

Location

Adairsville, Georgia

Funding

\$75,000 USDA Rural Business Enterprise Grant

Partners

City of Adairsville

Local Artists

Adairsville Heritage Foundation

Adairsville Downtown Development Authority

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Rural Development

Abstract

Proud of their community's heritage, Adairsville, Georgia is committed to the success of their downtown and the preservation of the area's historic character. As part of a greater downtown revitalization plan, Adairsville utilized a USDA grant to create a mural on their downtown train depot as part of the community's vision for a more robust cultural heritage tourism economy.

Project Description

In 1862, Adairsville, Georgia was the stage for an important event in Civil War history. A Confederate freight train, *The General*, was stopped in Big Shanty (present day Kennesaw, Georgia) for breakfast. A group of Union soldiers hijacked *The General* to disrupt the flow of supplies and soldiers between Atlanta and Chattanooga. In attempt to get his train back, *The General's* conductor made his way to Adairsville. It was in Adairsville that the conductor seized another freight train, *The Texas*. He put *The Texas* in reverse and chased after *The General*. *The General* eventually ran out of steam and all of the Union hijackers were captured. Because *The General* was saved, the Confederates supply lines were kept alive for the time being.

One-hundred and fifty years later, Adairsville (population 2,542) residents are proud of their history. The downtown is home to the original depot where *The General's* conductor commandeered *The Texas*, and the depot building is now a museum to local history. The surrounding streets around the depot are home to a quaint area of quintessential 19th century American downtown buildings.

Over the past five years, the Town of Adairsville has invested in downtown placemaking. It funded a streetscape project to improve the sidewalks, benches, and landscaping; and it used a transportation enhancement grant to renovate an area behind its downtown buildings into a pedestrian plaza. The City's work has transformed Adairsville's downtown into a pedestrian-friendly area.

A few years ago, community members decided to contribute to the downtown placemaking effort by creating a large outdoor mural that gives tribute to Adairsville's rich history. Community leaders knew a mural would attract more tourists and other businesses. Two local artists, Carson J. "Skip" McNutt and Ernest Neal, spearheaded the project. They decided the mural should depict the Great Locomotive Chase of 1862. Working with the Town of Adairsville, the Adairsville Heritage Foundation, and the Downtown Development Authority, the artists collaborated on fundraising efforts, but ultimately did not receive enough funds to continue with the project.

About that same time, the artists and other community leaders happened to attend a workshop on downtown development. They learned about an additional funding opportunity, the USDA's Rural Business Enterprise Grant (RBE). The Adairsville Heritage Foundation applied for the grant and received \$75,000 to complete the mural.

In April of 2011, Adairsville held a celebration for the unveiling of the mural attached to the side of the old depot depicting the Great Locomotive Chase. One year later, in April of 2012, the town held another downtown celebration for the 150th anniversary of the Great Locomotive Chase. The event featured Civil War Era costumes, blacksmiths, and crafts. The Heritage Foundation also showed two major films that were influenced by the events in Adairsville: The Great Locomotive Chase by Walt Disney Pictures and "The General" starring Buster Keaton.

Community members of Adairsville are proud of their new piece of public art and its contribution to cultural tourism and education. They believe that Adairsville's past is one of the community's greatest strengths. Local leaders in this small community are using their history to create a more successful future for their downtown.

Livability Principles Addressed

Enhance economic competitiveness.

Support existing communities.

Value communities and neighborhoods.

Lessons Learned

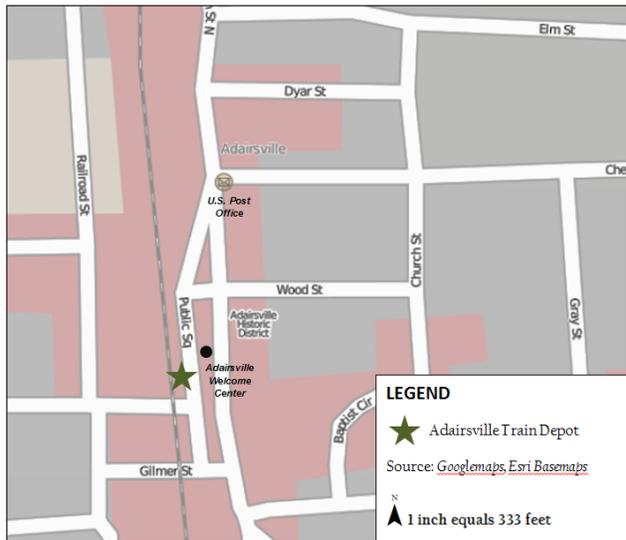
None.

Pictures and Maps



Description: Context Map.

Source: Esri Basemaps, ArcGIS online database (all layer packages by Esri)



Description: DowntownMap – Adairsville, GA
Sources: GoogleMaps, Esri Basemap



Description: Unveiling of the Mural
Source: [http://www.daily-tribune.com/view/full_story/12780080/article-Adairsville-unveils-Great-
Locomotive-Chase-mural-in-downtown](http://www.daily-tribune.com/view/full_story/12780080/article-Adairsville-unveils-Great-Locomotive-Chase-mural-in-downtown)



Description: Great Locomotive Chase mural in Adairsville
Source: USDA 3-S Success Story, Georgia State Rural Development Office



Description: People waiting for the reveal of the mural
Source: USDA 3-S Success Story, Georgia State Rural Development Office

Sources for Textual Information

Adairsville, Georgia. (2010). Retrieved September 10, 2012, from Cartersville-Bartow County, GA Convention & Visitors Bureau: http://www.visitcartersvillega.org/na/Adairsville,_Georgia

Bass, L. (July, 25 2012). CEO of Adairsville Heritage. (A. Murnan, Interviewer)

Golden, R. (n.d.). *The Great Locomotive Chase*. Retrieved September 10, 2012, from About North Georgia: <http://ngeorgia.com/history/raiders.html>