



Putting Dreams Into Action



Strengthening Our Community . . .



And Building A Future

The Revitalization of West Reading



Sharing A Vision For The Future

“When you ask why people come to West Reading, it’s the uniqueness. It’s not a big-box shopping center in the suburbs. It’s a downtown environment that becomes ‘home’ to individual entrepreneurs and specialty retailers who know your name.”



– Sam Loth
West Reading Main Street Manager

The community of West Reading is experiencing a transformation . . . spirited by the growth of the Penn Avenue shopping district and the expansion of its larger companies and institutions. Over 35 new retail and restaurant businesses have opened on Penn Avenue since 1999 and two short blocks away, a \$170 million expansion of the Reading Hospital and Medical Center is providing a built in market for the growth.

The **West Reading Main Street Authority** has sparked much of the improvement by applying the widely successful strategies of the “Main Street America” program with the added support of a Borough-wide, long-term strategic plan for revitalization.

Major companies located in the Borough include **The Reading Hospital and Medical Center**, the region’s largest employer with over 4,000 employees, **R.M. Palmer Company**, a world-class chocolate novelty manufacturer, **Narrow Fabrics**, a global textile corporation, and headquarters for **Edwards Business Machines** with retail outlets throughout the eastern seaboard.

The major anchor for small business in West Reading is the **VF Factory Outlet Center and Designer Place Outlets** located just one block from Penn Avenue. The outlets attract 4 to 5 million visitors each year with annual sales volume nearing \$190 million.

The Future IS NOW!



Scott Wolfe, COO
The Reading Hospital
and Medical Center

“The Reading Hospital has been a part of the West Reading Borough for more than 75 years. We feel a strong kinship with the community and its people. West Reading’s continued prosperity is very important to us, and we pledge our support and cooperation in working with the Borough as we build for the future together.”

SUPPORTING The Community!



Rich Palmer, Owner R.M. Palmer Company

“R.M. Palmer Company has been part of the West Reading family since 1957. Our relationship with the community has been outstanding and we have always been proud to call West Reading our home, and will continue to feel that way.”

▼ As important as big business is to the future of West Reading, the “heart and soul” of the community lies with the small independent businesses that bring an effective combination of high quality niche retail products and services to the discriminating consumer.

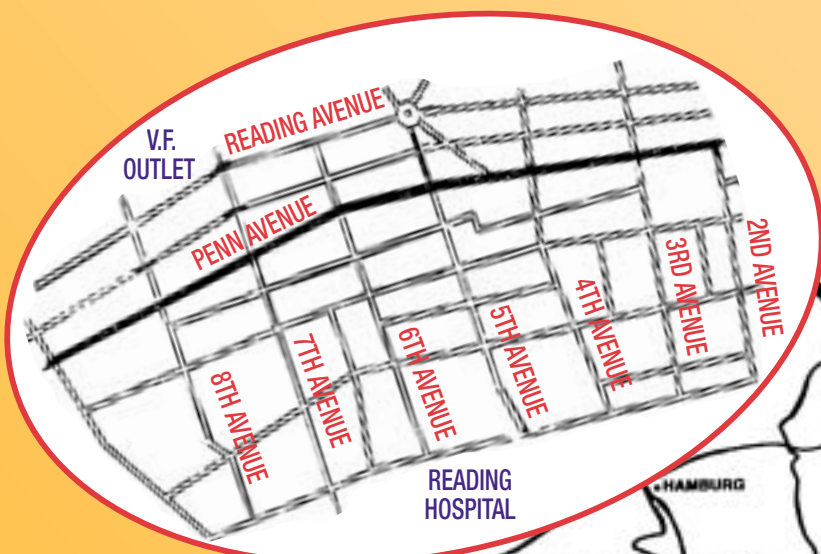




West Reading's Unlimited Opportunities

West Reading set a new course in 1999 when Borough leaders approved a long-term strategic plan to revitalize the community. Premier in this plan was the introduction of a Main Street America program, managed locally by the Main Street Authority, that is breathing new life into the Penn Avenue shopping district.

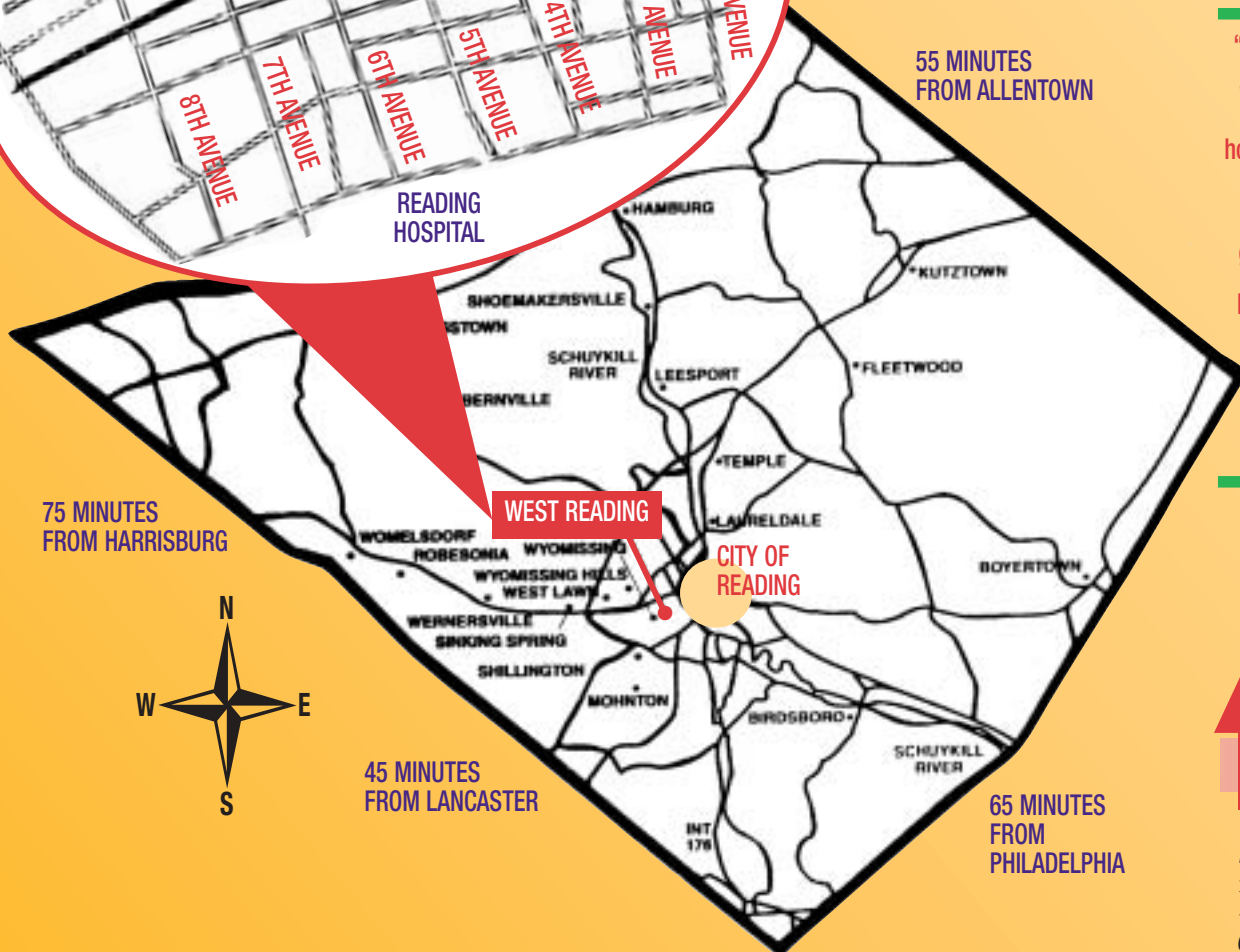
Tremendous growth since the program's inception has attracted business owners and entrepreneurs who find the uniqueness of West Reading's shopping district extremely appealing. The "Main Street" of the future must offer what is not typically available in a shopping mall, such as one-of-a-kind boutiques, bistros and arts and crafts galleries. ◆



55 MINUTES FROM ALLENTOWN

"We are beginning our 11th year in West Reading, and find our coffee house fits in well synergistically with the community. Our business is growing and this has been a good location for us . . . a crossroads of unique, specialty businesses."

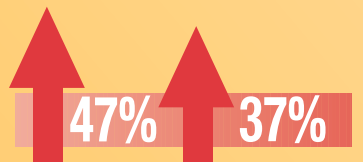
– Scott Bortz, Owner
The Hardbean Cafe



75 MINUTES FROM HARRISBURG

45 MINUTES FROM LANCASTER

65 MINUTES FROM PHILADELPHIA



* 47% of women 31-45 and 37% 46-55 largely represent Penn Avenue's current consumer market.



Revitalizing *The Community*

"The positive effects of the Main Street program are evident . . . the most tangible is the increased participation by residents and business owners. People see the community is headed in the right direction and they want to be involved."



- Kevin S. Barnhardt
West Reading Mayor



West Reading gateway completed 2002.

- T**he Main Street Program focuses on four development components:
- ◆ **Design:** Rehabilitation of Properties and Enhancement of the Public Streetscape
 - ◆ **Economic Restructuring:** Targeted Recruitment and Support for Existing Businesses
 - ◆ **Promotion:** Special Events, Marketing and Profiling the District
 - ◆ **Organization:** Community Consensus Building, Volunteerism and Partnerships

DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

The \$6 million Streetscape Enhancement Project completed in 2003 has dramatically improved the public environment in the shopping district. Access and parking are improved, traffic gridlock is eased, pedestrians can circulate safely and the nighttime ambiance opens unlimited opportunities. ◆



▲ Rehab work underway at Tina's Salon and Boutique with partial funding from West Reading's Main Street Program.

► Sherry's Salon and the apartments above received a full facade renovation and a reimbursement check from the Main Street program.



23% will expand business

* Of the 145 established businesses on Penn Avenue, 100 (69%) are at least eight years old. When surveyed, all plan to remain and 33 (23%) plan to expand over the next five years.



▼ First National Bank in Fleetwood, a 69-year old institution, values the benefits of locating branches in small communities such as West Reading. By being committed to fulfilling the dreams of those they service, First National provides leading edge financial products and "hometown personal service."

Bringing Business To The Community

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



"After 15 years on the corner of 6th and Penn Avenue, we've been fortunate to witness the tremendous expansion of the borough. We enjoy the high visibility, easy-to-get-to shopping, arts and entertainment community. The improvements from the MainStreet project have increased the popularity for businesses and shoppers alike to visit, and visit often, this 'one-of-a-kind' community."



– Alan and Jeff Rutter, Owners
Chef Alan's American Bistro

The Economic Development Team of the Main Street Authority performs ongoing market analysis, develops demographic data, maintains a community business-to-business clearing house and oversees the changing needs of the Penn Avenue business district utilizing a targeted business recruitment strategy to generate growth. Team goals include:

- ◆ Low interest, long-term loans to assist entrepreneurial investment
- ◆ Ongoing research to fine-tune marketing strategies
- ◆ Cross-promotional packages with area destinations and venues
- ◆ Adding new tools to the business recruitment package



The artist's depiction and the actual result of the streetscape enhancement project are shown . . . the dynamic new environment speaks for itself!



Consumers give 5 stars!

* Consumers who frequent "The Avenue" have noted the improved quality of products and services offered. On-site surveys yield a satisfied and expectant market. "What's coming next?" they ask.

► Since 1995, West Reading's Spring Arts Festival has attracted visitors and shoppers who enjoy music, art, dance, art cinema, crafts, and a terrific shopping experience!



The Uniqueness Of The Community

“The West Reading Main Street program has come a long way since its inception. The Chamber notes with pride the active business community in the district, a community that includes a number of Chamber members. We have the utmost confidence in the continued success of the area, a success that can be directly attributed to a seriously researched business plan and credible leadership. We believe this program will serve as a role model for many other communities in Berks . . . and beyond.”



– Tony Grimm, President Berks County Chamber of Commerce



* The traditional Thursday evening extended business hours still hold sway but 32% of Penn Avenue consumers shop regularly on Fridays and 25% more visit The Avenue on Saturdays.



PROMOTION

Managing annual community events that celebrate the town, its history and its future are an integral part of the Authority's work. Improving West Reading's image and presenting the Borough as a great place to live, work and visit help make the future bright and prosperous. Annual events include:

- ◆ **1st Thursday**, a year-round event on the first Thursday of each month highlights art gallery openings and special themed activities in the businesses of Penn Avenue; 5PM to 8PM.
- ◆ **Art on the Avenue** held on the third Saturday of June each year. The event showcases Penn Avenue galleries and the local art community. Food stands, entertainment and children's activities compliment the event; 10AM to 4PM.
- ◆ **Community Outreach Day** on the first Thursday in July provides an opportunity for area non-profit agencies and West Reading businesses not located on Penn Avenue to promote their programs, products and services. Penn Avenue becomes a giant business and non-profit expo featuring table displays and demonstrations for the public to enjoy; 10AM to 8PM.
- ◆ **The Royal Rummage Sale** held on the third Saturday in August combines a traditional downtown sidewalk sale with a community-wide yard sale on the front lawns throughout the Borough. The event draws crowds from miles around; 7AM to 4PM.
- ◆ **Holiday Glow Celebration** begins on the first Thursday of December and continues for 11 days. The event celebrates the cultural diversity of the wider community and includes activities sponsored by churches, fraternal clubs, institutions and businesses. The annual tree lighting ceremony, the arrival of Santa, window mimes, business open houses, church concerts, caroling, and model railroad displays are just a few of the many delights scheduled; various dates and hours.



The Tower of Health for West Reading since 1926

The Reading Hospital is a family of more than 5,000 physicians, caregivers, volunteers, and students who believe in the future of West Reading! We:

- provide compassionate health care to our West Reading neighbors
- patronize West Reading businesses
- partner with West Reading officials on many projects
- are proud to call West Reading our home!



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and Medical Center**

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