

St. Claude Main Street Announces \$60,000 in Arts/Culture Programs

By Doug MacCash, NOLA.com | The Times-Picayune

March 27, 2013 at 9:20 AM, updated March 27, 2013 at 6:32 PM



St. Claude Main Street, an organization meant to fuel the development of St. Claude Avenue and the surrounding neighborhoods from Elysian Fields Avenue to Poland Avenue, announced an award of \$60,000 to a suite of six arts and culture programs to take place in 2013. The historic suburb has rebounded from the 2005 storm and flood, as the city's hippest and hottest neighborhood. The programs sponsored by St. Claude Main Street are:

- "A series of intensive capacity-building sessions for St. Claude-area arts and cultural organizations, which will focus on strategic planning, fundraising planning, earned-income strategies, and board development," presented by The National Performance Network, an organization that fosters traveling theater and visual arts productions.
- A public workshop presented by The People's Institute for Survival and Beyond, an organization dedicated to eradicating racism.
- A cooperative gallery summit, during which "artists from around the world who run their own spaces will be invited to New Orleans to participate in a best practices sharing weekend." The St. Claude Avenue area is the home of several small, cooperative or artist-owned galleries.

- An arts, culture and entertainment guidebook to the area to be created by Constance, a design and publishing firm.
- The development of a St. Claude Arts District Visitors Center housed within the New Orleans Healing Center.
- Improvement of the St. Claude Arts District website SCADNOLA.com. SCAD is an association of the area's art galleries..

St. Claude Main Street board president Jonathan Rhodes interview, Part I
St. Claude Main Street board of directors president Jonathan Rhodes and I toured St. Claude Avenue from Elysian Fields Avenue to Poland Avenue on a rainy afternoon last week as Rhodes discussed the non-profit civic improvement organization's goals, the proposed uses of a \$275,000 grant St. Claude Main Street received in May. Note that the video streetscape was shot a day later than the interview, when the weather had improved.

In an August 2012 interview, St. Claude Main Street board of directors president Jonathan Rhodes explained that the organization is part of a nationwide program first instituted in the 1970s by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, which strives to revitalize business corridors. The original purpose was to rescue endangered small-town main streets, but the vision has grown to include select urban main streets, such as St. Claude Avenue.

In May 2012, St. Claude Main Street was awarded \$275,000 from a new organization called ArtPlace. ArtPlace, which began making grants in 2011, is a collaborative organization that consolidates donations from several philanthropies and public benefactors, among them the Ford Foundation, Knight Foundation, Mellon Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts. ArtPlace's focus is neighborhood revitalization based on arts and culture. The St. Claude Avenue area was ideal for ArtPlace funding considering that much of its current identity is based on the energetic growth of the art scene since Hurricane Katrina.