

**THE DONIPHAN NEIGHBORHOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAM, INC.
(DNAP)**

COMMUNITY PROJECTS AND FACILITIES

**A HISTORY OF PUBLIC-PRIVATE COOPERATION FOR COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT**

The Doniphan Neighborhood Assistance Program, Inc. (DNAP) is a 501(c)(3) Not-For-Profit Corporation formed in the late 1980's to take advantage of a State Public/Private Partnership legislation known as the Neighborhood Assistance Program. That program was designed to grant tax credits under state law to persons who made contributions to local public improvement projects. DNAP's first project under that partnership was the demolition of the derelict buildings in the Doniphan Central Business District and the creation of the Heritage Park which increased parking and open public space in the middle of the central business district. It took over \$200,000.00 in private donations subsidized with state tax credits to complete the project. A Park with Gazebo and Fountain surrounded by Wrought Iron Fencing is the venue for many community events, including Music in the Park, the Annual Christmas Parade and Santa Claus Visitation, and the Halloween Festival.

The success of the Heritage Park spurred DNAP's next project under the Neighborhood Assistance Program (NAP). With new tax credits and local donations of over \$150,000.00, three buildings at the corner of Washington Street and the Courthouse Square were purchased, renovated and re-opened as the Current River Heritage Museum, the Doniphan Community Center and a rental space to help finance the upkeep of the Museum and Community Center. The Museum provided several thousand square feet of exhibit space and offices for the Chamber of Commerce and for DNAP. The Community Center provided an indoor space for public events, along with facilities for weddings, reunions, private parties, and business meetings.

Following the success of the Museum and Community Center project, and with state funding for the NAP shrinking, DNAP initiated one final project under the Neighborhood Assistance Program. Along with a donation of land by private parties and thousands of dollars in private contributions subsidized with state tax credits, a site was prepared next to the historic Doniphan Cemetery to create what became known as the Heritage Homestead at the corner of Charles and Franklin Street. An actual pioneer cabin, and a traditional rustic barn and a blacksmith shop were moved from different locations in rural Ripley County and re-assembled at the Heritage Homestead site to create a living history project that would provide public space and a tourism draw for downtown Doniphan.

Although the NAP state tax credits are no longer available, the projects financed with NAP funding are still owned, operated and maintained by DNAP. Due to the expense of the operation and maintenance of the Heritage Park, the Current River Heritage Museum, the Doniphan Community Center and the Heritage Homestead, the City government and DNAP conceived a plan to establish a dedicated tourism tax on hotel rooms at the three hotels in

Doniphan which would be funneled under the provisions of state law to a Non-For-Profit Corporation to provide convention and visitor's bureau services to the City. DNAP has served that purpose ever since and continues to use this funding source, along with private donations, to operate and maintain all of the assets acquired under the now expired NAP state tax credit program.

The community facilities and programs operated and maintained by DNAP are, aside from the beautiful Current River itself, the primary tourism draws within the City. The Current River Heritage Museum has displays and programs that many cities ten times our size do not enjoy. It is open six days a week and is staffed with one paid Curator and Tourism Director and a number of volunteers who act as docents and maintain the gift shop at the front of the Museum. A Visitor's Bureau contains a host of publications, maps and brochures for tourists. The Community Center two doors down the street is also managed by the Museum staff who can reserve and schedule public and private events using the center. A block South of the Courthouse is the Heritage Homestead which is the site of the annual Civil War Days events and the location of the Tom Kennon Blacksmith Shop. The Blacksmith Shop is one of the few in Missouri which is open to the public every week on Saturday mornings where it provides demonstrations for visitors and residents alike and conducts periodic classes in the craft. In the final stages of construction is a newly re-assembled one room "Plunk School" building which has been saved and moved to the site and will soon be available for scheduling public and private events.

The most recent Public/Private cooperation between the City government and DNAP consists of the new River Walk sidewalk project which will take pedestrians from the Current River Boat Landing to the historic County Courthouse and which will run across and along the side of the Heritage Homestead up Franklin Street to the Courthouse Square. Completion is scheduled for later in 2015.

Future Plans

Although DNAP's primary duty to maintain and promote its tourism generating assets within the City, DNAP is also cognizant of its charter to improve the Doniphan Neighborhood with additional projects and programs as interest and funds can be made available. DNAP intends to support the City's Historic Preservation Commission's actions as they are conceived and implemented.

DNAP is also interested in helping the economic development of the Historic Downtown Business District since that is where the primary tourism assets, the Museum, Community Center and Heritage Homestead are located. Realizing that traffic drives commerce and commerce produces the funds to support further development, DNAP would like to suggest a project to link the Current River Boat Landing and its high volume of vehicle traffic into Downtown Doniphan by providing a street connection between the Boat Landing Parking Lots and Franklin Street across the southern end of the DNAP property. Such a thoroughfare would, with proper traffic regulation, divert large numbers of visitors to exit the Boat Landing onto Franklin Street where they will be forced to drive by the Heritage Homestead and up through the Courthouse Circle

order to leave town via Jefferson Street or Washington Street. Either route would markedly increase vehicle traffic in Downtown Doniphan, thereby increasing commerce and supporting businesses operating in the Central Business District. DNAP hopes that the Planning and Zoning Commission would support such a reorganization of the City Street Plan to give such a development a high priority.