

**BANNING CULTURAL ALLIANCE  
DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION  
JUNE 2009 YEAR END REPORT**

The Banning Cultural Alliance (The Alliance) thanks the City of Banning for its continued support of our organization's efforts to assist in the revitalization of downtown Banning. The final six months of this funding period was filled with activity and measurable progress.

This report addresses the six areas proposed in our 2008-09 work plan.

**Bring steady foot traffic to downtown Banning.**

*Cool Summer Nights started on May 22 with plans to continue through September 25, 2009. Various hosts have been lined up to provide different themes for each Friday night. This extended period is expected to help grow the audience for this downtown activity.*

*The fourth annual Art Hop was the most extensive to date. The art show at City Hall attracted newcomers to the Art Hop. The Dorothy Ramon Learning Center's participation was expanded with ethnic art exhibits. Having art and events in Ben Stevenson's building enriched the venue in a new way. There were fifteen vendors and a greater variety than ever. Many reported making significant sales. Nine downtown businesses participated. In addition, there were twenty three artists and five established galleries. There were twenty five community based organizations involved. Nine clubs provided entertainment.*

*The Alliance opened its outstanding Sculpture and Memorial Garden with artists from throughout Southern California in May. This outdoor gallery is expected to become a destination in itself.*

**Grow the Banning Center for the Arts Gallery**

*The City of Banning purchased the building that houses the Banning Center for the Arts Gallery. Escrow has closed. The Gallery, this year, held its first showing of a world renowned artist, Milford Zornes. This has helped The Gallery attract additional high quality artists and visitors. Sales are growing and producing increasing foot traffic downtown.*

*The Gallery in its ongoing efforts to establish an art presence downtown continues to hold artist exhibits with opening receptions every six to eight weeks. This has been very effective in showcasing local artists.*

*The Alliance awaits the lease with the city to begin improvements on the Gallery building.*

**Expand art exposure and experiences for youth throughout the Pass Area.**

*The Youth Arts Council is up and running. It has programs in dance, visual arts and crafts, and theater. Through volunteer opportunities at community events, thirty-five regular participants of YAC have effectively reached over three hundred youth with arts activities. Cooperation of the Episcopal Diocese has made possible the use of the old St. Agnes Church for youth activities at a very reasonable cost.*

**Enter into an agreement with the University of Redlands to bring in expertise to assist in building business and marketing plans for downtown revitalization projects.**

*The University of Redlands Intern students have been extremely valuable as extended staff for the Alliance. One is a graphic artist and marketing major; one is interested in events; and one is an accounting major who has been working as staff at the Art Gallery. It is expected that this relationship will continue in the Fall and expand.*

**Identify a business as a financial partner to round out the partnership between The Alliance, the City of Banning, and the University of Redlands to revitalize downtown Banning.**

*The Alliance continues its efforts to build a sponsor program to nurture long term relationships with business and corporations that will help identify a major financial partner to support the work in downtown Banning. During the current economic climate this is more difficult.*

**Facilitate collaborations with other appropriate entities that share the City's and The Alliance's goals for downtown Banning**

*The Alliance's way of work is one of collaboration. In all its projects, partners are brought to the table to help plan and implement the activities to assure maximum community participation and support. Our partners have included the Banning and Beaumont Chambers of Commerce, Banning Community Services, Banning Public Library, Soroptomist House of Hope, Rotary, a variety of churches, Banning Unified School District, San Gorgonio Rotary, etc. The current partners for Cool Summer Nights are the Banning Chamber of Commerce and the San Gorgonio Rotary Club. There are fifteen organizations and businesses signed on as hosts for an evening of Cool Summer Nights.*

**PBID**

*The dire economic climate has put plans for business organizing on hold. A couple of businesses are in critical circumstances. In the meantime The Alliance will identify ways and implement programs to promote businesses in the revitalization area through its printed materials. The Alliance believes as the Justice Center is completed and the streetscape moves forward along with the proposed commercial developments, there will be more incentive for downtown business and property owners to organize. It is the opinion of The Alliance that an actual PBID will evolve organically with careful organization of property owners and businesses as the economic environment improves.*

**SUMMARY**

The Banning Cultural Alliance is staying on target very well with the resources available at this particular time. We are pleased that with so much to accomplish and with limited staff, the quality of performance is not being jeopardized. The next fiscal year should continue to prove productive with additional positive outcomes through major events like the ongoing Cool Summer Nights, the Phineas Festival of Lights, events at the art gallery, PAPA productions, and activities that highlight the Sculpture and Memorial Garden. The Alliance's diverse youth program will continue to expand its variety of artistic and cultural activities to increase its outreach to more youth. The Alliance plans a promotional campaign in the new fiscal year for downtown merchants that should show positive results reflected in increased business.