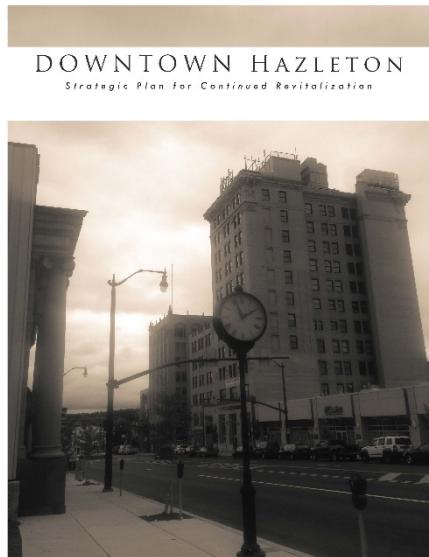




Spring has finally arrived and Downtown Hazleton is thawing out after a long winter. Planning is finally giving way to implementation, and the downtown will soon be buzzing with activity with many events planned for the warmer months. Read on for details!

Above: The façade rehabilitation of 13 E. Broad St. (Mount Zion Christian Church, worship center and offices) is complete. A ribbon cutting was held April 10th.



Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan is complete! After nine months of meetings, workshops, surveys, and interviews, the goals, strategies, design concepts, and priority projects for downtown revitalization have been finalized. To review an electronic copy of the plan, visit [The Plan](#) tab at www.downtownhazleton.org, or contact Krista Schneider at 570-455-1509 to check out a hard copy version. This plan will

now serve as the basis for our application to the Department of Community and Economic Development to have downtown Hazleton designated as a certified "Main Street" community, which will file within the next month. This designation will make the downtown eligible for special funding and incentive programs to support the revitalization process.

State Budget Matters

Over the last several years, the Pennsylvania Main Street and Elm Street programs, once among the most productive and well received community revitalization programs in the United States, were reduced by Commonwealth budget cuts. Taken as a whole, the programs which help to revitalize the state's historic downtowns and neighborhoods dropped from a funding level of \$56 million in 2009, to \$6.1 million in 2014-15. Governor Wolf has proposed increasing this level to \$21.15 million in 2015-2016. This is good news! If funded, these business district and neighborhood revitalization programs, including tax credit programs, façade grants, and program funds, will help bolster our efforts.

Second Friday Highlights

The "Second Friday" of March was marked by several well-attended events, including the grand opening of the "Trompe L'Oeil" (Trick of the Eye) exhibit at the Hazleton Art League, opening night of "13 The Musical" at the Pennsylvania Theatre of Performing Arts, a travelling exhibit of Irish and mining history sponsored by the Hazleton Historical Society and Museum with costumed interpreters Bryan Dunnigan (portraying an Irish miner), Regina Drasher (performing "Big Mary of Lattimer"), and musician Dave Matsinko, who performed several Irish and mining



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ballads with the guitar, dulcimer, and banjo. Poet Laureate Maria Jacketti also read some of her poems to celebrate the occasion.

Charles McElwee, a dedicated DHAP volunteer, was also recognized with an award for his volunteer service to the City by Mayor Joe Yannuzzi, particularly for his efforts to document and celebrate Hazleton's Irish-American heritage, and for his help with the Strategic Plan. Sixteen downtown businesses also offered special promotions and discounts to complement the day's activities, as did the YMCA/YWCA and the Hazleton Library, which hosted children's programs.



Top: Dave Matsinko performs historical mining ballads on the dulcimer during the March 13 "Second Friday" event. Above: DHAP volunteer and Hazleton Historical Society & Museum board member Charles McElwee receives an Irish-American Volunteer Appreciation award for his service to the city.

April's Second Friday (April 10th) celebrated the arrival of spring with several "Home & Garden" themed workshops, exhibits, a painting class, and business promotions, as well as an open house and tours of Brandon's Forever Home at 187 N. Church St., a grand 1907 Georgian mansion now being used to help local foster children.



Top: Brandon's Forever Home. Above: Tours in progress.



Below: Hazleton POWER! hosted a painting class with local artist Gisselle Ulloa at the Pine's mezzanine during April's "2nd Friday" events. Approximately 20 people attended.

Façade Restoration Complete!

The Downtown Hazleton Alliance for Progress hosted a ribbon cutting on April 10th to mark the completion of the downtown's first façade rehabilitation project located at 13 E. Broad Street, and restoration of one of the downtown's oldest buildings.



Top: View of the building as it existed in 1920 (note that Hotel Loughran, located to the east, was destroyed in a fire in the 1950s); Middle: Conditions after siding was removed, 2014. Bottom: View of building, rehab complete.

A short slide presentation was held inside the building to recap the renovation progress and recognize all project partners and sponsors. These included the CAN DO Community Foundation, which helped fund

the project, the property owner, Iglesia Cristiana Monte de Sion (Mount Zion Christian Church), which contributed some of its own money towards the project; the contractors (Spec Restoration, Korpics Kontracting, and Sign Renderings); the Downtown Hazleton Overlay District Committee, which helped organize project partners; and the Greater Hazleton Historical Society & Museum, which provided historical information and photos of the building.

The Alliance coordinated the rehabilitation project and worked with the property owner and the contractors to develop a plan for restoring the upper two floors of the façade while maintaining the building's historic characteristics.



A ribbon cutting outside the building marked the completion of the project. In attendance were Derek Korpics (Korpics Kontracting), Sue Farley (Hazleton Historical Society and Museum), Ann Vinatieri (representing State Representative Tarah Toohil), George Leitner, Krista Schneider, and Neal DeAngelo III (representing DHAP), Dan Guydish (representing the Greater Hazleton Chamber of Commerce), Mayor Joe Yannuzzi, and Pastor Manuel Nieves and many members of the church congregation.

Façade Rehabilitation Mini-Grants Available

The Alliance is hoping that the successful completion of the 13 E. Broad St. project, along with some financial assistance, will encourage other property owners to spruce up their own facades within the downtown.

Thanks to a grant from the First Federal Foundation, the Alliance is able to offer a mini-grant program to provide property owners with matching grants up to \$5,000 to help fund maintenance and rehabilitation of existing commercial properties. The grant program is intended to stimulate building improvements while being mindful of the historical significance and uniqueness of downtown architecture. For more information and to view the grant guidelines, visit www.downtownhazleton.org and visit the [Facades tab](#).

Featured New Business

Exclusively Ana's Clothing, owner Ana Pérez, 41 W. Broad St., Hazleton



Ana Perez (pictured above), owner of Exclusively Ana's Clothing moved her store from Wyoming Street to Broad Street earlier this year (next door to Carmen's Bakery & Deli). This move allowed Ana to expand and diversify her inventory (she now sells a wide selection of beautiful dresses, handbags, shoes, and jewelry). As salsa music plays in the background and the sun shines through the big storefront windows, it is easy to feel like you have been transported to the Caribbean. "The move has been really good for business," says her daughter Julia. The Downtown Hazleton Overlay District Committee, in partnership with DHAP, has been working with Ms. Perez as she prepares to install a new sign and awnings.

Art Youth Expo (AYE5)



Mark your calendars for April 17 and 18 for the fifth annual Art Youth Expo, organized by the Hazleton Art League. AYE is different than other arts events as it focuses primarily on young artists under the age of 30.

Downtown businesses and organizations within a three block area host the exhibits and performances, which include live music (over a dozen bands as well as wandering acoustic musicians and performers), and over one hundred individual art entries and interactive events, including photography and a phenomenal Fantasy Makeup Show. A schedule of activities and map of all the venues will be available at the Hazleton Art League 225 East Broad Street. For more information or to volunteer, contact Marie Hayes at mhayes18@verizon.net.

Above: Fantasy Make-up contestant in last year's Art Youth Expo (AYE4). Photo by JPecora Photography. To view other portraits visit: www.JPecoraPhotography.com

Alan Whitaker Joins DHAP Board



The Alliance would like to welcome Alan Whitaker as the newest member of the Alliance's Board of Directors. Alan is a graduate of MMI and Penn State University. He is a Senior Financial Advisor with Wells Fargo Advisors Financial Network, LLC and a co-owner of American Patient Transport Systems Inc. He is also an active member of the Hazleton Rotary club and currently serves on the club's Board. He resides in Sugarloaf with his wife Lisa and two sons, Alec and Jace.

Wanted: Farmer's Market Vendors

The Downtown Hazleton Alliance for Progress, together with the Chamber, is busy planning for this season's upcoming Downtown Hazleton Farmer's Market. The market will take place every Friday from 10am to 2pm starting July 17 and running through September 4th. Anyone interested in participating in the market as a new vendor should contact Krista Schneider at 570-455-1509 for details. There is interest in expanding the market to include additional prepared foods, flowers, artisan crafts, and of course fresh produce.



Paula Neira, owner of Paula's Patisserie, and her daughters participated in last year's market as new vendors.

Parking Garage Update

After much anticipation and recent press, structural repairs to the City's parking garage on South Wyoming St. are underway. Gottstein Corporation, the prime contractor for the structural repairs, has begun work on the concrete. According to the City Engineer, Dominic Yannuzzi, there will be more encompassing parking restrictions in the garage over the next few months. Those that use the garage should be extra cautious and aware of the workers and areas restricted to parking as the repairs proceed.

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Mark Your Calendars

First Friday Themes

(switching to First Friday in May)

May 1, 2015: May is for Mom
June 5, 2015: Summer Fun
July 3, 2015: Freedom Friday
August 7, 2015: Crusin' Downtown
September 4, 2015: Tastes of Home
October 2, 2015: Latin Arts Expo
November 6, 2015: Veteran's Day
December 4, 2015: Christmas

Art Youth Expo (AYE)

April 17 and 18, 2015

Farmer's Market (10AM – 2PM)

July 17, opening day; July 24, July 31, August 7, August 14, August 21, August 28, and September 4

Funfest

September 12 and 13, 2015

PTPA Shows

May 1-10: Lost in Yonkers
June 12-24: The Who's Tommy
July 3-12, 2015: Mister Roberts
August 7-16, 2015: Mary Poppins
September 11-20: A Little Night Music
December 3-13, 2015: Scrooge the Musical

Victoria's Candies

Established: 1934

Owner: Paul Esposito, Jr.

Location: 51 North Laurel Street, Hazleton

Phone: (570) 455-6341

Email: paulespo@msn.com



Featured Legacy Business

Downtown Hazleton has been home to many multi-generational and family-owned small businesses. This section is dedicated to recognizing and celebrating those that have had a meaningful and long-lasting impact on the community. Each has evolved in different ways to meet the challenges of a changing economy.

Victoria's Candies, located at 51 N. Laurel St., is a landmark business in downtown Hazleton that has been in operation for over 80 years. It is owned and operated exclusively by the Esposito family since 1934.

It all started back in the late 1920's when George Esposito traveled from Hazleton to Philadelphia and then New York to learn the art of making chocolates. He mastered this art for many years before moving back to his hometown to marry his wife, Victoria.

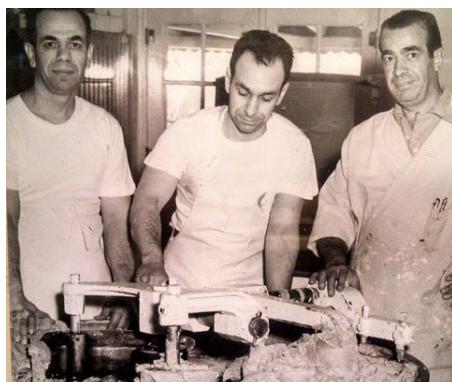


Photo of Jack, Carmen, and founder George Esposito (1954)

Back in Hazleton, George began making candy for his friends and colleagues with one stove and one copper kettle. His chocolates became so popular that in 1934, George opened his first storefront on East Diamond Avenue and named it "Victoria's Home Made Candies." Soon after, Victoria's demanded a larger factory and so in 1946 it moved to 51 N. Laurel Street and still remains there today.

Gradually George's five brothers and two sisters joined the rapidly expanding business. George's brothers Sam, Jack, Joe, Angelo and Carmen became master candy makers and the company flourished. People were coming from all over the region to buy the famous Butter Creams and other fine chocolates. George suddenly passed away in 1956 and his brothers continued his work.

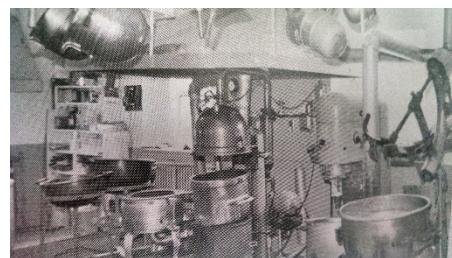


Photo of the of kitchen (1980)

George's nephew, Paul Esposito Sr. joined the company in 1969 and learned the art of becoming a master candy maker. Paul Sr. then bought the business from his uncles and father in 1979. Paul's business practice and dedication to high quality and customer service has driven the business to where it is today. His motto of "giving quality without any compromise" has been his key to success! After taking the helm, Paul Sr. saw the need for additional retail space.



Paul Sr., Jack, and Carmen Esposito (1984)

In 1982 he opened the first off premise store in the Church Hill Mall on Rt. 309. In 1985 he opened his second off premise score in the Laurel Mall. Paul Sr. knew that people would appreciate the convenience and atmosphere of the new stores. He also developed a fundraising program and a corporate gift-giving incentive program, which still continue today.



Photo of Paul Esposito, Sr. (left) and Paul Esposito, Jr. (right).

In 2014 Paul Esposito Jr. purchased the company and continues his father's legacy. While growing up, Paul Jr. spent much of his time in the factory where he learned to become a master candy maker, along with all the aspects of the chocolate business. He now carries on the proud tradition of Victoria's Candies.

To keep the business competitive, Paul Jr. has developed a strong wholesale base of new customers and sells to many other candy stores that market the candy as their own. Victoria's now ships chocolates all throughout the Eastern U.S. On-line orders are also gaining in popularity and are becoming a significant percentage of the company's business. Currently it offers over 100 different types of filled chocolate pieces, even more if you count its seasonal items. But it is their cooked creams, made with real butter and cream that makes Victoria's Candies stand above the competition.

This summer Paul Jr. will be opening a new store in the Wilkes-Barre/Kingston Area, and hopes to have more retail stores open by 2018.

Credits: Thanks to Paul Esposito, Jr. for the information and all the wonderful historic photos.