launched **two new restaurant cocktail competition promotions**, designed t-shirt graphics and generated video content for “I Had a Bloody Good Time in Venice” (565 drinks sold at 12 locations) and “Grandma Got Rum’ed Over by a Reindeer” (944 drinks sold at 9 locations) totaling **1,509 drinks sold**.
- Highlighted eight downtown Business Partners and upcoming events on ABC7’s **Suncoast View** television segments airing on January 24, July 11 and September 1.
- Published **52 e-newsletters** sharing information about events and partner announcements. From January to December, subscribers increased from 12,629 to 13,798; average open rate was 58%.
- Posted **88 news blogs** on VisitVeniceFL.org announcing new partners, events, downtown news and other Venice MainStreet activities.
- Posted **5,291 community events** on VisitVeniceFL.org's 2023 monthly calendar (includes concerts, theatre shows, tours, exhibits, classes, workshops, grand openings, fundraising events, and other special events of partners) .
- Created content for **24 full pages in the Venice Gondolier and Sun Weekly** highlighting the downtown district, events and partners (published bi-monthly).
- Created **64-page printed Venice MainStreet Directory** for distribution in December 2023 through 2024 throughout Sarasota County (15,000 copies) .
- Created photography and designed layout of **new Venice mural at Sarasota-Bradenton International Airport** in partnership with Visit Sarasota County and coordinated digital advertising opportunity in the baggage claim area for participating partners.
- Managed event promotions and messaging on downtown **LED gateway arch sign**.
- Coordinated **Downtown Ambassadors volunteer program** with 45 volunteers, **Centennial Park Information Kiosk** event postings and distribution of printed materials.
- **Continued sales** of engraved commemorative bricks, art festival posters and t-shirts.



Launched event and website for Sharks Tooth Festival



Produced 64-page Downtown Directory



Coordinated 8 downtown Business Partners to be featured on the Suncoast View on ABC7 for 3 air dates in 2023.

SOCIAL MEDIA & MARKETING REACH



197K interactions for Historic
Downtown Venice, FL on
Google My Business



136K users on
VisitVeniceFL.org



13.7K e-newsletter subscribers



23K followers



18,000 subscribers receiving
full page Venice MainStreet
advertisements in Venice
Gondolier



10,000 daily motorists viewing
the digital gateway arch sign

2023 DESIGN COMMITTEE

DOWNTOWN DESIGN ACTIVITIES

- Installed **Memorial Day flags** downtown.
- Held two **holiday window decorating workshops** on June 19 and September 26 in partnership with Venice Theatre and downtown merchants.
- Held Call to Artists and judged **2023 Venice Art Festival poster contest**. “Sunset at the South Jetty” by Diane Chencharick was selected. Student winner was Harper Hambrick for “Sunset at Brohard Beach.”
- Funded the new **Centennial Park Christmas Tree** for \$6,000.
- Held downtown **Holiday Window Decorating Contest** and awarded 15 winners.
- Selected 2023 **District Design Award** winners.



Norhala Houck, Co-Chair (shown above)

Jean Trammell, Co-Chair

John Collier

Aimee Odette

Christy Nuttall



Held 35th Annual Downtown Venice Art Festival poster contest. Winner was Diane Chencharick for *Sunset at the South Jetty*. Student winner was Harper Hambrick from Woodland Middle School for *Sunset at Brohard Beach*. Thank you to Aimee Odette and Michael Rank of Collectors Gallery & Framery for hosting and framing.

2023 DISTRICT DESIGN AWARD WINNERS



The Pattinson Building- exterior refurbishment, Miami Ave. West

Mayor Nick Pachota- design award for support and contribution to Historic Downtown Christmas decor, Centennial Park, West Venice Ave.



Venice Area Historical Society- restoration of the Circus Train Car, Venice Train Depot Campus, East Venice Ave.



Held holiday window decorating contest and awarded 15 winners. The Island Bookshop is featured above, first place for Most Creative Window .

OTHER PROJECTS, PARTNERSHIPS & OUTREACH

- Held our **Annual Meeting** for our volunteers, donors and Community Partners on January 25.
- Participated in **Venice Area Chamber of Commerce's Non-profit Rally** on January 20 to share information about volunteering with our organization.
- Hosted Venice Area Chamber of Commerce's **Business Connections** event, in partnership with City of Venice, at City Hall on February 16.
- Held **Breakfast with the Mayor** on February 22 (Topic: VPD Public Safety) and on September 7 (Topic: Historic Seaboard District).
- CEO Kara Morgan presented **5 outreach presentations** to local service organizations.
- Staff attended **CityXpo and Florida MainStreet Conference** in Winter Haven, Florida May 4-5.
- Coordinated Zoom presentation for community leaders with **URBAN3** on May 11 to focus on property values and tax revenue of mixed use buildings.
- CEO Kara Morgan served on the **Board of Directors of Visit Sarasota County** maintaining relationships and connections to the broader Sarasota County area.
- CEO Kara Morgan participated in **Gulf Coast Community Foundation Executive Institute**.
- CEO Kara Morgan attended **Florida Main Street** conferences in Deland, Orlando, Ft. Pierce, Tallahassee and Main Street America conference in Boston.
- Assisted the City of Venice with its annual **Venice Holiday Parade** by providing logistical support, volunteers and emceeing the event.
- Partnered with the Venice Area Chamber of Commerce for the **Buying Local Pays Back** promotion from November 27 to December 15.



Florida Trust, 35th Anniversary Award, Venice MainStreet President, Tracy Silver is second from right; VMS board member, Jean Trammell, is at center.



Venice Area Chamber of Commerce Non-profit Rally, January 20.

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

PLATINUM



SILVER



IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



FRIDAY NIGHT CONCERT
SERIES SPONSOR

NEALCOMMUNITIES

Where You Live Matters

THANK YOU 2023 VOLUNTEERS

45 DOWNTOWN AMBASSADORS & EVENT VOLUNTEERS

Special thanks to:

Tracy Ivey, Kiosk Event Postings Manager
Chuck Jackson, Handyman Extraordinaire
Linda Nelson, Walker Coordinator
Melinda Schell, Kiosk Volunteer Coordinator

Amy Antonino

Jo Ann Byrne

Cindy Casse

Helen Castellano

Frances Clemo

Pat Colonnese

Joe Colonnese

Lisa DeMauro

Mickey Eberhart

Margo Emmons

Syd Emmons

Joan Farragut

Paul Farragut

Barbara Feltquate

Arlene Ferrick

Lorraine Finizio

Joan Gardner

Hank Gesek

Cleora Grossi

Jo Gruenwald

Alice Haber

Bill Harris

Trish Harris

Mary Kay Heitman

Debbie Hobbs

Jim Ingham

Paul Innes

Larry Ivey

Tracy Ivey

Brenda Jaacks

Chuck Jackson

Kathe Magadance

Rita Maistrellis

Linda Nelson

Amby Nolan

Nancy Parzych

Joyce Puglio

Sandra Pyles-Viers

Kristin Randle

Jerry Rehert

Melinda Schell

Rose Shkordoff

Verna Silk

Michelle Usiskin

Madre Volschenk

Mary Vlismas

Paul Weldon

Chris Wilson

Dee Wright



Volunteer Strut, November 9.



Volunteer appreciation luncheon
(Volunteer Dee Wright's 85th birthday) April 2023

THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS & 2023-24 RENEWING COMMUNITY PARTNERS

SILVER SPONSORS

James & Donna Bolt
Janis Fawn

INVESTOR LEVEL

Gehring Family Foundation
Jamie Henry
Larry & Tracy Ivey
Linda Lewis
Nick & Kate Pachota
Nancy & Gary Prior
The Caterpillar Foundation

PATRON LEVEL

Helen Dennis
Sandra & John DiPentima
Dr. C. Thomas Gooding
Mike & Addy Griffith
Jo Gruenwald
Gene & Cindy Lodge
Matt & Ashley Troutman
Tom Voigt
& Our Anonymous Patrons

SUSTAINER LEVEL

Jim & Dawn Backus
Joe & Pat Colonnese
Jane Diles
William & Lauren Ginand
Chris & Gregg Hassler
Tammy & Phil Heller
Mark & Irene Infanti
Philip & Dorothy Korwek
Pamela Morris
& Our Anonymous Sustainers

SUPPORTER LEVEL

Marty Damon
Norma Dayton
Ruth Ann Dearybury
Judy DeLucia
Cynthia Elsberg
Lorraine Finizio
Virginia Hurney
Blair K. Morrow
Nancy Pike
Debbie Salinas
Richard Spangenberg
Paul Weldon
Aaron Willoughby
& Our Anonymous Donors

**YOUR
INVESTMENT
KEEPS VENICE
VIBRANT!**

DONORS

David Carlson
Blue Iris Jewelry
Steven Burt
Christine Dear
Jane Diles
Jack & Beth Gehring
Marilynn Gliniecki
JoAnn Guinane
Jamie Henry
Larry & Tracy Ivey
Jeff Lefebvre
Nancy & Gary Prior
Vinita Ramsay
Linda Rivard
Timothy Smith
Lucinda Spaney
Emma Stokes

THANK YOU, 2023-24 PARTNERS

193

BUSINESS PARTNERS

14 NEW NP PARTNERS
THANK YOU FOR JOINING
THIS YEAR!

NONPROFITS:

Bay Indies Christmas Club
Enviroracing

Epiphany Cathedral School

Family Promise of South Sarasota County

Impact100 SRQ

Jewish Congregation of Venice

Manasota Fossil Club

Our Mother's House

Tamiami Amateur Radio Club

Temple Sinai

Ukrainian National Women's League of America Post 56

Union Missionary Baptist Church

Venice Shuffleboard Club

Venice Tennis Clinics

75

NONPROFIT PARTNERS



40 NEW BIZ PARTNERS

THANK YOU FOR JOINING THIS YEAR!

BUSINESSES:

Abondanza Italian Deli

Adrenaline Harley Davidson

Bar Harbor Cheesecake Company

Bayshore Guest Home & Gardens

Blue Breaks Sports Cards & Hobby Shop

By the Sea Esthetics

Calvary Chapel Venice

Command Performance Firearms and Training

Coppola Artistica

Core Corporate Advisors, Thom Krusinski

Creator's Farm and Garden

El Guero Tacos

Exit King Realty- Sheila Allaire

Florez Martial Arts Academy

Florida Comedy Network

Get It Gone

Gilly Francis Weddings & Events

GitChewSum Catering

Hammerheads Catering

Hot Digitty Doggies

Hotworx of Osprey

Intracoastal Cleaners Laundry Service

Mature Image Barbershop

Oasis Eye Care, Optical & Med Spa

Parise's Mobile Coffee & Cannoli Bar

Pro Measure Service

PromoUkraine Embroidery

Quality Food International

Simply Greek by Wynnberry

Susu's Always Fresh

Taste the Vibez Jamaican Cuisine

The Artistic Flip Flop

The Coastal Concierge

The Pavilion of Downtown Venice

Venice Ale House

Venice East Golf Course

We the People Health & Wellness Center

Woody's Junk Removal

YouFit Gyms

Your CBD Store- Sunmed- Venice

WE APPRECIATE YOU!



Thank you to the **City of Venice** staff, City Council Members and Mayor for your support of Venice MainStreet's events and efforts this year. Special thanks to the following:

Lorraine Anderson, Public Information Officer
James Clinch, Assistant City Manager
Ed Lavallee, City Manager
Brianne Lorenz, Special Events & Marketing
Lt. Louis White, VPD Special Events
Ricky Simpson, Director of Public Works
Ashlee Castle, Asst. Dir. Public Works

Public Works Department



Thank you, Patricia Matero, Skip Petitt and Phil Young for installing 26 commemorative bricks



Public Works Staff Scott "Boots" Marra, Tony Rosen, Neil Heuring and Chris Somers

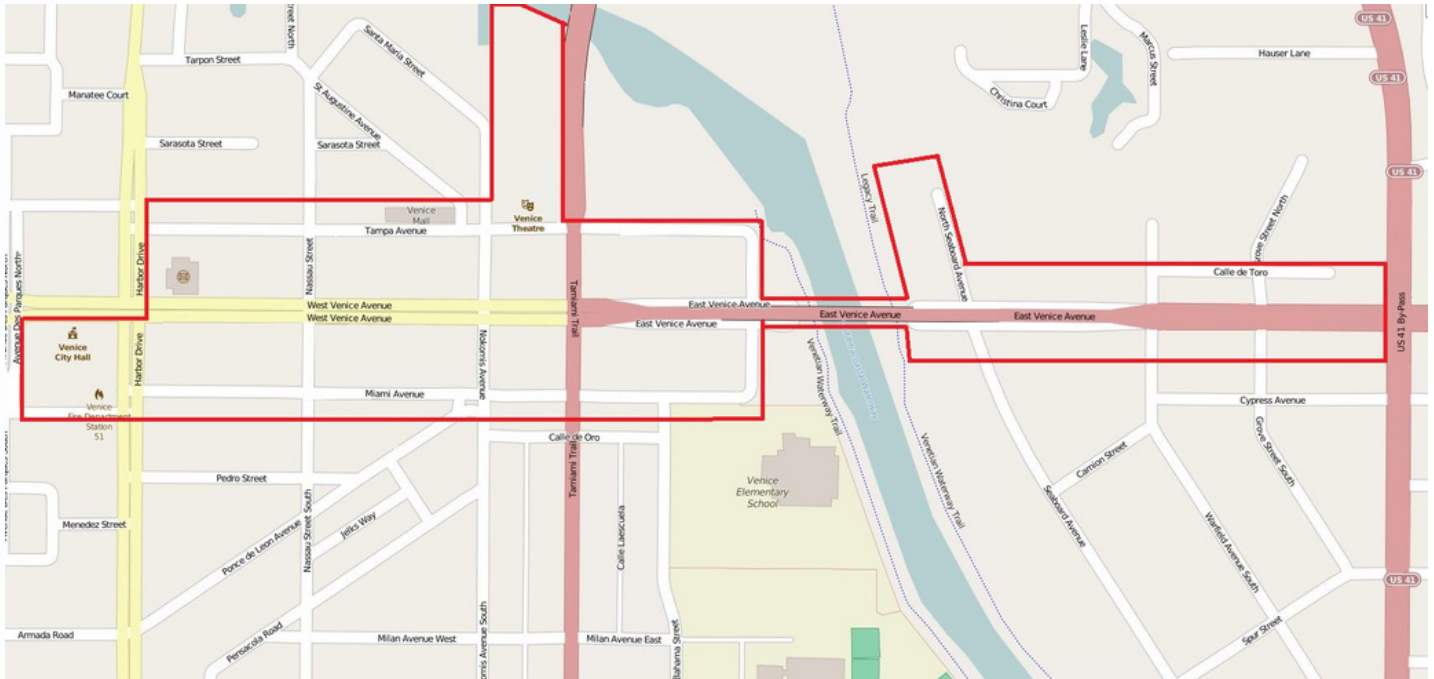


National Public Works Day, photo courtesy City of Venice

THANKS FOR THE EXTRA HELP!

- **Get It Gone** staff and **Together We Can** volunteers for helping with set-up and break-down at Sharks Tooth Festival
- **Venice Warehouse** youth volunteers for assisting with Eggstravaganza
- **Young Marines** for installing flags downtown for Memorial Day, as well picking up trash during Sharks Tooth Festival
- **Chuck Jackson** for volunteering as Santa Claus and the **Venice-Nokomis Woman's Club** for volunteering on the trolley at Christmas in July
- **Venice Lions Club** for assisting with Eggstravaganza, Sharks Tooth Festival, and Children's Halloween Parade trick or treating
- **Venice-Nokomis Rotary** for helping with Venice Beach Party and Barstool Open

SUPPORT OUR HISTORIC DISTRICT



To learn more about volunteering, joining or donating to Venice MainStreet, please go to VisitVeniceFL.org

To download this annual report go to VisitVeniceFL.org/staff-and-board-of-directors/

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