



## CEO Comments

Penny Parsekian – Summer 2010

The idea for having a seasonal ice rink in downtown New London has been tossed around for years. With the City Council awarding us a Community Block Grant in the spring, we now have a chance to make it happen. So in May, when I attended the National Main Street Conference in Oklahoma City, I immediately sought out Donna Dow, manager of a Main Street program that has installed a rink in its downtown, Durant, Oklahoma. The Durant experience was very positive. Hundreds of people came to skate daily, patronizing downtown shops and restaurants as well. Donna's advice was to market the rink heavily and to program it non-stop.

What's our strategy to get it done? Partnerships, both within the Main Street organization and with outside players. All the Main Street core committees must play a role. Design will start the ball rolling by finding the right rink for our downtown and recommending how it should be installed and administered. Promotion will create and execute a marketing plan for the rink. Economic Enhancement will ensure that the merchants are advised of rink hours and opportunities for their businesses, as well as measure the success of the endeavor, and Organization will work with other entities, from the New London Recreation Department, Youth Affairs, and Adult Education to explore ways these groups can use the rink for instruction and parties. At least this is how the Board of Directors envisions our organization tackling this project and functioning, on the whole, in the future.

In the past, our committees have operated "in silos," each focused on their individual projects. All that is about to change, and the rink project will establish the wisdom of the new approach. Please wish us luck, or better yet, jump in and lend a hand!