



"PARTICIPATING (BUSINESS) MEMBERSHIP" PACKET

ABOUT DOWNTOWN FIRST

Downtown First, originally named "First Saturdays," is a grassroots effort which has grown from 1 business to almost 30 in 5 years. Downtown First is a 501(c)3, non-profit organization* with an elected board** and board officers (President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer) and multiple sub-committees focusing on anything from business outreach and events, to financing and marketing.

We hope to continue to grow and attract new business to downtown with the belief that all of us working together is what will make our community thrive.

**Organizational bylaws are available upon request.*

***Board members are elected by Participating (Business) Members like you, at the General Membership meeting each year.*

OUR MISSION

To develop, foster and promote the arts, entertainment, economic development and sense of community throughout the businesses and public spaces in downtown St. Joseph, Missouri.

WHY SHOULD I BECOME A PARTICIPATING MEMBER OF DOWNTOWN FIRST?

Downtown First exists is to promote downtown and businesses like yours. By joining Downtown First, you are directly supporting the cause to grow downtown, grow your own business, and fund advertising, community events, and resources for downtown business owners like yourself.

WHAT BENEFITS CAN I EXPECT FROM MY DOWNTOWN FIRST PARTICIPATING MEMBERSHIP?

1. Increased Promotion and Marketing Opportunities

- Your business can be featured* in **recurring ad campaigns and promotions**, and posters, showcasing downtown businesses and events—at no additional cost to you. **Participation may require additional submission of information or details, which would be requested by marketing volunteers through designated communication channels. Examples include First Saturdays posters, and campaigns such as “The 12+ Days of Christmas Downtown.”*
- **Increased visibility** to the nearly 4,500 Facebook followers (and growing) for your business events you wish to promote—at no additional charge.
- Your business will be listed as a **member on downtown’s premier business directory**: www.downtownfirst.org, which continues to receive over 1000 hits per month and growing.

2. Option to Participate in Special Events

Downtown First currently hosts 4 large events each year: Craft Beer & Music Walk (April), Themed Mixed-Drink Walk (August), Art & Wine Walk (November), and Holidays Downtown (December). All are organized and funded by Downtown First.*

Downtown First members who have participated in these events as a “stop on the map,” report **increased foot traffic and sales to their places of business**. Furthermore, these events are a great opportunity to introduce new audiences to your business, services, and products and widen your customer base.

Because of increased interest and participation, starting in 2019, participation in these special events will be reserved *only to Downtown First Participating Members*.

Because these special events cost more to plan and promote, some will require an additional fee for participation on top of your membership dues. Participation will be reserved **only for members, and on a first-come, first-serve basis for events where participation can be limited to only a certain number of businesses. More details are provided during the planning phases for each event.*

3. Resources for your Downtown Business

- Beginning in 2019, Downtown First will begin offering **FREE workshops*** to Participating Members, in effort to provide you with resources, skills and tutorials on social media, marketing, theft prevention, (and other important topics as they present themselves,) as well as issues that may be unique to downtown business. **Workshops will be scheduled as live sessions once per month beginning in 2019, with a goal of recording them so those unable to attend might still benefit from the content.*
- You'll have access to resources such as **local artist and band directories** to make the most of your special events.
- A Downtown First membership provides you with a **wide network** of small-business owners, building owners and like-minded downtown advocates. You won't find a small business network like ours anywhere else in town!
- **Quarterly general membership meetings** give us an opportunity to discuss our group goals, plan events, share ideas and celebrate our accomplishments! Board members are also elected during General Meetings once a year.
- Each of us brings our own set of friends and acquaintances that are unique to us. By joining a group of downtown-focused individuals and advocates, you widen the net for your business and increase **word-of-mouth promotion**.

HOW MUCH DOES A MEMBERSHIP COST?

In order to be guaranteed the membership benefits, and to make the most of your membership, you are asked to commit to an *annual membership*, beginning January of each year.

- **PAYMENT OPTIONS**
 - \$120/yr for an *annual membership**, paid in an annual lump sum.*

**Annual membership dues should be submitted to the Downtown First Treasurer by January 1 each calendar year. Businesses wishing to join Downtown First mid-year may enroll for an annual membership at a pro-rated fee.*

HOW CAN I MAKE DOWNTOWN FIRST WORK FOR MY BUSINESS?

So you've decided to become a Downtown First member? Welcome! Here are some tips to help you make the most of your membership:

- **Join our 'St Joseph Downtown First Businesses' page on Facebook** for information on monthly events and general issues affecting downtown. This is also where you will submit your information to participate in events, promotions, and posters.
- **Participate in First Saturdays.** Your poster/promotional info is due by the 10th of the month for the upcoming month's events. (Example: Info for February First Saturday is due on January 10th.) Instructions on how to submit your information can be located on the 'St Joseph Downtown First Businesses' Facebook page. Share the poster on social media!
- **Create a "Facebook Events"** for your business-specific events, and invite everyone you know.
- **Display Downtown First promotional and event posters** in your place of business. Consider finding a few places outside of Downtown to hang posters and promotions as they come available.
- **Tell your patrons about your neighbors' events, too!** Support your friends and neighbors in their efforts; be a contributing part of the community that's working together to make downtown a better place!