

TREND report



Downtown Tucson Partnership's Rapid Response to the Pandemic

Kathleen Eriksen • published in the March 2021 issue

2020 was a challenging year for everyone including the downtown business community. From the pandemic, to calls for social justice, health and safety regulations and rioting; the businesses were faced with many obstacles and were struggling to stay alive. The Downtown Tucson Partnership (DTP) was on the frontline responding to the needs of the businesses and the community at large.

With the help of our many partners and dedicated staff and board, the DTP responded to these challenging times with creative programs, financial support and vital, real time communications.



Outdoor Cafe grant recipient HUB

Innovative programs like the DTP Gift Card Incentive program, infused \$308,000 directly into downtown businesses in two short months. The common goal was to inject funds into the businesses immediately. Large organizations sponsored separate rounds (\$10,000 for 1000 cards) of the Gift Card Incentive Program, thereby providing a \$10 bonus for each \$25 gift card purchased by the public. DTP and the downtown businesses worked together to cross-promote the program through social media. It was wildly successful with some rounds selling



DTP Ambassadors on Congress Street

businesses to employ the highest level of health and safety standards, thereby earning them the certification through Pima County's Ready for You program. DTP assisted Pima County with the distribution of free PPE to all downtown businesses. DTP also helped the Pima County Health Department select a central location and provided marketing assistance for a free COVID-19 testing site located downtown. The site is open to the public on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

DTP welcomed the community back downtown while sharing important health and safety information. 200 banners were installed on the light poles and 100s of posters were distributed to businesses. Health and safety signage, window vinyls and sidewalk clings completed this visual marketing campaign.

DTP also launched a new state of the art website, downtowntucson.org which features improved functionality, a modern design and visually stunning content. In tandem with the website, DTP released the new user-friendly Downtown Tucson Gift Card, honored at over 50 downtown businesses.

Throughout it all, the majority of downtown businesses have survived. Our downtown businesses have been an inspiration to the community with their ability to pivot, adapt and survive. DTP is immensely grateful for all the support they received from their many partners in 2020.

out in under 15 minutes! This program was used as a model and emulated by other downtown organizations throughout the nation.

A progressive partnership agreement with Pima County resulted in creative re-granting programs like the Outdoor Café and Downtown Rebound grant programs with a total of 72 grants and approximately \$200,000 awarded to downtown businesses. Additional funds were made available to acquire and install 30 public hand sanitation stations, 12 touchless solar-powered trash compactors, eight water filling stations and 158 street trees tight-wrapped in white lights.

DTP's partnership agreement with Pima County served as a pilot project and was designed to be replicated in other areas of the community. The agreement was refined and duplicated with the Fourth Avenue Merchants Association and the Ready for You program was implemented County-wide.

With guidance from the Pima County Health Department, DTP encouraged a safe reopening of Downtown Tucson through the Ready for You program. DTP encouraged downtown



Thank you DTP Rialto Marquee

..... DTP was recently honored by the Minority and Small Business Alliance of Southern Arizona and the U.S. Small Business Administration with the “Hero Award” for our commitment to Downtown Tucson and our efforts to help those that are struggling amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

Kathleen Eriksen is CEO of the Downtown Tucson Partnership. She took over the position on Oct. 1, 2016, relocating from Michigan, where she was the owner and founder of the Eriksen Development Company, a full-service downtown development and consulting firm. She has 14 years of executive experience with downtown organizations in Michigan and California. She can be reached via email at kathleeneriksen@downtowntucson.org.

Tucson Real Estate + New Development

Subscribe online at
www.trendreportaz.com

For Quotes on Corporate Subscriptions and Advertising Programs,
Contact **Lucinda Smedley**
at 520-603-2175 or lucinda@trendreportaz.com