



*State College* ...The Best Times of Your Life

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**



**IMPROVEMENTS**



**MARKETING & EVENTS**



*2015 Annual Report*



## GREETINGS

>The Downtown State College Improvement District, Inc. (DSCID) is devoted to preserving and enhancing the value and vitality of Downtown. With that in mind, 2015 was a year of advanced communication and marketing, improved branding and maintenance, and preparation for further economic development.

In 2015, we continued to facilitate a foundation for growth and development. The Fraser Centre project made significant strides towards completion, and we look forward to the retail space opening this fall. We are also pleased to welcome a number of new businesses to the Downtown community: The Makery, Sower's Harvest Café, Sheetz, GNC, Liberty Craft House, Café Wow, California Tortilla, and the Chamber of Business and Industry of Centre County.

To enhance the Downtown experience both on the street and online, we implemented a redesign of our website and improved communication of street closings, changing traffic patterns, and construction. The website, which utilizes the branding from the State College Borough 20-Year Downtown Master Plan, includes weekly news features on Downtown businesses, and events. The new website complements the use of social media to improve marketing and communication efforts.

As part of our marketing initiatives, the DSCID has reached out to community partners and improved communications with constituents. We collaborated with local organizations and the community at large to gain valuable input in planning successful events, such as Summer's Best Music Fest, which continues to grow. Additionally, we provided weekly email updates to DSCID members which included any relevant and timely information about Downtown happenings.

As Downtown is the place to have the "best time of your life," we strive to provide exceptional cleaning services to keep Downtown fresh and inviting to the community and visitors alike. Our future is exciting, and we are eager to promote and strengthen Downtown State College.

Sincerely,



George Arnold  
Executive Director



Sharon Herlocher  
Chairman of the Board

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## Board of Directors

Dolores Taricani, Chairman Jan. '08 - Aug. '15
Sharon Herlocher, Chairman Sept. '15 - present
Jonathan Friedman, Vice-Chairman Sept. '15 - present
Pat Daugherty, Secretary Jan. '08 - present
George Woskob, Treasurer Jan '11 - Aug. '15
Chris McKee, Treasurer Sept. '15 - present
Ron Agostinelli
Cathy Dauler
Margaret Gray
Dave Richards, ex-officio

## Committees

## Chair

Finance	Romulus Comly
Retail Advisory	Dave Richards
Summer's Best Music Fest	Shannon Bishop
First Friday	Doug Albert
Public Services	Pat Daugherty

## Staff

George Arnold, Executive Director
Valerie Reed, Office Manager
Jill Rosenfeld, Assistant to the Chairman
Denny Barnhart, Clean Team
Kevin Runkle, Clean Team
Kevin Runkle, Jr. , Clean Team

## MISSION STATEMENT

>The DSCID is a live, work, and play neighborhood that sparks the creative, the eclectic, and the local. We're a constantly adapting, progressive community of people, with tradition blending harmoniously with trends in food, entertainment and the arts. The DSCID is devoted to preserving and enhancing the value and vitality of Downtown and works to retain, expand and attract businesses and investment to improve the Downtown environment. The result is the establishment of Downtown State College as the premier business, cultural and entertainment destination in Centre County.

The DSCID is a Neighborhood Improvement District and a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, established in 2002 by ordinance of the Borough of State College in accordance with the laws of Pennsylvania. The district extends from Atherton Street to Sowers Street, between College Avenue and Highland Alley.

With over 350 participating businesses, the DSCID sponsors annual events, promotions and other civic-minded pursuits that add value to the State College experience and reinforce our belief that there's no better place in the world to discover the best times of your life.



## HONORING SERVICE

>Since the earliest days of the DSCID, board members Dolores Taricani, Rich Kalin, George Woskob, and Pat Daugherty have served to promote the interests of the downtown property owners, businesses, and residents (both student and non-student) with dedication and perseverance. Their unique perspective and leadership has been invaluable in our quest to make Downtown a clean, vibrant, and growing economic center in the heart of Pennsylvania. With our sincerest gratitude, we thank them for their contributions.

## FRASER CENTRE

>After 10 years in the making, construction on the much anticipated Fraser Centre project reached new heights in 2015. When completed, the building will be home to 26 residential condominium units, a Hyatt Place Hotel (with 165 signature rooms, a fitness center, and conference, meeting, and function space), and 50,000 square feet of retail space occupied by Target, H&M, and the Federal Tapouse.

In spite of the economic downturn, changes in community climate, and transitioning to a new developer, DSCID board members Rich Kalin, Dolores Taricani, and George Woskob were a significant driving force behind the project, along with the Borough. When developer Gary Brandeis of Real Estate Capital Management and his investment partner Dan Deitchman of Brickbox Enterprises, Ltd. took over the project, DSCID board members and the Borough all collaborated to see the project to fruition.

The DSCID recognizes the importance of maintaining traffic flow during the construction project, specifically preserving two open lanes on Beaver Avenue. General contractor Leonard S. Fiore, Inc. worked with the Borough and the DSCID to mitigate construction impact. Upon completion, Fraser Centre will be an everyday reminder of what public-private partnerships can accomplish together to positively impact the Downtown community.



*The Fraser Centre in various stages of construction, including the installation of the tower crane (at left). At the far left (bottom), Dolores Taricani, George Arnold, Pat Daugherty, Sharon Herlocher & Rich Kalin attended the Topping Out Ceremony to celebrate the final beam being lifted into place.*

## WEBSITE REDESIGN

## DowntownStateCollege.com

>The DSCID redesigned its website, launching the new site in November, which included a user friendly platform, and a fresh, updated aesthetic interface. The staff and visitors to the site experienced the benefits of the new site with increased site traffic and ease of gift card purchases, facilitating more shopping in Downtown stores.



>The **Downtown Gift Card** continued to perform well in 2015. December sales were the highest in more than five years and accounted for more than 50% of the \$60,000 worth of gift cards sold for the year.

DOWNTOWN GIFT CARDS WERE REDEEMED IN

**2316** TRANSACTIONS

AT **100** STORES

EQUALING **\$46k** IN SALES

**3,732 = 36%**

ONLINE SESSIONS IN  
DECEMBER 2015

INCREASE FROM  
DECEMBER 2014

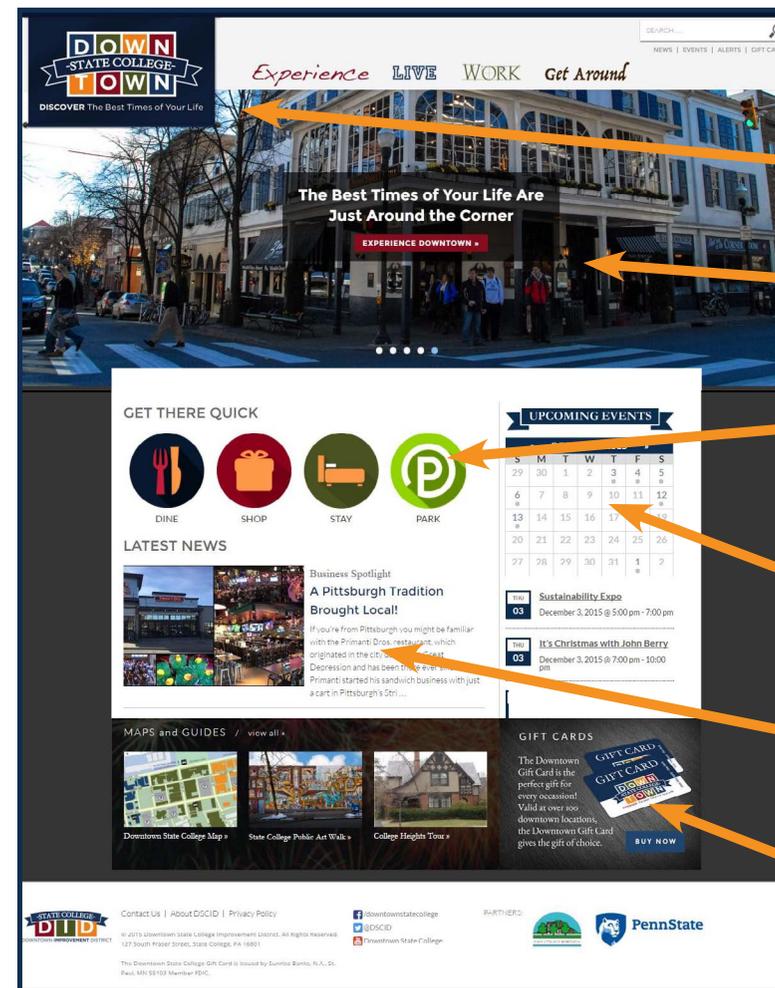
**84%**

OF VISITORS TO  
DOWNTOWNSTATECOLLEGE.COM  
WERE NEW IN 2015

**31,910 = 24%**

VISITORS TO THE  
WEBSITE (OLD & NEW)  
IN 2015

INCREASE FROM  
2014



## Website Features

INCORPORATES BRANDING FROM THE  
DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN

ROTATING SLIDERS THAT HIGHLIGHT  
EVENTS, BUSINESSES AND INITIATIVES

QUICK LINKS TO DOWNTOWN  
BUSINESSES & CONVENIENCES

INTERACTIVE CALENDAR SHOWCASING  
DOWNTOWN COMMUNITY EVENTS

BLOG FEATURE FOR BUSINESS  
SPOTLIGHTS, PRESS RELEASES & NEWS

MUCH IMPROVED SHOPPING CART FOR  
DOWNTOWN GIFT CARD SALES

## MOVE & PARK EASY

>In 2015, the DSCID partnered with Ogovo to produce a number of **parking videos** to showcase the ease of parking Downtown. The series focused on the various ways to pay for parking, while highlighting the garages, the municipal parking lots, and on-street parking options. The new DSCID website features the videos, and they also appear on YouTube and other social media platforms.



**YouTube**  
2,539 views



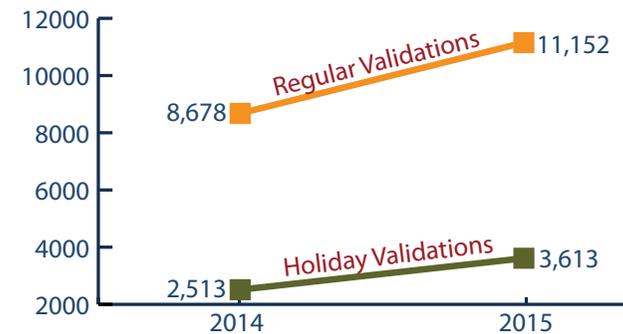
>One of the videos features **Parkmobile**, an app that can be used to pay for parking at any municipal metered spot.

This easy-to-use payment solution allows people to both skip the lines at the parking kiosks and forgo digging for quarters.

Because Parkmobile is featured prominently on the new Downtown website, the company has agreed to sponsor the site on an annual basis.

>The **Merchant Validated Parking (MVP)** program took a big leap forward in 2015 with a *29% increase* in the total number of one-hour validations redeemed. In this continuing program, the cost of validations is split between the Borough of State College Parking Department, the DSCID, and participating Downtown businesses choosing to offer FREE garage parking to their customers. The DSCID is encouraged to see more businesses taking the opportunity to offer this service to their customers and, even better, to see customers taking advantage of FREE parking to shop and dine Downtown.

Parking Validation Comparison



>For the last five weeks of the year, we set the MVP program aside and put the **Holiday Parking Program** into effect. Holiday Validations (similar to MVP but effective for four hours each and completely free to businesses) saw a *44% jump* in usage from 2014. Additionally, 1,424 people were treated to some holiday cheer when they received Courtesy Cards instead of parking tickets.

## KEEPING IT CLEAN & SAFE

### Cleaning Ambassadors

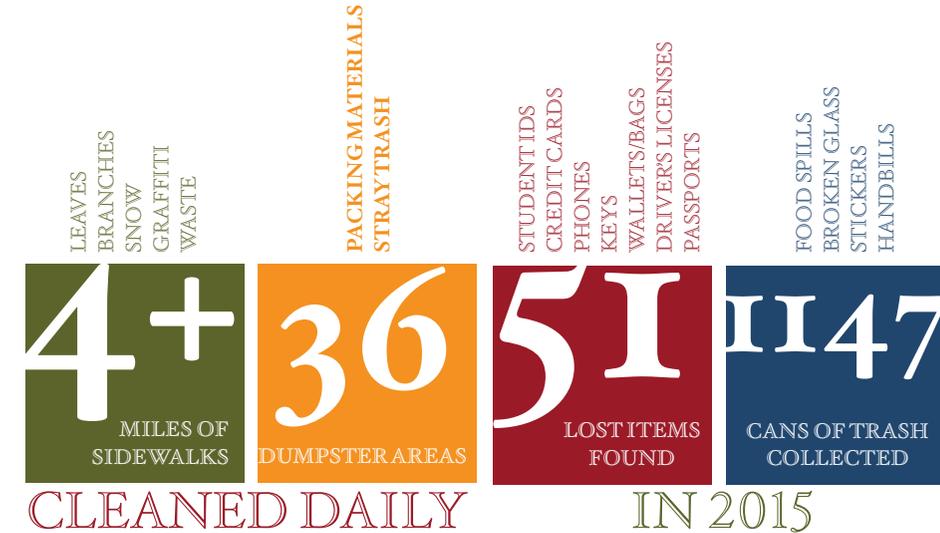
>What does it take to keep Downtown State College clean? In the wee hours of the morning, Denny Barnhart, Kevin Runkle, and Kevin Runkle, Jr, the Downtown Cleaning Ambassadors, work quickly and tirelessly to maintain the cleanliness and appearance of all district walkways in preparation for daily Downtown life. In addition, they provide general hospitality and assistance to Downtown visitors.

Two cleaning ambassadors are on duty each day; however for high-traffic times like home football games, or Arts Fest, it's all hands on deck. The cleaning ambassadors keep downtown fresh and inviting for all.

### Safety Ambassadors

> For more than a decade, Penn State student Auxiliary Officers have served as ambassadors patrolling the streets of the DSCID and assisting those in need as part of the Downtown Safety Enhancement Program (DSEP). Whether providing simple directions or handling more dire concerns, these officers are on hand promoting the safety and well-being of all who visit Downtown. Scheduled in the late night and early morning hours and during peak periods, the students are trained to serve as additional eyes and ears for the State College Police Department (SCPD), deterring crime by their very presence and adding to the sense of safety.

DSEP continues to be an effective partnership between the DSCID, Penn State University, and the SCPD . When the program was first conceived in 2004, Penn State provided the student auxiliary officers, the SCPD provided training and oversight, and the DSCID paid for the services. In 2011, Penn State agreed to cover the cost of standard DSEP services each year, while the borough agreed to continue with the training. Many thanks to Penn State and the State College Police Department for their ongoing support of this valuable program.



## ENGAGING OUR MEMBERS

>In 2014, the staff began sending weekly updates to Downtown businesses. Email updates included information about a variety of topics, including street closures, construction updates, upcoming events, cooperative advertising deals, and opportunities to participate in a range of programs. In the fall of 2015, the updates were upgraded using the email management program, MailChimp, which provides a professional email template and analytics to gauge readership.

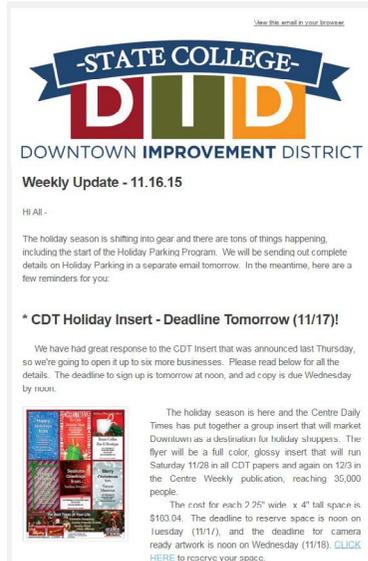
The DSCID hosted quarterly Open Forum Meetings in 2015, which gave constituents an opportunity to provide input and connect about the issues and the direction of Downtown. Topics of meetings included First Friday, the website redesign, parking, and downtown events and happenings.

## FIRST FRIDAY WEBSITE & E-MAIL

>With the continued growth of the First Friday program the planning committee launched a monthly e-mail newsletter showcasing the variety of events taking place and driving traffic to the event website, [FirstFridayStateCollege.com](http://FirstFridayStateCollege.com). The first e-mail went out in October, and the number of subscribers has steadily increased since. More importantly, the open rate of these e-mails has been almost *triple the industry standard* of 23%. That shows that people are interested in what's happening in Downtown State College. Use the QR code or visit [www.FirstFridayStateCollege.com](http://www.FirstFridayStateCollege.com) to subscribe to the e-mail list.



## Sample Weekly Email Update



## ENGAGING THE STUDENTS

>To encourage more Penn State students to visit Downtown early in their college experience, DSCID created welcome packets showcasing Downtown offerings from events to businesses. The packets were distributed at Penn State New Student Orientation (NSO) events throughout the summer, in the HUB, during the first week of classes, at the LION Bash event, and at the Fall Housing Fair.

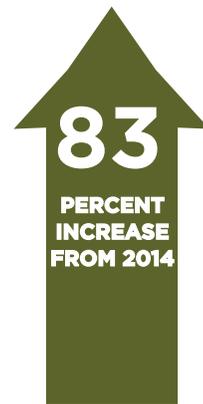


LION Bash is a new initiative from the Borough Office of Community Engagement in partnership with Penn State Student Affairs. The mission of LION Bash is to foster a sense of community and facilitate activities that promote safe, attractive, and diverse neighborhoods. The DSCID was privileged to participate as part of the planning committee.

The DSCID also teamed up with the Borough and Penn State to extend an extra welcome to incoming students and their families by hanging Welcome Banners throughout Downtown.



2830  
TWITTER FOLLOWERS



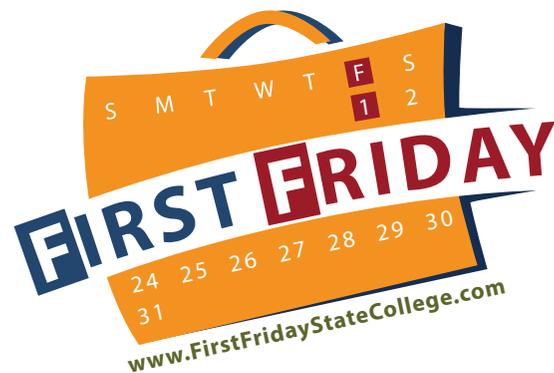
5447  
FACEBOOK PAGE LIKES

## SOCIAL MEDIA

>The staff and interns worked diligently throughout 2015 to increase Downtown's social media presence, utilizing contests, events, Thowback Thursday posts, and some very cost-effective advertising. The number of followers steadily increased throughout the year, generating more buzz about Downtown and bringing larger numbers to Downtown events like the Fall Fest and Tree Lighting.

## EVENTS

>Our festivals and events celebrate through the seasons. We have Fall Fest, Tree Lighting, Polar Express, Summer's Best Music Fest, Summer Sidewalk Sale, and First Friday which experienced its first full year of monthly events. In addition to our personally sponsored events, DSCID works closely with organizations such as Centre Region Parks and Recreation, the Central Pennsylvania Festival of the Arts, and others that host events Downtown. We appreciate all the businesses and organizations who supported the Downtown in 2015 and provided the State College community with a variety of family-friendly events in the heart of Centre County.



>**First Friday** continued to grow in 2015 with participation from more than 40 Downtown restaurants and retail establishments. A casual atmosphere features art, peoplwatching, mingling with friends, shopping, and dining at the diverse and delectable State College restaurants. First Friday goes will experience after-hours access to galleries and shops, free bites and beverages, live music and entertainment, retail and restaurant specials, and more. The First Friday Committee worked to develop the event, creating themes to attract visitors and the community. First Friday events featured poetry reading by local authors, a one year anniversary celebration of First Friday, concert tickets giveaway, and "I ♥ First Friday" buttons entitling wearers discounts at local businesses and raffle entries. DSCID is encouraged by the growth of this event.

## JUNE 6

>The 9th year of **Summer's Best Music Fest** saw some changes, as the SBMF committee continued their efforts to grow the festival. The footprint of the festival was condensed to make it more walkable, and national country artist Jo Dee Messina was featured on a ticketed stage in the Garner Parking Lot.  
>Thanks to Northwest, our presenting sponsor, for their continued support of this great event.



## AUGUST 8

>Based on feedback from one of the Open Forum meetings, a decision was made to separate the annual **Sidewalk Sale** from the Music Festival and to move the sale to later in the summer. More than a dozen businesses set up booths on Allen St., while others utilized the sidewalks in front of their storefronts to display their wares.



## AUGUST 11

>**The CAST of Beatlemania** returned to Old Main Lawn after a year's hiatus, drawing a crowd of 2,000-3,000 from State College and beyond. Their performance delighted the crowds with authentic renditions of dozens of Beatles classics. This concert continues to be a popular attraction brought to the community in part by Northwest and the Central PA Convention and Visitors Bureau.



## OCTOBER 17

>Two welcome additions were added in the planning for the 2015 Fall Fest - sponsorship opportunities and increased social media presence, including Facebook. The sponsors' additional energy and creativity accentuated an already lively event. And more than 1,100 people responded to the Facebook event page.  
>Thanks to Frost & Conn, Grace Lutheran Preschool & Kindergarten, Growing Tree Toys, and St. Pauls Christian Preschool for sponsoring the event.

# FALL FEST



## NOVEMBER 19

>Social media marketing played a significant roll in the success of the **Annual Tree Lighting** event. More than 850 people responded to the Facebook event.  
>Thanks to all the businesses who donated cookies, and a special thanks to Sheetz who handed out hundreds of cups of free coffee from their coffee truck.

*Tree Lighting*



## DECEMBER 5, 6, 12 & 13

>**The Polar Express** continues to be a huge tradition for families in State College and the surrounding areas. 2015 saw our two biggest weekends ever with more than 1,100 children in attendance, plus parents, grandparents and friends.  
>Thanks to the Schlow Memorial Library and the Downtown State College Rotary for their continued partnership of this event.



**STATEMENT OF NET POSITION**

<b>ASSETS</b>	<b>2015</b>
Cash & Cash Equivalents	\$373,275
Prepaid Expenses	\$10,419
Accounts Receivable	\$20,752
Net Capital Assets	\$40,415
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$444,861</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>	
Accounts Payable & Accrued Expenses	\$13,596
Agency Funds	\$16,980
Deferred Revenue	\$7,118
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>\$37,694</b>
<b>NET POSITION</b>	
Invested in Capital Assets	\$40,415
Restricted Net Assets	\$366,752
<b>TOTAL NET POSITION</b>	<b>\$407,167</b>

**TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET POSITION \$444,861**

**STATEMENT OF INCOME & EXPENSE**

<b>INCOME</b>	
Property Assessments	\$331,571
Partnership Contributions	\$123,253
Service Agreements	\$6,522
Merchant Validated Parking	\$10,429
Co-op ads and Sponsorships	\$23,643
Grant Revenue	\$4,315
Interest	\$1,384
Other Income	\$4,364
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$505,481</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>	
Marketing	\$130,594
Clean & Safe	\$157,506
Administration & Operation	\$190,449
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$478,549</b>

**NET INCOME \$ 26,932**

**Looking Ahead to 2016****ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

- >Collect data regarding housing, traffic, and parking to form the basis for development plans.
- >Assist the Borough as they begin the process of updating the Zoning Ordinances that have seen minimal revisions since 1959.
- >Help coordinate the renovation of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Plaza (formerly Fraser Plaza).
- >Put procedures in place to track openings and closings of Downtown retailers.
- >Celebrate the completion and opening of the Fraser Centre. The retail space is expected to open late fall 2016, the hotel and restaurant in Dec./Jan., and the condos spring 2017.
- >Provide support as Hillel continues their development project at the corner of Beaver and Garner.

**IMPROVEMENTS**

- >Upgrade holiday lighting Downtown.
- >Work with the Borough to develop improved signage and ease of parking Downtown.
- >Continue the long standing and successful Clean Team and Downtown Safety Enhancement Programs.
- >Increase traffic to downtownstatecollege.com, by posting new content regularly and utilizing social media to drive traffic.
- >Expand the "Work" section with resources and links that will attract new businesses and be useful to existing businesses.
- >Integrate FirstFridayStateCollege.com with the main site.

**MARKETING & EVENTS**

- >Expand Summer's Best Music Fest.
- >Pilot an event with an open air beer garden at Summer's Best Music Fest 2016.
- >Continue to develop event sponsors and revenue options that will lead to events becoming self-funding.
- >Create and implement an overall marketing plan for the district.
- >Increase the number of businesses actively involved in the First Friday program.

The Downtown State College Improvement District receives an assessment from all properties within its boundaries. The audited financial statements on this page represent the consolidated finances of the Downtown State College Improvement District, Inc. in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States. More detailed financial statements are available for review at the DSCID office, located at 127 S. Fraser Street.



DOWNTOWN **IMPROVEMENT** DISTRICT

127 SOUTH FRASER STREET  
STATE COLLEGE, PA 16801