

APPLICATION FOR
2015 BAD BUILDINGS PROGRAM

CITY OF THOMAS
THOMAS, WEST VIRGINIA

Submitted: February 13, 2015

Submitted to:
BAD Buildings Program
Attn: Luke Elser
Northern WV Brownfields Assistance Center
385 Evansdale Drive, Suite 201
Morgantown, WV 26506-6064
Luke.Elser@mail.wvu.edu

Application Contents:

- a. Application Cover Sheet
- b. Community Description
- c. Description of Need
- d. Capacity for Project Implementation
- e. Signed Letter(s) of Support and Commitment (6)
- f. Proof of Non-Profit Status & Non-Profit Mission Statement

a. APPLICATION COVER SHEET

Section I: APPLICANT/PROJECT INFORMATION and SUMMARY

A. General Information:

Applicant: New Historic Thomas

Lead Contact Person: Emily Wilson-Hauger Title: AFHA AmeriCorps Member

Second Contact Person: Athey Lutz Title: V.P., New Historic Thomas

Address: P.O. Box 116

City, State, Zip: Thomas, WV 26292

Telephone Number: (717) 503-6332 Fax Number: (304) 463-4697

E-Mail Address: newhistoricthomas@gmail.com

Project Name: Thomas BAD Building Program

B. Community Information:

Name of Community: City of Thomas

County: Tucker

b. COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION

i. Describe the community and define the targeted geographic area

Located in the Potomac Highlands of north-central West Virginia, the historic city of Thomas is a former coal mining town situated along the western banks of the North Fork of the Blackwater River. Rapid industrial development, resource extraction, and railroad access in the late 19th and early 20th centuries brought people, work, and wealth to a previously remote frontier town. Thomas and Tucker County grew to be a cultural and economic hub, boasting a 400-seat opera house, shops, and restaurants with easy passenger railway use for nearby residents.

However, over the years, Thomas began to decline. As industry and natural resource extraction slowed, workers and their families began to move away. Underground coal mines closed in the 1950s and railroad activity slowed. Lacking customers, many businesses downsized and eventually closed altogether. Abandoned homes and storefronts began to decay and collapse. Reliable jobs and incomes disappeared. By 2010, Thomas recorded just 586 residents¹. Thomas' story is a common one in West Virginia and Appalachia – a story of boom and bust.

Recreation and tourism industries took on a greater importance, coinciding with the decline of extractive industry and the acquisition of public lands by state and federal governments. Commuting times from Pittsburgh and Washington metro areas decreased and access to public lands improved. Today, Thomas and Tucker County play host to visitors from across the eastern United States who come to visit two state parks, national forest, wildlife refuge, ski resorts, and other outdoor recreational attractions. Thomas attracts loyal arts and music crowds with several galleries as well as a regionally renowned music venue called the Purple Fiddle.

Tourism, recreation, heritage, and art contribute important jobs and wealth to some in and around Thomas. Unfortunately, the legacy of decaying historical buildings, brownfields sites, ecological damage, population decline, industrial decline, a lack of reliable full-time employment, less educational opportunities, high household poverty rates, and lack of funding for redevelopment continue to hamper economic, social, and environmental development – even with a strong desire for change from Thomas' residents. These realities present clear challenges for community and economic redevelopment plans in Thomas.

Despite these trends, an influx of young people have been moving to Thomas recently, many opening businesses and sustaining their livelihoods. These newcomers helped renew revitalization efforts in town, especially with the resurgence of the community volunteer nonprofit organization, New Historic Thomas (NHT). Community-wide planning, fundraising, beautification, and redevelopment efforts increased, boasting many successes. An organization is actively restoring the 1902-built opera house, the arts/music culture strengthened, and city officials work closely in support with volunteers on beautification and revitalization activities.

ii. List the community stakeholders impacted by abandoned/dilapidated buildings in the community.

- Thomas community residents – (1) BAD buildings pose health and safety hazards to vulnerable populations (children, senior citizens, and those with ADA accessibility needs), (2) Citizens complaining of the state of various buildings at City Council meetings, (3) Homeowners seeing decreasing property values from BAD building proximity, and (4) Residents demoralized by the state of buildings
- Tourists – Many comment that when they see the BAD buildings on Spruce Street, they almost leave town. If they do not continue onto East Avenue with restored buildings and active

¹ U.S. Census Bureau. 2010 Census of Population and Housing. <http://www.census.gov/>

businesses, Thomas misses out on significant traffic. The Cooper House owner (please see attached letter) also wrote that guests often comment on the declining state of those buildings.

- Local and frequent visitors – Similar to community resident impacts
- Local business owners – The economy would strengthen from addressing BAD buildings.
- Community development, cultural/arts development, and civic organizations
- Potential homeowners/renters – A lack of quality housing stock is a documented need in Thomas², though many BAD residential buildings could be addressed to alleviate that need.
- Potential businesses – At least three businesses did not open or expand in Thomas in 2014 for lack of safe, affordable, energy efficient commercial space in the downtown area.
- Realtors – Best of Canaan agent said that some houses sit on the market for years, beyond help for most potential buyers as a result of neglect by the owners.
- Property owners – BAD buildings affect those who see diminishing values and who own dilapidating buildings and either are absent or do not have the means to address the problems.
- City officials and maintenance crew – Money and time are still spent on police and fire coverage for BAD buildings as well as utility and sidewalk maintenance.

iii. Describe level of community involvement and previous/current efforts to address abandoned/dilapidated buildings.

Thomas' current revitalization and redevelopment plans are a direct outcome of years of community-led development efforts, spearheaded more recently by NHT and the City. NHT has successfully engaged dozens of local residents in community planning efforts and there is widespread consensus in the community that addressing the abandoned and dilapidating properties is a high priority for the entire population. Many Thomas community members are involved with one or many of NHT's projects or initiatives – either formally or informally.

In 2011, NHT conducted a Vacant and Dilapidated Buildings Survey for Thomas that utilized a toolkit created by the WV Community Development Hub and the Northern WV Brownfields Assistance Center (NBAC). NHT identified 35 buildings in that survey. Since then, at least one mixed use and one commercial building have been successfully restored by private owners, while one is scheduled for demolition and rebuild by Woodlands Development Group. However, the survey now needs updated and re-evaluated. The remainder of the buildings listed in the inventory need prioritization and site-specific solutions to continue making any progress.

The efforts of NHT are supported by the Woodlands Development Group (WDG), a nonprofit housing development and downtown redevelopment organization that provides NHT with an AmeriCorps member, technical assistance with property redevelopment, and access to an alternative business lending entity that benefits local business creation and retention. WDG continues to assist Thomas in these areas and provides input when needed from their experience. They hope to continue working with NHT and property owners to redevelop the mixed use and residential BAD buildings into viable commercial spaces and much-needed workforce housing.

Many of the mixed use buildings on East Avenue have been successfully restored in the last five to ten years by private owners, many making use of historic tax credits. New businesses have opened as a result, many owners making Thomas or Tucker County their home and contributing to the vibrancy of the community. NHT hopes to make use of the BAD Buildings Program to continue to find site-specific solutions and financing for other interested property owners to do the same.

² Downstream Strategies. Tucker County, West Virginia: Small Business and Housing Needs Assessment. 2014, pp. 24-25.

c. DESCRIPTION OF NEED

i. Describe impacts abandoned/dilapidated buildings have on the community.

Thomas' BAD buildings inflict many negative economic and social setbacks on Thomas in its revitalization efforts. Thomas' concentration of BAD buildings, especially on Route 219 and Spruce Street, as well as its real and perceived brownfield concerns, have reduced the economic viability of the nationally registered historic commercial downtown district and are a major disincentive to attracting new developers and business-owners. Thomas's downtown suffers from a loss of business opportunities and job opportunities because of those nearby BAD buildings. They negatively impact existing business, limit growth potential and customer access, and limit interest in creating new business nearby. Additionally, several commercial and mixed-use properties lay vacant and abandoned downtown due, in part, to their unknown environmental status and location nearby known brownfield sites. Though many East Avenue buildings have been restored in recent years, those BAD buildings left unaddressed create major holes in Thomas's commercial downtown, which leads to a negative perception from tourists and visitors to the area. This can result in long-term economic and tourism impacts – an economy that Thomas relies upon heavily. Thomas is suffering from a lack of energy efficient, affordable commercial spaces for its growing demand from new and growing business owners.

In addition to the downtown economic impacts, the BAD buildings in Thomas serve as a major demoralizing factor in the community, reducing community morale and local investment (i.e., money, time, and expertise) in improving Thomas. The buildings pose major safety, health and environmental hazards to vulnerable community members and visitors. Though Thomas has not yet had major crime patterns resulting from its BAD buildings, they sit as an attractive venue for illicit activities. Not only do these sites not contribute to the local tax base and depress surrounding property values, they also act as a drain on Thomas by requiring costly municipal services, such as utility and sidewalk maintenance as well as fire and police protection.

Both the conditions of mixed use BAD buildings and residential BAD buildings also contribute to the severe housing needs in Thomas. There is a lack of quality housing stock in Thomas that does not support the potential for growth and the needs of the community as found in the recent community survey and the focus group at a City Council meeting in the *Small Business and Housing Needs Assessment* that was published by Downstream Strategies in 2014.³ The study's survey participants in Thomas strongly identified dilapidated homes in the community as a major issue. All of these economic and social impacts as a result of unaddressed BAD buildings reduce local morale and community investment and lead to an ongoing cycle of economic decline, poverty, abandonment, and community disinvestment.

A small population (586), low property values (attributed in part, to BAD buildings and brownfields properties), low median household incomes and per capita incomes, below average educational attainment levels, and limited economic opportunities resulting in a small local tax base make prioritizing active redevelopment of BAD buildings difficult financially for the city and its stakeholders to undertake.

ii. Describe any potential reuses already identified for abandoned/dilapidated properties in the target community.

NHT and the city are focused on redeveloping and beautifying the whole nationally registered historic commercial district area. Some of the preliminary work for addressing BAD Buildings Model was completed in the 2011 inventory and prioritization. Use of this technical assistance would help Thomas regain momentum and take the model to the next level. NHT and

³ Downstream Strategies. Tucker County, West Virginia: Small Business and Housing Needs Assessment. 2014, pp. 24-25.

the BAD Buildings Team would first update its inventory of vacant and dilapidated buildings. However, the bulk of the technical assistance would aid Thomas in finding site-specific solutions and conducting major reuse planning and visioning activities for the buildings and streetscapes. With NBAC's assistance, NHT would attempt to locate assistance for property owners to address these properties, find site-specific solutions to deal with particularly difficult property owners, and address infrastructure needs and community services to ensure that Thomas attracts permanent residents as well as tourists, among other solutions.

The backbone of Thomas is its historic, walkable, riverfront downtown is made up of two downtown, one-way streets. There has been progress in restoring many of its storefronts with private, state, and federal funds on East Avenue – some utilizing historic tax credits. The City is gaining a new identity as it begins to fill with unique small businesses. NHT and the community envision restoring (or demolishing and rebuilding) many of the multiuse BAD buildings on Spruce Street and Route 219, making sure to keep the integrity of the boom town style, historic streetscape. Energy efficient, fairly priced rental commercial spaces have been filling with new businesses faster than can be restored. The bottom levels of these buildings would be restored to commercial use, while the top floors would provide much-needed downtown housing. Residential BAD building homes could be restored or rebuilt, also helping to alleviate the housing burden in town. The Tucker county Assessor graded fifty-five Thomas properties as housing redevelopment opportunities and three as housing rehabilitation opportunities⁴.

Addressing the BAD buildings also incentivizes continued progress on the Thomas Riverfront Park Redevelopment Plan that will solve a well-recognized need for parking, will beautify the downtown and riverfront, and connect existing and planned recreational amenities to the business district. Business creation and retention will greatly benefit from the redevelopment plans for Thomas' BAD buildings.

iii. Detail anticipated results of a successful abandoned/dilapidated building program.

Redevelopment of Thomas' BAD buildings is vital in the process of creating a sustainable economy and quality of life in Thomas. The economy is heavily reliant on tourism and the redevelopment of BAD buildings will significantly increase the ability of Thomas to attract and retain eco and heritage tourism business. With work well underway for a new section of the Corridor H Highway and an exit just one mile north of town – cutting the driving time from the Washington Metro Area from 4 to 2.5 hours – the timing is vital to transform these blighted sites into restored or rebuilt storefronts and residences. This will cement Thomas's reputation as a tourist destination.

Small business owners in town will benefit from redevelopment efforts of commercial buildings as these will help retain visitors who will be able to enjoy an entire day (or longer) in Thomas without having to drive elsewhere to enjoy the area's artwork, restaurants, music, shopping, and recreational opportunities. Business viability, creation, and retention will increase greatly from the redevelopment of the riverfront and downtown.

Many single family homes and downtown upstairs rental units being developed from BAD buildings in town would ease the significant housing burden and provide room for population growth that Thomas is already seeing. Thomas residents would also gain more pride in their city.

Since much of the inventory, property research, and prioritizing work has been accomplished, the team can utilize the technical assistance to focus on major reuse planning and visioning activities that will bring renewed momentum to BAD building and redevelopment efforts in Thomas.

⁴ Downstream Strategies. Tucker County, West Virginia: Small Business and Housing Needs Assessment. 2014, p. 25.

d. CAPACITY FOR PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

i. Describe applicant ability to administer technical assistance activities.

NHT and the City of Thomas have a strong track record of successfully administering grants and projects, especially in recent years. NHT administered FOCUS and FOCUS plus grants, funded by the NBAC, several county Parks and Recreation Hotel-Motel Tax Fund grants, and Tucker Community Foundation grants. NHT completed the projects associated with these grants with associated reporting requirements. Currently, NHT is assisting the City of Thomas to administer and manage a \$200,000 U.S. EPA Brownfields Hazardous Materials Assessment Grant (a grant that will environmentally assess some of the properties on which Thomas' priority BAD buildings sit). NHT's board and membership are made up of dedicated volunteers who will successfully administer the required and expected activities in the BAD Building Program. Those volunteers have extensive and varied experience and networks that will aid the program's ultimate success (that experience will be outlined in later section d.iii). Many of the volunteers who did the research and field work for the 2011 Thomas Vacant and Dilapidated Buildings Survey continue to show interest in the BAD Building Model and will be invaluable when revisiting the inventory and carrying out envisioning and reuse planning with the aid and momentum that will come with this technical assistance.

Matt Quattro, the current Mayor of Thomas brings extensive experience that has enabled him to acquire a network of experts with which he can consult on a variety of subjects. He has administered a variety of grants through his involvement with the city as city council member and then Mayor over the last twenty years. He is a strongest supporter and member of NHT and will be very involved in every step of the BAD Buildings Program implementation.

Emily Wilson-Hauger, NHT's AmeriCorps member with a sustainable development graduate degree, will serve as the main point person and team leader for the BAD Buildings Team. She has worked closely with NBAC in the last two years on brownfields-related work, wrote and managed several grants and projects, and provides ongoing administration and organizational capacity for NHT. She works closely with diverse stakeholders in the community and will move the program along in a timely manner.

ii. Identify how the community will be engaged and involved in the program.

NHT will work closely with the City of Thomas to engage the program team and all program stakeholders within the target community as well as the community members themselves, all of whom are affected by BAD buildings in some way in Thomas (as noted in the stakeholder list in section b.ii. of this application). NHT, during its monthly public meetings will provide program updates as well as address questions, concerns, and feedback from stakeholder organizations and residents.

Program partners, local stakeholders, and residents will be informed of monthly project meeting updates by email and announcements made in local media and posted in the post office, as well as by word of mouth by members of NHT. This is appropriate for the City of Thomas because of its small population and tight-knit community. Email notices are appropriate for county partners like the Tucker County Development Authority and the County Commission due to distance and level of engagement.

Community meetings will be utilized during each step of the program as needed. There has historically been impressive turnout for community meetings relating to redevelopment in Thomas. NHT will actively engage volunteers who have already shown interest or gave time to BAD buildings and redevelopment efforts and will attempt to identify new volunteers who show interest or demonstrate needed skills.

iii. Identify anticipated members of the BAD buildings team.

The Thomas BAD Buildings Team would be comprised of a combination of a few different stakeholder groups that work on community development and revitalization issues, many of whom have already been actively addressing BAD buildings in their various ways. New Historic Thomas board members and a few active members will organize and manage the program. All are community volunteers with varying skills and expertise including NHT's AmeriCorps member who has a working relationship with NBAC and is currently managing Thomas' EPA Brownfields grant and ongoing NHT organizational administration. Other members who will serve on the team include a professional environmental consultant, local small business owners, local gallery manager, AmeriCorps member from the local arts development organization, AmeriCorps member from the Thomas opera house restoration organization, and a graphic designer, among others. Another NHT community member brings his experience as a building contractor, having previously utilized historic building tax credits to restore several buildings on East Avenue in Thomas. Finally, one building owner of a dilapidated building on Spruce Street also shared his interest to not only work to restore his building but the streetscape as a whole. Many of these NHT members actively worked on the Vacant and Dilapidated Buildings Inventory completed in 2011, on the redevelopment plan update for the riverfront park, and on beautification projects, among other redevelopment and revitalization projects.

The City of Thomas, the local unit of government will be involved in the BAD Buildings team (please see attached support letter). Mayor Matt Quattro will contribute to the team actively, while City Council will be consulted with and updated as needed. They have been supportive of past initiatives and redevelopment efforts that NHT has undertaken.

A couple of local business owners will be involved with the team, some that serve as NHT Thomas members and others who support NHT's work. The owner and the manager of the Purple Fiddle, The Cooper House, The Christmas Shoppe, and Tip Top Coffee, among other business owners on East Avenue, show strong support for revitalization efforts in Thomas, especially addressing its historic buildings.

The Brownfields Task Force – the committee overseeing the management of Thomas' EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant – will also work closely to ensure brownfields and BAD buildings redevelopment goals align and complement one another throughout their respective administration. The Executive Director of both the Tucker County Development Authority (please see attached support letter) and WDG (please see attached support letter), who serve on the task force, will also contribute to the BAD buildings team to ensure this commitment to coordinate remains strong.

e. SIGNED LETTER(S) OF SUPPORT AND COMMITMENT

Please see the following attached letters of support and commitment from the following stakeholders/partners:

- City of Thomas
- Tucker County Commission
- Tucker County Economic Development Authority
- Woodlands Development Group
- Alpine Heritage Preservation/Cottrill's Opera House
- The Cooper House

**City of Thomas
P.O. Box 248
307 Spruce St.
Thomas, WV 26292
304-463-4360**

BAD Buildings Program
Attn: Luke Elser
Northern WV Brownfields Assistance Center
385 Evansdale Drive, Suite 201
Morgantown, WV 26506-6064

February 13, 2015

Dear Mr. Elser,

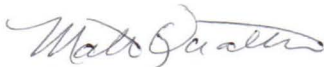
I am writing as the Mayor on behalf of the City of Thomas, West Virginia to express support for New Historic Thomas' application for the Northern WV Brownfields Assistance Center's BAD Building Technical Assistance funding.

There is a significant need to update the Thomas Vacant and Dilapidated Buildings Survey and to prioritize the next steps to address the city's BAD buildings to encourage local redevelopment and reinvestment in Thomas. With the support of this technical assistance funding and the expertise of the Northern WV Brownfields Assistance Center staff, whom we enjoy a strong relationships with, Thomas will be able to continue activities fulfilling the redevelopment and revitalization goals related to the city's many BAD buildings.

The City of Thomas and City Council are committed to providing support as New Historic Thomas' major partner to maintain momentum throughout the implementation of the technical assistance funding initiatives. The City of Thomas can provide space for public meetings and will look for ways to partner and strategize with New Historic Thomas on future funding activities and program implementation. I, as the Mayor will participate as a member of the BAD Building team, attend and assist in input sessions to inform future action, and utilize my existing relationships with partners and property owners as needed to move initiatives forward.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or comments regarding the funding application or the assistance the City of Thomas can offer.

Sincerely,



Matt Quattro
Mayor
City of Thomas



TUCKER COUNTY COMMISSION

211 First Street, Suite 307 Parsons, WV 26287

304-478-2866 Ext 207 Fax 304-478-2446

tuckergwa@gmail.com

Lowell Moore, Commission President

Diane Hinkle, Commissioner

Patrick E. Darlington, Commissioner

Sherry Simmons, County Clerk

Joel L. Goughnour, Administrator

www.tuckercountycommission.com

BAD Buildings Program

Attn: Luke Elser

Northern WV Brownfields Assistance Center

385 Evansdale Drive, Suite 201

Morgantown, WV 26506-6064

February 13, 2015

Dear Mr. Elser,

I am writing on behalf of the Tucker County Commission to express support for New Historic Thomas' application for the Northern WV Brownfields Assistance Center's BAD Building Technical Assistance funding.

We, as the county's elected commissioners, recognize the significant need to address Thomas' BAD buildings to encourage local redevelopment, reinvestment, and revitalization. The support of this technical assistance funding and the expertise of the Northern WV Brownfields Assistance Center staff will not only improve the lives of residents and strengthen the businesses in Thomas but will benefit Tucker County as a whole.

The Tucker County Commission is committed to providing support to New Historic Thomas to increase momentum for this program. We have actively supported New Historic Thomas in the past and will continue to look for ways to partner and strategize with New Historic Thomas. New Historic Thomas will keep the commission informed on the progress of the initiative so that we know the needs when meeting with decision-makers in Charleston.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or comments regarding New Historic Thomas' funding application or the support the Tucker County Commission offers.

Sincerely,

Tucker County Commission



**Woodlands
Development Group**



**Woodlands
Community Lenders**

P.O. Box 1577 Elkins, West Virginia 26241 (304)636-6495

BAD Buildings Program
Attn: Luke Elser
Northern WV Brownfields Assistance Center
385 Evansdale Drive, Suite 201
Morgantown, WV 26506-6064

February 13, 2015

Dear Mr. Elser,

I am writing on behalf of Woodlands Development Group to express support for New Historic Thomas' application for the Northern WV Brownfields Assistance Center's BAD Building Technical Assistance funding.

With additional support from the BAD Buildings program, Thomas will be able to continue its progress in addressing local blight, while also tackling other critical local issues including housing demand. With the support of this technical assistance funding and the expertise of the Northern WV Brownfields Assistance Center staff, Thomas will be able to bring continued energy to its goals related to its BAD Buildings.

Woodlands Development Group is committed to providing (1) staffing assistance, through our shared AmeriCorps member position with New Historic Thomas and (2) technical and consultation support for site-specific building solutions. In addition, Woodlands has recently secured financing for the demolition of a significant downtown Thomas dilapidated building and are currently pursuing funding for site redevelopment. It is our hope that Woodlands will contribute to this critical initiative, and help New Historic Thomas maintain momentum throughout the implementation of this program and technical assistance.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or comments regarding this application or the assistance Woodlands can offer.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dave Clark", is written over a horizontal line.

Dave Clark
Executive Director
Woodlands Development Group
Woodlands Community Lenders

ALPINE HERITAGE PRESERVATION P O Box 156 Thomas, West Virginia 26292

Luke Elser
BAD Buildings Program
Northern WV Brownfields Assistance Center
385 Evansdale Dr. Suite 201
Morgantown, West Virginia 26505-6064

Feb 10, 2015

RE: New Historic Thomas application for technical assistance

Dear Mr. Elser,

Alpine Heritage Preservation is a volunteer non-profit organization dedicated to the restoration of Cottrill's Opera House in downtown Thomas, West Virginia. Cottrill's Opera House was the cultural center of this coal mining community when it was built in 1902. It remains the centerpiece of a sustainable economic development plan in the community.

AHP partners with many local organizations and offers office space to New Historic Thomas, Woodlands Development Group and the Tucker County Development Authority as well as a public information center for residents and visitors to the area.

When our restoration project is complete the opera house will be a 425-seat multi-use performance hall. As we continue our capital campaign we are working with community stakeholders to solve basic service issues that affect the economic viability for sustainable development. Our restoration project is impacted by the lack of adequate infrastructure and services available to buildings on East Ave.

The work of New Historic Thomas is vital to the improvement of this community. Thomas has more than its fair share of buildings in need-- many owners are derelict and do not have the resources or community sense of responsibility in understanding the importance of maintaining their properties.

Alpine Heritage Preservation considers the WV Brownfields Assistance Program to be an important element of success within the community, and enthusiastically recommends New Historic Thomas for the program's support.

Sincerely,



David M. Downs, President



BAD Buildings Program
Attn: Luke Elser
Northern WV Brownfields Assistance Center
385 Evansdale Drive, Suite 201
Morgantown, WV 26506-6064

February 13, 2015

Dear Mr. Elser,

As an Innkeeper in Thomas, I interact with a number of our visitors from around the country and the world. A large number of my guests are between 30 and 50 years old, are from the DC area and are here to experience the remarkable landscape and outdoor activities that we have to offer. Because of the recent Corridor H (highway 48) extension, the trip from Washington and surrounding metro area has been shortened to around 2 ½ to 3 hours.

This very "doable" drive has brought many first time travelers in search of skiing, biking, and hiking opportunities to our town. They are a thoughtful and sophisticated bunch and to the last guest are completely charmed by Thomas and the area. Two couples that stayed with me last year and this, recently bought properties in Thomas they like it so much.

My guests, however, also comment on the declining state of the buildings on Spruce Street. I spend a good amount of time talking about the beautification on Front/East Street, the ongoing projects like the waterfront and new projects like the Understory Tiny House project up on Brown Street. At some point I'd like to be able to tell them about a revitalization effort directed at these empty eyesores.

There is a great momentum in this town thanks to groups like New Historic Thomas, individual citizens including our AmeriCorps members, and vital business anchors like The Purple Fiddle, The Christmas Shoppe, Tip Top, and The White Room. The wave of renewal needs to enter a new phase that includes the continuing restoration of Thomas city and neighborhood streets and dwellings.

Joy Malinowski
Cooper House Bed & Cocktail
114 East Avenue, Thomas WV 26292

Tucker County Development Authority
We Live Here

BAD Buildings Program
Attn: Luke Elser
Northern WV Brownfields Assistance Center
385 Evansdale Drive, Suite 201
Morgantown, WV 26506-6064

February 13, 2015

Dear Mr. Elser,

As Executive Director of the Tucker County Development Authority to express support for New Historic Thomas' application for the Northern WV Brownfields Assistance Center's BAD Building Technical Assistance funding.

There is a significant need to address the city's BAD buildings to encourage local redevelopment and continued economic growth in Thomas. With the support of this technical assistance funding and the expertise of the Northern WV Brownfields Assistance Center staff, Thomas will be able to build on its strong volunteer base and previous efforts to make progress on its BAD buildings and brownfields properties.

The Tucker County Development Authority is committed to providing support to New Historic Thomas to increase momentum for the program by providing space for public meetings and looking for ways to partner and strategize with New Historic Thomas on future funding activities and program implementation. The development authority will also utilize existing relationships with partners and property owners as needed to move initiatives forward. I, as the Executive Director of the development authority already serve on the Thomas Brownfields Task Force that oversees management of the EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant that Thomas received in 2014. That task force will work closely to identify and prioritize properties for assessment and redevelopment and will work with the BAD Buildings team to make the most of all resources.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or comments regarding the New Historic Thomas' funding application or the support the Tucker County Development Authority offers.



Sincerely,



Anne Jones
Executive Director
Tucker County Development Authority

f. PROOF OF NON-PROFIT STATUS & NON-PROFIT MISSION STATEMENT

i. Proof of Non-Profit Status

 IRS Department of the Treasury Internal Revenue Service	In reply refer to: 0437877571 Dec. 20, 2012 LTR 4168C 0 55-0746851 000000 00 00032496 BODC: TE
OGDEN UT 84201-0038	
 NEW HISTORIC THOMAS PROJECT COMMITTEE % F RENEE DIBACCO PO BOX 116 THOMAS WV 26292-0116	
013964	
Employer Identification Number: 55-0746851 Person to Contact: Ms. Patino Toll Free Telephone Number: 1-877-829-5500	
Dear Taxpayer:	
This is in response to your Dec. 11, 2012, request for information regarding your tax-exempt status.	
Our records indicate that you were recognized as exempt under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code in a determination letter issued in August 1997.	
Our records also indicate that you are not a private foundation within the meaning of section 509(a) of the Code because you are described in section 509(a)(2).	
Donors may deduct contributions to you as provided in section 170 of the Code. Bequests, legacies, devises, transfers, or gifts to you or for your use are deductible for Federal estate and gift tax purposes if they meet the applicable provisions of sections 2055, 2106, and 2522 of the Code.	
Please refer to our website www.irs.gov/eo for information regarding filing requirements. Specifically, section 6033(j) of the Code provides that failure to file an annual information return for three consecutive years results in revocation of tax-exempt status as of the filing due date of the third return for organizations required to file. We will publish a list of organizations whose tax-exempt status was revoked under section 6033(j) of the Code on our website beginning in early 2011.	

ii. Non-Profit Mission Statement

New Historic Thomas is a 501(c)3 non-profit community group dedicated to revitalizing the city of Thomas by preserving its history, cultural heritage, and resources that make the city unique. Working with the mayor and city council, New Historic Thomas aims to preserve the city's built and natural environment, businesses, and people so that Thomas continues to be a thriving environment for residents, visitors, and the business community.