



Press Release

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For immediate release

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Local Banks Offer Canopy Removal Loans

Low-Interest Loans to Aid in Removal and Repairs

Columbia – The Columbia Special Business District is pleased to announce that several banks have come together to participate in the Canopy Removal Loan Program for property owners interested in removing their canopies and doing minor repairs to the building facade.

Boone County National Bank, Boone National Savings and Loan, Premier Bank, Commerce Bank, First National Bank and Premier Bank have created a simple, low-interest loan program for those property owners interested in removal.

Both the Columbia Special Business District and the Central Columbia Association Boards believe that canopy removal will improve the aesthetics of Columbia's "main street," increase the economic vitality of businesses located under the canopy, and make *The District* a bigger draw for tourists. Other towns have experienced positive benefits from removing their canopies, including:

- Increased sales for businesses – some up to 50% higher.
- Drive-by traffic could now see businesses previously hidden under the canopy.
- Signs and window displays became more effective at drawing in customers.
- Sidewalks became larger, sidewalk cafes opened up, and there was more room for festivals.
- People started saying things like "When did you plant the trees downtown?" and "Is this a new restaurant?"
- Other beautification measures became possible, such as street trees, new street lights, and so forth.

Details of the Canopy Removal Loan Program are attached and the entire canopy removal assistance package is available at www.discoverthedistrict.com. This packet contains other resources available to those interested in removing their canopy – from tax incentives to renovation guidelines to technical assistance.