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Introduction

Looking back on her 30-year career in Tupelo, Mississippi, Debbie Brangenberg had plenty to be proud of. Despite numerous obstacles, she had led the efforts to transform Tupelo's downtown from a withering business center back into a thriving, bustling hub of commerce. Under Brangenberg's direction, Tupelo had become a nationally recognized downtown revitalization success story. Lessons from Tupelo's success significantly impacted the revitalization efforts of other downtown business districts in small and medium-sized cities in the United States.

Brangenberg came to Tupelo in 1991 as the executive director of the newly created Downtown Tupelo Main Street Association (DTMSA). Brangenberg was new to Tupelo when she was hired to lead the effort to revitalize its downtown. To be successful, she would need to buck a national trend that saw downtown business districts losing tenants, visitors, and community events to shopping malls and centers.

In 1991, Tupelo's downtown business district was suffering. Businesses in the district were leaving, and the area was beginning to suffer from decay. Over a thirty-year period, progress was slow but steady. By 2021, Tupelo's downtown looked nothing like the one Debbie had inherited 30 years prior. The downtown now had a low vacancy rate, and there was a renewed vibrancy to the business district. The downtown was once again the first choice for local shoppers shopping for goods and services. Under Brangenberg's 30 years of leadership, Tupelo's downtown had become the heart of the community.

Brangenberg and her community were not unaided in their efforts. A key partner of the DTMSA was Main Street America. Main Street America was a national organization that helped communities breathe new life into their downtown business districts. Brangenberg and Tupelo followed three out of the four development paths outlined by Birkhölzer (2005) and six guiding objectives by Main Street America to carry out successful revitalization efforts.

Downtowns and business districts had played a vital role in economic development by serving as the commercial heart of a community (Hofstedt, 2022). As the commercial heart of the community, the downtown districts provided opportunities for increased community employment, sources of revenue, and gathering places for residents. Other communities attempting a revitalization of their downtowns were learning valuable lessons from Tupelo's success. What specific qualities or circumstances in Tupelo led to its success, and to what extent could the recommendations of Main Street America be adapted and beneficial for other cities encountering comparable challenges?

History of Tupelo, Mississippi

Tupelo was incorporated in Lee County, Mississippi in 1866. Like other small American cities, Tupelo saw its share of growth during the 20th Century. In 1920, Tupelo's population was 2,118 (U.S. Census Bureau, 1920). The population had increased to 20,471 by 1970 (U.S. Census Bureau, 1970). According to the 1990 Census, the year before Brangenberg joined the DTMSA, the city's population was 30,685 (U.S. Census Bureau, 1992). By 2010, Tupelo was Mississippi's seventh-largest city, with a population of 34,546. According to the most recent 2020 Census, the city's population had risen to 37,923 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2023).

Tupelo's diversity brought it many benefits. The percentage of the non-white population in Tupelo increased from 29.6% in the 1950s to 42.7% by the 2020s (U.S. Census Bureau, 1950; U.S. Census Bureau, 2020c). Similarly, in 1950, the median income for non-white families and unrelated individuals in Tupelo was \$866, compared to \$1,880 for all families and unrelated individuals. The state average for non-white families was \$847 and \$1,614 for white families. In 2020, the median income of White households in Tupelo was \$66,806, and the median income of Black households was \$33,460. These were higher than the state median income of \$57,781 for White households and \$31,389 for Black households (U.S. Census Bureau, 1950; U.S. Census Bureau, 2020b).

Despite a rich and colorful economic history, Tupelo's downtown, like those in similar-sized communities during the 1960s to 1990s, faced challenges from the rise of shopping malls (Downtown Tupelo Main Street Association, 2021). Like many other American communities in the 1960s and going forward, consumers in Tupelo, who once were limited to downtown shopping districts, found themselves with other shopping options. From the 1960s until the 1990s, downtown businesses found stiff competition from new shopping centers and malls. The landscape became more challenging in the 1990s as internet-based commerce challenged brick-and-mortar stores.

Downtown Tupelo Main Street Association

When a new mall opened in Tupelo in early 1990, the downtown community realized they needed leadership, strategy, and investment if they were to save downtown. Within months, they formed DTMSA with significant support from the city government (J. Reed, personal communication, July 23, 2021). While the mall was the catalyst for creating the organization, the mission went beyond simply competing with suburban development. "Our goal is to make the

downtown the beating heart of the community” (D. Brangenberg, personal communication, February 18, 2021).

In 1991, Brangenberg came to Tupelo with a massive task. She said the new role forced her to “invent herself,” as her responsibilities went beyond the typical duties of a downtown association director. “It has been an incremental process over 30 years where we have had to maintain our vision for downtown while being flexible, and at the same time building strength,” she said (D. Brangenberg, personal communication, February 18, 2021).

Camile Reed-Slone, a local business leader, praised Brangenberg’s early and ongoing commitment. “Debbie (Brangenberg) cultivated support and volunteerism in the community and the downtown association,” Reed-Slone said. “She had a vision that has been tireless and constant in her efforts to stick to that vision.” She added that Brangenberg had selected and retained an incredible staff who worked hard to support Brangenberg’s vision (C. Reed-Slone, personal communication, July 23, 2021).

Brangenberg credited seven key components to Tupelo’s revitalization success:

1. Partnering with Main Street America
2. Maintaining local strategic partnerships
3. Reaching out early to local businesses
4. Improving Economic Development
5. Embracing Tupelo’s diversity
6. Coordinating with local governments
7. Supporting special events

Partnering with Main Street America

In 2000, DTMSA became a member of Main Street America, a national organization that helped older commercial districts with preservation and economic development efforts. Main Street America was created in 1980 and was a subsidiary of the nonprofit National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Brangenberg stated that the DTMSA’s goals aligned with Main Street America’s mission long before 2000 but joining had provided access to valuable resources and programming. “Main Street America provided points and a framework which aided greatly in planning and implementation,” she said (D. Brangenberg, personal communication, February 18, 2021).

The objectives of Main Street America were diversity, being a voice for economic development, adaptation, innovation, engagement, and inclusion with economic development partners, growth and diversity of funding support, and building the capacity and resources of community leaders and partners (The National Main Street America, 2022). The four guiding principles of Main Street America followed Karl Birkholzer’s (2005) development strategy. Birkholzer was an economist at the Technical University of Berlin who had extensively researched local economic development efforts. The focus of Main Street America’s revitalization objectives had four paths

for local economic development and revitalization efforts, such as Tupelo's efforts. Revitalizations often took at least one of four paths (Birkhölzer, 2005, pp. 4-5):

1. Development from above: The primary entity in this scenario was the state, functioning in a top-down manner from the central government to regional administrations and local authorities.
2. Development from outside: This strategy followed the development from above approach but also included bringing in outside investors to bring in necessary resources.
3. Wait and see: Local actors passively stood by and waited for things to come.
4. Development from within: The key role was played by the locals who put forth the efforts to solve their own problems in the community.

While the "wait and see" approach was typically the most common, Tupelo successfully employed the three active paths in their revitalization efforts. Before the founding of DTMSA, Tupelo attempted the wait-and-see approach but abandoned it when it did not yield results (D. Brangenberg, personal communication, February 18, 2021).

Birkhölzer (2005, p. 5) emphasized that the "development from within" approach revolved around local individuals and businesses actively engaging in revitalization and economic development. Main Street America played a pivotal role in supporting local organizations like DTMSA in encouraging downtown businesses to engage in initiatives promoting the downtown business community. These initiatives included hosting special events, offering support to other downtown businesses, setting attainable goals, and collaborating on marketing efforts. Main Street America also assisted downtown business districts in identifying community assets to support revitalization and development efforts.

Guiding Principles from Main Street America

At the core of their approach, Main Street America emphasized four strategies for transformation: Economic Vitality, Design, Promotion, and Organization.

1. Economic vitality: Create a sustainable economic base that provided jobs, supported businesses and entrepreneurship, enhanced the value of buildings and land, and delivered strong returns on investment (Main Street America, 2022).
2. Design: Create unique spaces where everyone felt welcome and included.
3. Promotion: Describe the area's "unique features through storytelling, support buy-local experience, or marketing district's defining assets" (Main Street America, 2022).
4. Organization: Create a framework for continual improvement so the area has the processes, funding, resources, and community support to keep growing and evolving.

These four transformative strategies enabled communities collaborating with Main Street America to initiate and sustain success. By focusing on economic vitality, these communities bolstered their local economies through financial tools. Design efforts transformed their districts into unique and inviting spaces that attracted the community. Promotion initiatives ensured that businesses and events in downtown business districts gained visibility. Organizational development strategies enabled downtown business districts to optimize their resources and

membership. These four transformative approaches fostered increased commercial activity and growth in communities partnering with Main Street America.

Maintaining Local Strategic Partnerships

In addition to working with the MSA, the DTMSA created strong alliances with two local organizations to help revitalize the downtown area.

The first, the Community Development Foundation (CDF), played an important role in growing local businesses and recruiting new employers to Tupelo since 1948. CDF's business incubator, the Resanant Center for IDEAS, was home to about 30 companies, including ones in software development, insurance, specialty printing, real estate, and healthcare (J. Milstead, Personal Communication, July 23, 2021).

Working with CDF and the Resanant Center, the DTMSA could attract start-ups and emerging companies – especially those in the technology sector – to the downtown area. By working out of the incubator, those companies had access to critical resources, including office spaces and utilities, as well as access to Mississippi Small Business Association specialists who could assist entrepreneurs with business plan development and access to funding and angel investors.

The Tupelo Chamber of Commerce proved to be another invaluable partner for the DTMSA. The chamber's director, Neal McCoy, praised DTMSA and Brangenberg as community and business development partners. "Debbie has contributed quite a bit to our downtown's identity," he said. "Debbie has worked with many of our chamber businesses to help them learn about e-commerce and find new customers." He added, "The DTMSA helps create a destination within a destination. Part of the Tupelo experience is coming downtown." McCoy saw the relationship between the chamber and DTMSA as vital and mutually beneficial (N. McCoy, personal communication, July 22, 2021).

Early Outreach to Local Businesses

When Brangenberg arrived in Tupelo in 1991, she was an outsider. One of the first things she did as director was to introduce herself to downtown business owners. Many people she met were already concerned about economic development and wanted to help. The positive reception was a good sign; Brangenberg knew these meetings were just the first step toward building familiarity, trust, and engagement between the organizations and the businesses. Brangenberg gained even more trust and credibility with the downtown business community as she made progress. That, in turn, led to deeper relationships and a stronger commitment to downtown Tupelo's revitalization (D. Brangenberg, personal communication, February 18, 2021).

Jan Pannell, a former board chair of the DTMSA, said, "People in the downtown heard Debbie (Brangenberg). They believed in her vision, and she was able to funnel their talent and energy into success." Pannell added, "Debbie (Brangenberg) has an ability to identify what people do well and put them in a place where they can serve best. She is a great team builder" (J. Pannell, personal communication, July 22, 2021).

Improving Economic Development

In 2020, Tupelo won the prestigious Great American Main Street Award (GAMSA). According to Main Street America, which presented the community with the award, “Tupelo is being recognized for building a lively downtown with a thriving small business environment and inclusive community events” (Main Street America, 2020). Tupelo’s national recognition extended beyond the Great American Main Street Award. The National Civic League named the community an “All-American City” in 1967, 1989, 1999, 2011, and 2015. Tupelo was among a small handful of communities that won this designation five or more times. Cities that won this award had to demonstrate a high degree of civic pride, community involvement, diversity, and a solid ability to address local issues (National Civic League, 2021). The revitalization of Downtown Tupelo followed Main Street America’s (2022) downtown revitalization and economic development objectives and Birkhölzer’s (2005) approach to economic revitalization and development.

Over the previous decade, many accomplishments paved Tupelo’s path to winning the 2020 Great American Main Street Award. One main accomplishment was creating the 1.4-mile Elvis Guitar Trail, a streetscape project with a road leading from downtown to Elvis Presley’s birthplace. The \$11 million project was a joint effort between the DTMSA, the City of Tupelo, and the Federal Highway Administration. This project was an example of the Birkhölzer (2005) “development from above” revitalization effort, where the state government was the main actor, and the efforts were operated in a top-down fashion to local government and authorities. In Tupelo, the streetscape project required the capital and political horsepower of local, federal, and state governments. This project capitalized on a critical asset of Tupelo’s history, Elvis Presley, by attracting visitors to the community. The streetscape featured aspects of Presley’s life and musical career, improved the visual appeal of downtown Tupelo, and enhanced visitors’ desires to stop in the downtown business district. The streetscape project became the number one tourist attraction in Mississippi.

One of the biggest challenges for the DTMSA — but the one that would bring a major reward — was to transform vacant and underused properties into buildings that would attract stores, restaurants, professional offices, and residents. Doing so would achieve two things: First, it would raise real estate values and the tax base. Second, it would draw in more people willing to spend money — whether it was a few dollars at a coffee shop or hundreds of thousands of dollars for new development.

DTMSA’s efforts to reduce the vacancy rate echoed Birkhölzer’s (2005) “development from within strategy.” Due in part to the efforts of DTMSA, the downtown business district had a vacancy rate of around 8% (D. Brangenberg, personal communication, February 18, 2021). According to the U.S. Census (2020a), the residential rental vacancy in 2020 was 8% in Tupelo, Mississippi; in comparison, the state average for 2020 was 9.5%.

DTMSA’s efforts to lower the vacancy rate created many new downtown businesses, including new medical practices, restaurants, retail stores, and a new hotel. These new businesses also increased customer traffic into the downtown area. The addition of new businesses gave shoppers additional reasons to patronize the district.

Beyond helping to find new uses for properties in downtown Tupelo, the DTMSA also encouraged existing businesses to stay in the downtown area. Local business owner and former Tupelo mayor Jack Reed credited Brangenberg's skill and reputation for supporting businesses as a significant factor for many existing businesses staying downtown when many were tempted to leave the district for malls or other new shopping complexes (J. Reed, personal communication, July 23, 2021).

While Tupelo was focusing on its revitalization efforts, Birkhölzer's (2005) "development from outside" path was also being utilized as a strategy to increase business downtown by developing from outside resources such as bringing outside investors or businesses in to develop the underutilized areas of downtown. One industry underrepresented in the downtown was healthcare.

Total employment in healthcare and social assistance in Tupelo during 2021 was 3,306, 18.96% of the population employed (U.S. Census Bureau, 2021d). DTMSA wanted to see this industry sector better represented downtown. DTMSA's development from outside efforts attracted North Mississippi Health Services (NMHS), a regional hospital and health clinic chain, into the downtown area. According to North Mississippi Health (n.d.), Tupelo's North Mississippi Health Services became the largest non-metropolitan hospital in the United States. In addition to creating many new jobs and giving people in Tupelo additional reasons to visit downtown, NMHS routinely partnered with DTMSA to organize several events in the downtown area (Parsons, 2022). In 2010, the healthcare and social assistance sector employed 2,415 people, which rose to 2,549 in 2015 and 3,306 in 2021 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2021d). The growth of the healthcare sector and resulting increased foot traffic helped to make the downtown business district in Tupelo an attractive area for many other types of businesses to build new locations and promote growth (D. Brangenberg, personal communication, February 18, 2021).

For Tupelo, the banking industry played a role as an outside developer. Tupelo was a hub of financial and banking services for northeastern Mississippi. Tupelo was the smallest city in the U.S. with the headquarters of two banks (BancorpSouth Bank and Renasant Bank) that each had more than \$10 billion in assets (Sparks, 2019)." The financial sector saw downtown Tupelo as a regional hub for financial services and employed 4.6% of the population in 2020 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020d). This industry invested heavily in developing downtown real estate and in creating many high-paying jobs in the business district.

In addition, a Toyota automotive manufacturing facility a few miles north of Tupelo provided over 2,000 jobs. The additional income and residents created additional opportunities for development in downtown Tupelo, suggesting that "development from outside" took place close to Tupelo and positively impacted the downtown area.

This constant flow of daily downtown workers did not go unnoticed by the DTMSA. Brangenberg said, "We noticed that many people came into the downtown area to work, often from far away. However, we had only ten years ago three restaurants downtown. We felt there was an unmet demand for restaurants. So, we encouraged people to start restaurants in the downtown area" (D. Brangenberg, personal communication, February 18, 2021). In 2022, 17

restaurants operated in the downtown area. These restaurants acted as a magnet to draw customer traffic to downtown Tupelo. Additionally, downtown churches were encouraged to stay in the downtown district. Many of these religious congregations had meetings during evenings in the middle of the week, adding to foot traffic.

The revitalization of historic buildings in downtown Tupelo, the opening of new restaurants, and a growing professional sector created demand from younger people interested in living downtown. According to Brangenberg, “The young millennial/Generation Z people are taking over the downtown” (D. Brangenberg, personal communication, February 18, 2021). Two residential neighborhoods flanked the core of downtown Tupelo. Also, many new upper-floor apartments, built into the upper levels of existing buildings with storefronts and shops, were developed downtown. Many of the younger people who lived downtown had high disposable income levels. These young people often liked living near the shopping, entertainment, and dining opportunities the downtown provided them (D. Brangenberg, personal communication, February 18, 2021).

Embracing Tupelo’s Diversity

Dating back to the 1950s and 1960s, Tupelo had enjoyed a good reputation for race relations when compared to other southern cities. The Washington Post in 1956 even went so far as to declare that in Tupelo, “Race relations are excellent, and the white people show determination to keep them that way (Brown, 1978).” The DTMSA felt diversity and inclusion had enhanced their efforts. Brangenberg stated that Tupelo had taken a very enlightened approach to issues of diversity and inclusion. Engaging with the whole community added to the vitality and richness of today’s downtown Tupelo environment (D. Brangenberg, personal communication, February 18, 2021).

Brangenberg believed the community historically engaged in less discrimination in the post-Civil War era than did most communities in the Deep South. Likewise, she perceived that the community suffered less turmoil related to race relations during the civil rights era of the 1960s. Brangenberg said, “We told the Main Street America committee that we do not think about our neighbors being Black or White. Here in Tupelo, we are just neighbors living in the same community.” A committee member told Brangenberg that the community’s commitment to diversity helped differentiate them from other communities being considered for the award (D. Brangenberg, personal communication, February 18, 2021).

Jack Reed Jr., a business leader and a former Tupelo mayor, felt that the business community in the downtown area took the lead in promoting better race relations and inclusion. Reed shared that inclusion was part of the Tupelo Spirit. “As a community, we understand we have shared benefits and responsibilities.” According to Reed, the Tupelo business community had been a pioneer in encouraging the desegregation of schools. The business community still recognized inclusion and diversity as sources of strength and contributors to the success of the downtown and the rest of the community (J. Reed, personal communication, July 23, 2021).

Tupelo’s history of settlement was different than its neighboring communities. The city was not incorporated until 1866, which was the same year Lee County, Mississippi, was established.

Much of the area surrounding Tupelo was swampy. Settlement became attractive after the Civil War due to efforts to drain the land. Newly available farmland, in addition to the growing railroad industry, attracted people from outside the southern United States to Tupelo (Turner Publish, 2001). Culturally and historically, Tupelo, as a city settled after the Civil War, likely developed different attitudes toward race relations.

However, Tupelo had not been immune to issues related to race relations and discrimination. One example was demonstrations and conflict between the Ku Klux Klan and the Black civil rights group, the United League of North Mississippi, in 1978. The demonstrations held simultaneously by both opposing groups led to a few violent encounters, but these demonstrations were considered to be outside the norm (Brown, 1978). Brangenberg had attempted to diversify the membership and leadership of DTMSA. However, her board and staff, while having individuals of different backgrounds, including those of protected classes, mirrored the diversity of the greater community (D. Brangenberg, personal communication, February 18, 2021).

Dr. Embra Jackson, the pastor of the First United Methodist Church in Tupelo, saw that progress was being made in Tupelo concerning race relations. He felt he was an example of progress, being the Black pastor of a predominantly white congregation. Jackson said, “There are good people here in Tupelo. Brangenberg and her organization, those involved in economic development, are part of the answer to the need for better race relations. However, there is still work to do here” (E. Jackson, Personal Communication, July 22, 2021).

Nettie Davis, a Black woman who served as a councilwoman for 20 years, was active in the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s. She said that she had seen positive developments in cooperation and inclusion. While in office, Davis tried to better the lives of Black people, particularly in the downtown area, by promoting unity among all citizens of Tupelo (N. Davis, personal communication, July 22, 2021).

Davis worked with the DTMSA to establish an initiative called “Community Forward Festival.” The festival aimed to “build a better relationship between the police and the community.” She worked with the local police department to improve the community’s quality of life and to increase inclusivity downtown. Her initiative went hand in hand with what DTMSA did regarding downtown improvement and revitalization. In honor of her efforts to promote unity, Davis was inducted into the Tupelo Hall of Fame (N. Davis, personal communication, July 22, 2021).

Coordinating with Local Government

Despite different city administrations over the years, the city had been a consistent partner and supporter of DTMSA’s vision for revitalization and provided another example of the “development from above” approach. According to Brangenberg, the city government’s role in developing the \$11 million streetscape project was helpful with parking access and zoning issues in the downtown area by creating an overlay district (an additional layer of standards for a specific area with specific goals, like historic preservation or sustainable development). The city council also approved the creation of a Leisure and Recreation District in the downtown area,

which would allow restaurant customers to “carry out” alcoholic beverages and make beer gardens possible (D. Brangenberg, personal communication, February 18, 2021).

Urban renewal efforts by the city government positively impacted the downtown area of Tupelo. The county and city working together to convert the former 50-acre fairgrounds adjacent to the downtown into FairPark was an example of how local government support helped the business district. According to Brangenberg, the FairPark district created the opportunity for much development in the downtown area by bringing in both residences and new businesses. The park with the FairPark district was the location of many smaller community events, parties, concerts, and private gatherings. These contributed to the number of people who came and did business in downtown Tupelo (D. Brangenberg, personal communication, February 18, 2021).

Milstead, vice president of planning and property for the CDF, felt that DTMSA and Brangenberg personally contributed significantly to the planning and development efforts in and around downtown Tupelo. Milstead stated, “She has had a great deal of impact on the positive developments in the downtown, including FairPark and the Elvis Guitar Trail streetscape.” He added, “Debbie (Brangenberg) has always done a great job of seeing Tupelo as a place of opportunity and promoting that way to others” (J. Milstead, Personal Communication, July 23, 2021).

Supporting Special Events

Special events, which also followed the “development from within” path, supported downtown businesses. Various events, including 240 separate events before 2019, ranged from major concerts to smaller conferences. These conferences drew up to 10,000 people. A key asset to this effort was the Bancorp South Arena (now Cadence Bank Arena), which hosted a wide range of well-known entertainers such as Elton John, Aerosmith, and Faith Hill, assisting in attracting people from outside Tupelo and contributing to the growth of new hotels in the downtown area (D. Brangenberg, personal communication, February 18, 2021).

The Tupelo Elvis Festival also held significance for the downtown district, drawing attendees from no fewer than 29 different states and five foreign nations, according to Brangenberg. She also asserted that the events in the business district played a pivotal role in shaping the perception of downtown Tupelo as the “heart and soul” of the community. This perception firmly entrenched the downtown area as the community’s central hub, ensuring it remained at the forefront of the community’s consciousness as the city’s most essential component (D. Brangenberg, personal communication, February 18, 2021).

Conclusion

In 2023, downtown Tupelo boasted a vibrant and thriving epicenter of entertainment, business, and culture. With the Cadence Bank Arena hosting renowned artists and international events, adjacent venues like the Cadence Bank Conference Center and upscale accommodations such as the Hilton Garden Inn and Hotel Tupelo collectively offering over 237 rooms for guests in the downtown area. Since the creation of Main Street America in 1990, 184 new businesses were established, with over 83 businesses in the past decade, making it a magnet for economic

activity. Downtown Tupelo's diverse calendar of events, drawing approximately 80,000 visitors annually, reflected its cultural richness and heritage, with a special focus on the Americana Music Triangle and the Mississippi Hills National Heritage Area. In sum, Downtown Tupelo had evolved into a dynamic and multifaceted destination that catered to the needs and interests of its ever-expanding community (Downtown Tupelo Main Street Association, 2021).

Brandenberg's 30 years as director of the DTMSA had been successful for her and for the city. Yet, that success was born out of failure. Some ways that Brangenberg helped to revitalize downtown Tupelo included a partnership with Main Street America, partnerships with government agencies and businesses, and encouraging outside businesses to come to the downtown area. The partnership with Main Street America helped to provide guidelines and a framework for revitalizing the downtown area. The partnerships with the government allowed for applying the "development from above" economic revitalization strategy. The DTMSA's efforts to encourage outside businesses to come to the area demonstrated the "development from outside" approach. Efforts of the DTMSA to support local downtown businesses were examples of the "development from within" approach.

While the outcomes of other downtown areas did not always look the same as in Tupelo, there were many things to glean from Brangenberg and DTMSA's efforts in revitalizing downtown Tupelo. Local economic development organizations could learn from each other's successes. Brangenberg and the DTMSA provided excellent examples for other downtown cities to follow in their revitalizations. The success of Brangenberg and DTMSA was a great example of how consistently following a plan over several years could pay big benefits.

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