

2026 OMS Deep Dive: Makers on Main

Preliminary Schedule – Subject to Change

Wednesday, October 7th

Time	Location: Online
12:00 – 12:20 p.m.	Lunch Networking
12:30- 1:45 p.m.	Welcome & Plenary Speaker Alli French, co-founder of Talent Maker City, will share a decade’s worth of insights from building a maker community that is tightly woven into the fabric of downtown Talent. Participants will explore how makerspaces can strengthen Main Street districts, how local businesses and civic partners can uplift makers, and how creative collaboration can serve as a catalyst for economic resilience and community identity. Drawing from 10 years of hands-on experience, Alli will highlight the practical wins, the challenges, and the unexpected breakthroughs that emerge when makers, entrepreneurs, and downtown stakeholders work in true partnership. This session invites attendees to consider how place-making, creativity, and Main Street engagement can drive long-term vitality in their own communities. With over 27 years in education, Alli French has taught everything from middle school health to college-level courses, developing a natural ability to spark curiosity and build meaningful connections. As one of the founders of Talent Maker City, she is dedicated to creating inclusive spaces where innovation, creativity, and community come together. Alli’s proudest accomplishment is the collaborative work of building Talent Maker City from the ground up alongside an extraordinary team. Today, TMC stands as a vibrant hub where individuals of all ages and backgrounds can learn, make, and grow. Alli lives in Talent with her partner and their two beloved dogs. When she’s not in the shop making and creating, she enjoys traveling and getting outdoors to recharge and explore.
1:45-2:00	Break
2:00 – 3:05 p.m.	All-In on Makers Spaces Panel Discussion Maker spaces connect people to place by offering hands-on, authentic experiences that bring Main Streets to life. This panel highlights communities that have embraced makers as drivers of creativity, economic vitality, and local identity. Hear from Main Street programs and business owners about how they are uplifting local talent, filling storefronts with activity, and creating environments where makers feel valued and supported. Through stories of collaboration and lessons learned, we’ll explore how the experience economy can strengthen both makers and Main Streets, and how communities can build creative ecosystems that energize downtowns.
3:05 – 3:15	Break
3:15 – 4:20 p.m.	Makers Booth to Main Street: Incubating Creativity Panel Discussion Oregon’s downtowns have long been powered by makers, and today’s creative entrepreneurs continue that legacy by turning small opportunities into thriving businesses. This session highlights how Makers Markets, Farmers Markets, holiday bazaars, fairs and other shared spaces as incubators where artisans and small manufacturers can test products, build customer relationships, and generate early

	revenue that can lead to brick-and-mortar success. We'll showcase Oregon Main Street communities that strengthen maker relationships by creating opportunities, connecting dots, and building networks that help creative entrepreneurs grow. When makers shift from incubator spaces into storefronts, Main Streets become more vibrant, creative, and rooted in local identity—and Main Street organizations can be the key link that supports that transition.
4:20-4:30	Break
4:35-5:35	Continuum of Resources for Makers This breakout session highlights the vital role resource and technical assistance providers play in supporting small businesses, especially makers and creative entrepreneurs activating downtown spaces. Participants will rotate through small-group conversations, choosing which experts to engage with based on their needs and interests. Each breakout offers practical guidance on business development, funding tools, regulations, and capacity-building. Attendees will leave with targeted insights and tools to strengthen their community's maker and experience-based economy.
5:35-6:30	Happy Hour Fun!

Thursday, October 8th

Time	Online
8:30 – 8:50 a.m	Morning Networking
9:00- Noon	Workshop Ilana Preuss, author of Recase Your City, will present a dynamic, three-hour workshop that transforms the promise of makers and small-scale manufacturing into a concrete strategy for your downtown. We'll set the language for small-scale manufacturing as economic development, walk through how to find the artisans and product businesses already in your town, and work through the conversations to have with property owners, business support organizations, and your own board. You'll leave with talking points, a first-cut goal, and the tools to bring your committee into the work — advancing multiple Main Street goals at once, from vacancy to wages to local ownership. Participants are encouraged to complete brief pre-conference preparation, including reading the first chapter and completing the SPARK scorecard, both provided after registration. This foundational work ensures everyone arrives ready to make the most of the session and to move confidently from understanding the maker opportunity to implementing a plan that supports it.