

# SUCCESSFUL SMALL TOWNS: ELKIN, NC Funding - Funding - Bullet Points for Success



The following information was submitted by the community of Elkin. We appreciate their willingness to pull together these additional tips that will hopefully help you build the same type of movements in your community.

## Elkin Trails

- **Champions:** Elkin Valley Trails Association
- **Strategy:** To build trails, connect to NC MST, become Trail Town, create office NC TRAIL DAYS festival for North Carolina (like Damascus)
- **Public/Private relationships:** Town of Elkin, trail grants, Lowes grants

## Advice

- Connect with outside authority sources (NCRT, FMST, etc.), state and regional.
- Research local history... bring it to the trails.
- Creative fundraising (Insane Terrain, Trails Boogie, Duke & Turtle Regatta, plus grants, etc.).
- Have a good grant writer on hand.
- **Partner with:**
  - A town (Town Hall/Town Board/Parks and Rec).
  - Agencies
  - Counties
  - Businesses (Hospital, or those with larger employee base)
  - TDA
  - Clubs (scouts, schools, hike/bike)
  - Locals (hike/bike enthusiasts, trail builders, earth movers, volunteers)
- Building something “tangible”
- Point out literature showing impact.
- Know what your plan is (write up a plan) and stay on track (list solutions)
- Develop merchandise (for recognition)
- Public Image (get out and talk to community, update town board at monthly meetings)
- Create events promoting trails (NC Trail Days festival, Elkin NC)

## Learn More:

- Elkin’s trail builders, Elkin Valley Trails Association <https://elkinvalleytrails.org/>
- MST site, Elkin’s segment 6: <https://mountainstoseatrail.org/segment/6/>
- Links on Explore Elkin to trail markers: <https://www.exploreelkin.com/trailmarkers>
- NC Trail Days Festival (premiered June 2019) <https://www.nctraildays.com/>
- Insane Terrain 5K/10K: <https://insaneterraintrailrace.itsyourrace.com/event.aspx?id=5607>
- Town links to trail info: 1. <https://elkin.recdesk.com/Community/Page?pageId=5713>  
<http://www.elkinnc.org/residents/trails.php>
- Elkin Valley Trails Assoc FB page; filled with Elkin trail videos:  
[https://www.facebook.com/watch/ElkinValleyTrails/?ref=page\\_internal](https://www.facebook.com/watch/ElkinValleyTrails/?ref=page_internal)

# Coley Hall at The Liberty

## Angry Troll Restaurant & Brewing

- **Champions:** Owner Cicely McCulloch, and Partners of Angry Troll Brewing
- **Strategy:** Make downtown Elkin a destination/ bring large event space & microbrewery to downtown.
- **Partner with:** Explore Elkin (event space for community meetings, Big Elkin Brewfest, Reevestock Downtown Get Down), Hospital (for annual Wine Gala fundraiser), Downtown/Main Street (events/meeting space), EVTA Trails group (NC MST annual conference, Trails Boogie Fund Raiser), State/federal (tax credits)
- The Liberty won an award of merit from NC Main Street for Best Adaptive Reuse Project in 2014.
- **Public/Private relationships:** Federal/State Historic Tax Credits project; Building Reuse Grant funds from Rural Center; owner investment.

## Advice

- Do not rush the renovation process. Some expenses might not be necessary in the estimates (like a top-of-the-line HVAC), so do your research and find those contractors you can trust to confirm fair and accurate pricing and necessary work. Get 2nd and 3rd quotes/opinions.
- Have support from locals that include experienced individuals/team who you can bounce ideas off, can provide connections, give advice. Do not try to do it all by yourself.
- Involve the town from the beginning with the process and collaborate with those who are like-minded.
- Look for what is missing in your downtown to fill a niche. This project fulfilled the need for event space, retail, restaurant, and office rental spaces.
- Listen to advice from those who have done similar large-scale projects or have done historic building renovation.
- Create a business plan.
- Plan to be a part of the community you are trying to improve, and do not be an absentee owner.
- Support local contractors if possible as you will need them at a moment's notice at times. Shop local for interior items too, as these businesses will support you back.
- Take advantage of historic tax credits, building reuse funds, grants, and any funding you can find. You will need it!

## Learn More:

- **Coley Hall** at The Liberty: <https://coleyhall.com/>
- FB: <https://www.facebook.com/LibertyElkin> @libertyelkin & Instagram @libertycoleyhall  
<https://www.elkinweddings.com/venues>
- <https://www.yadkinvalleync.com/news/four-great-places-destination-wedding-yadkin-valley/>
- **The Liberty Catering Company:** <https://www.thelibertycatering.com/?fbclid=IwAR1aveOkIIR5s-WVT1rOyaXoMBVXbb4f4E4RxFLplBE-DcgGGjkOYbmZVD8>
- FB: <https://www.facebook.com/thelibertycatering> & Instagram @thelibertycatering
- **Angry Troll Brewing:** <https://www.angrytrollbrewing.com/>
- FB: <https://www.facebook.com/angrytrollbrewing> & Instagram
- <http://yadkinvalleywinecountry.com/restaurants/angry-troll-brewing-elkin-nc/>
- Weddingwire.com 3d video <https://www.weddingwire.com/biz/coley-hall-at-the-liberty-elkin/e515b1d89114c499.html>
- UNC-TV video <https://youtu.be/CGXAPGipgak>
- Videos on angry troll fb and Instagram  
[https://www.facebook.com/angrytrollbrewing/videos/?ref=page\\_internal](https://www.facebook.com/angrytrollbrewing/videos/?ref=page_internal)

# The Reeves Theater & Café / Downtown Music School

- **Champions:** Owners Debbie Carson, Chris Groner, and Erik Dahlager
- **Strategy:** Create Arts & Entertainment district along Main Street / bring music venue to support regional music & farm to table restaurant with bar
- **Partner with:** Community support & donations, Tri County Citizens non-profit , State funding/ Dept of Commerce/NC Main Street Program funding , State/Federal (tax credits), Explore Elkin (EE community events/downtown events/promotions), MSAB (Light up Elkin/Trick or Treat on Main/showed Downtown Development videos for downtown merchants) , Martha Bassett podcasts/performances at the Reeves
- **Public/Private relationships:** Historic Tax Credit project, NC Main Street/ Main Street Solutions Fund \$100K, private donations, Save the Reeves Fund, Reevestock Music Fest (fund raiser to save building prior to owners buying it in 2014); owner investment, local citizens donating, previous funding Tri County Citizens fund raisers.

## Advice

- Build as broad a base of support as possible for the project in advance. It helped us a lot that the Reeves had already been in the public eye for almost two decades, and that many people had previously contributed time and/or money toward a renovation effort and really wanted to see the building saved.
- Plan as carefully and as comprehensively as possible. Devote time and thought to wide-ranging project details. Consider technology needs going forward and plan accordingly. Invest in high-quality essential equipment to avoid constant headaches and replacement costs. Consider staff working conditions, comfort of patrons, traffic flow, safety, and aesthetics as you make decisions. Details really matter when your project is completed and people start working, visiting, congregating, or performing in your renovated building.
- Get early buy-in from as many community partners and financial supporters as possible. Whether your project is undertaken by a non-profit or for-profit entity, you will need supporters across the spectrum. As for-profit business developers, we still needed to form important alliances with the Town of Elkin (and Main Street Advisory Board), Foothills Arts Council, Explore Elkin, Elkin Valley Trails Association, Hugh Chatham Memorial Hospital, Elkin City Schools, and Yadkin Valley United Fund, as well as our local Chamber of Commerce and various service, environmental, and arts organizations like Rotary, Watershed Now, Elkin Valley Fiddlers, etc. In our case, as a live performance venue, we have hosted special events for all our partners, and many of them have sponsored other events held at the Reeves. We also solicited business support from key community players who became "box patrons" by purchasing advance seats for an annual fee. Our box patrons have been invaluable--most have become regular audience members, and many have introduced their friends and customers to the Reeves by sharing tickets or hosting groups at Reeves events.
- Generate consistent buzz about your project, both around your town and on social media. Having a presence on social media is huge, but so is physical in-person presence. Post progress notes and photos on Facebook, Instagram, and other platforms; provide updates to local/regional media and encourage them to visit, write about you, include you in local TV news segments, etc.; invite local leaders and interested citizens in (when safe and practical) to see your project as it evolves. Try to keep people interested and in the loop!
- Document the process. You will be surprised how much you will forget along the way, so take photos and make notes as your project proceeds. Say "yes" as often as possible when asked to do a presentation for a local organization and make use of those notes and photos!
- Seek funding from as many sources--public and private--as possible. Look for grants, partnerships, and other opportunities for funding sources that might help you complete your project in a timely and optimal manner.
- Build a good, solid team. Whether you hire one person, ten, twenty, or many more, look for the best, most diverse, talented, and creative people you can find. Your staff should help you think outside the box, and if they represent a cross-section of your community, will encourage many others (friends, families, church/school/civic groups, etc.) to connect with and support your project.
- Expect and plan for cost overruns. Do not let unexpected costs completely derail your project. Save where you can, budget carefully, but expect and prepare for setbacks and surprises.

# The Reeves Theater & Café / Downtown Music School

## Advice

- Build excitement as project completion is imminent. Plan a special opening event, ribbon-cutting, or celebration to recognize partners and people who made your project possible. Invite regional media and elected officials and include as many community members as possible in the celebration of your success.
- Collaborate. Continue to nourish community partnerships after your project is completed! The more people and groups you have in your corner, the more likely your business (or non-profit) is to thrive. Sustained support is essential, so consult with partners, cross-promote, and plan regular events with partners across the public-private spectrum.
- Be realistic about sustainability as you develop your business plan/budget. Overhead costs--taxes, insurance (property, general liability, workers comp), utilities, maintenance--can be intractable and deadly. Do not let them completely surprise you as you transition from renovation to operation. Find out what it will take to stay afloat and develop/identify resources to make it possible.
- Evolve. Ongoing investment in your future requires regular reassessment and improvement. Determine what is working well and what is not. Be flexible and open to new ideas for strengthening your business/organization. Keep your most important goals in sight and adjust stay on course.

## Learn More:

- Reeves Website <https://www.reevestheater.com/>
- Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/ReevesTheater> and Instagram @ReevesTheater
- <http://yadkinvalleywinecountry.com/restaurants/>
- <https://www.yadkinvalleync.com/attractions/reeves-theater-cafe/>
- <http://cinematreasures.org/theaters/23671>
- <https://www.blueridgemusicnc.com/find-music/event/reeves-theater-upcoming-events>
- Martha Bassett Show podcasts (recorded & performed at the Reeves Theater) <https://www.marthabassett.com/podcast-1>
- Martha Bassett website featuring Reeves Theater <https://marthabassettshow.com/>
- NC Main Street Best Historic Rehabilitation Project 2018 <https://www.ncmainstreetandplanning.com/post/reeves-theater>
- Reeves intro video: <https://fb.watch/3PNBgg1WtG/>
- WXII report/early stages: <https://www.wxii12.com/article/reeves-theaters-rich-past--and-future/1914728#>
- Reeves Theater: The New Life: <https://vimeo.com/237986389>
- PBS North Carolina Weekend <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Zr7aYweCTw>
- Reeves Theater FB page video clips: <https://www.facebook.com/watch/ReevesTheater/>
- House Band does Fleetwood Mac fund raiser livestream, during COVID to raise money for Reeves while forced to close: <https://www.facebook.com/ReevesTheater/videos/698544710732524>
- NC Main Street Award 2018 <https://vimeo.com/channels/ms2019/322601393>
- <https://www.ourstate.com/the-reeves-theater-and-cafe-in-elkin/>
- APA NC Award - <https://www.elkintribune.com/news/27285/reeves-named-great-historic-restoration>
- Martha Bassett Show at The Reeves Theater: [https://journalnow.com/winstonsalemmonthly/voice-of-the-valley/article\\_7e9af6bc-c3b2-11e8-8d93-470433ca80a7.html](https://journalnow.com/winstonsalemmonthly/voice-of-the-valley/article_7e9af6bc-c3b2-11e8-8d93-470433ca80a7.html)

# SUCCESSFUL SMALL TOWNS: ELKIN, NC

FUNDING SOURCES



## Funding - Elkin Trails

### Private

- Donation/Donors (large amount)
- Fund Raising
- In Kind Donations
- In Kind Labor

### Government:

- Town of Elkin New Capital Reserve Trail Maintenance Fund
- Elkin & Jonesville TDA Assistance
- Wilkes County Assistance
- Downton Elkin MSD

### Other:

- NC Recreation Trails Program Grant
- Winston-Salem Foundation Grants
- Lowes Foundation Material Donations
- Walmart Foundation Material Donations
- Friends of the Mountains to Sea Trail assistance

## Funding - Coley Hall at The Liberty / Angry Troll Restaurant & Brewing

### Private:

- Owner Investment

### Government:

- Town/County Incentives
- Federal Historic Tax Credits
- State Historic Tax Credits

### Other:

- NC Rural Economic Development Center - Building Reuse & Renovation Grant Program

## Funding - The Reeves Theater & Café / Downtown Music School

### Private:

- Owner investment
- Box Office Seat Sales
- Donations
- Reevestock Music Fest

### Government:

- Federal Historic Tax Credits
- State Historic Tax Credits
- NC Main Street Solutions Fund

### Other:

- Tri County Citizens Foundation, Save the Reeves Fund