Main Street Design creates experiences that connect people with ideas, for places where education, entertainment, and visitor satisfaction are parallel priorities.

We are committed to informing guests in entertaining and memorable ways.
Main Street Design is an award-winning interpretive planning and experience design practice. Since 1991 we have completed more than 200 projects for nature centers, wildlife reserves, zoos, aquariums and botanic gardens, visitor centers and museums, and corporate clients.
Main Street’s principals, Michael Mercadante and Tevere MacFadyen, are flexible, responsive, and dedicated to providing authentic and compelling experiences. Michael assumes primary responsibility for dimensional design, while Tevere directs programmatic aspects of our work, with a focus on content development.
WORK

ZOOS & AQUARIUMS

MUSEUMS & VISITOR CENTERS

NATURE CENTERS, PARKS & PRESERVES

TRAVELING EXHIBITS

ENVIRONMENTAL GRAPHICS
Main Street’s zoo, aquarium, and botanic garden work encourages memorable encounters between people and wildlife.
- Tactile raised-line drawings and interactive graphics provide accessible overview of prairie plant diversity.

- Simple commercially manufactured “hay sheds” house interpretive nodes, provide shade and rain protection in contextually appropriate style.

- Life-sized Corten steel bison silhouette is an irresistible photo opportunity.
FLORIDA: MISSION EVERGLADES

Client: Zoo Miami
Location: Miami, Florida

- Large-scale cast concrete tactile graphics introduce key Everglades habitats.
- Brightly colored, whimsical identity signage draws guests to feature attractions, alludes to Florida’s “picture postcard” traditions.
NATURE’S NEIGHBORHOODS

Client: Zoo New England  
Location: Boston, Massachusetts

- Colorful, illustrated, high-visibility identity signage introduces fun and playful project style.

- High-energy whole-body play opportunities abound throughout, such as this simple stump-jump activity.

- Emulative parallel play activities enrich guests’ experience and facilitate emotional connections with exhibit animals. Here, young visitors try climbing like a red panda on a simulated bamboo play structure.
GRIZZLY RIDGE

Client: Akron Zoo
Location: Akron, Ohio

- Species ID’s and other graphics incorporate historical references, alluding to Ohio’s “wild” past.
- River otter exhibit features slide-through acrylic tube, allowing young guests to “swim with the otters.” Deck offers sweeping views of bear enclosure.
- Custom-designed weathervane at exhibit entrance showcases feature species.
Large-scale wet model of Southern California watersheds anchors interpretation of fresh water resource management, offering informal and engaging access to complex content.

Guest trigger “rainfall” from overhead “clouds,” then observe as water flows over simulated paved hardscape but gets absorbed by permeable surfaces.

Colorful curvilinear bilingual banners introduce key themes.
For traditional exhibition settings Main Street balances education, entertainment, and operational efficiency.
Interpretive exhibit spaces are deliberately designed to support educational programming, enhancing the efficiency and flexibility of these spaces.

Understated custom-designed contemporary modular display fixtures are highly functional while avoiding competition with architectural and historic interiors.

Integrated audiovisual and multimedia programs provide additional content depth.
• Restored former “slave kitchen” serves as a jumping off point for discussions of President Grant’s troubled relationship with issues of race.

• The former dining room has been painstakingly restored but left unfurnished. Instead, “magic mirror” audiovisual program reflects a lively dialogue that might have occurred around the table.
At the site of the only known physical evidence of the passage of the Lewis and Clark expedition, exhibits consider the voyage itself, its motivations and its impacts.

The expedition’s multiple routes through the west are explored in dynamic, interactive fashion and celebrated with large-scale illustrations based on Clark’s own cartography.

Large-scale hands-on mechanical interactives bring alive the stories of members of the Corps of Discovery as real people and explore the complex interrelationships among them during and after the voyages.
• Rich mix of objects, artifacts, media and graphics trace company history back to Colonial times, as well as the evolution of an iconic American brand.

• Replica of locally famous John Hancock sculpture greets arriving visitors, introduces brief history of insurance industry.

• Artifacts and media programs survey and document the company’s consumer advertising over time.
• Realistic, archaeologically accurate reconstruction of 2,000 year old Mogollon pit house celebrates “America’s first farmhouse” and the deep roots of New Mexican agriculture.

• Open displays of replicas and artifacts in period settings bring different historic eras to life.

• Grinding corn the old fashioned way, using mano and metate, powerfully connects guests to enduring Southwestern cultural traditions.
NATURE CENTERS

PARKS

PRESERVES
Main Street’s work in natural environments fosters understanding, appreciation, and stewardship.
• Outdoor interpretive elements housed in stylized “ramada” shade structures take advantage of Zion’s comfortable year-round climate, enable Park to serve peak season crowds without overbuilding.

• Large-scale accurate relief model of Zion Canyon serves as practical and conceptual centerpiece of exhibits, provides both geological interpretation and visit planning support.

• High-durability tactile elements and simple mechanical interactives enhance guest experience and can withstand harsh conditions in exterior setting.
• Gateway experience introduces core environmental education and stewardship themes.

• Dedicated locations for staff or docent-led programming are designed into the project.

• Interpretive graphics support animal viewing opportunities but don’t compete with them.
TRAVELING EXHIBITIONS
Main Street’s traveling exhibits utilize durable, modular components and methodologies to produce high-impact experiences.
First Nations peoples share their own experiences in Arctic “story circle.”

Visitors try their luck at jumping like an Arctic fox or hopping like a snowshoe hare.

Crawl into a polar bear’s ice den to find cubs safe and snug inside.
What’s it like to look inside a living creature? X-ray interactive invites guests to find out for themselves.

For an exhibition focused on positive human responses to environmental disasters and other threats to wildlife. Interactive exhibits engage guests in activities that simulate real work being done in the field, like foster feeding hand-reared condor chicks or cleaning oiled seabirds.
• Traces African-American sacred music traditions from slavery to the present day.

• Based on work of Bernice Johnson Reagon, *Sweet Honey in the Rock*.

• Immersive environments anchor thematic sections of exhibition.

• Ambient and visitor activated audio programs enhance sense of place.