

Suwanee

First Town Center Businesses Open

The first businesses in Suwanee's new mixed-use Town Center have opened their doors and laid out the welcome mat for customers. These businesses, located in the 42,000-square-foot Main Street Corners building at 350 Town Center Avenue, represent the first "work" and "shop" elements to be opened at Suwanee's built-from-scratch "live...work...play...shop" development.

At Executive Barbers, the first shop to open last week, the twirling red, white, and blue stripes of a barber-shop pole and Jasper, the owner's 4-year-old jack-russell-rat terrier eagerly greet customers.

"I'm excited about being a part of Town Center," says Executive Barbers owner Steve Lederman. "This is going to be a great place to do business."

Across the hallway, the menu at Sweet Temptations is sure to offer a satisfying reward for those with even the most discerning sweet tooth. The coffee and dessert shop, will also offer gourmet breakfast and lunch items. Sweet Temptations' desserts, breads, and pastries, notes owner Surelyne Lee, are all fresh and made to order for the shop. The coffee, she adds, is organic, shade-grown, and meets fair trade standards.

"We wanted to establish a business that tied in with our family values," Lee says. "Lots of times the kids wanted ice cream and we didn't. There wasn't a place that offered something for everyone. We want to provide something for the sweet tooth of all ages."

Upstairs from these shops, Ameriprise Financial owner Kevin O'Brien from his third-floor office overlooking the park already has served the rush of tax-filing clients who needed a little last-



minute assistance before tax deadline.

Other businesses to open in Main Street Corners include BB&T

Bank, Imagix Dentistry, and Ippolito's Italian Restaurant.

Seeking Citizens that want to be Actively Engaged in Reading and Building a Stronger Gwinnett

The Gwinnett Neighborhood Leadership Institute, GNLI, is an intensive, 8-month program that trains, empowers and supports ordinary citizens and community leaders so that they can promote positive changes in their neighborhoods and communities. The purpose of the program is to develop community leaders who will assist others in understanding their government and effectively identify and address community problems. Diversity is pivotal to the success of GNLI. Participants range in age from 18 to over 80. Some students are lifelong residents of the county, while others are newcomers. Class make-up represents the population and diversity in Gwinnett. Students are located demographically countywide.

The range of interests among students and alumni reflect the concerns of community residents as a whole. Among them are: Addressing growth and development issues; helping our youth succeed; preventing violence and crime; environmental concerns; removing transportation barriers for seniors, youth, low-income parents and workers; building cross-cultural understanding; bridging the gap between citizens and their government; providing opportunities for all citizens to take an active and involved role in their communities.

Applications to participate in the program are accepted throughout the year. There is a \$500 program fee, with some scholarships available. Applications can be obtained online at www.gnli.org. The deadline for applications for this year's class is July 1, 2006.

Contact Rachael Shaikun Holder at Gwinnett Coalition for Health and Human Services, 770-995-3339, rachael@gwinnettcoalition.org

Gwinnett Place CID Promoting Retail Environment

If there were such a thing as "downtown Gwinnett," then surely the central business district known as Gwinnett Place would have to fit the bill.

For decades, the Gwinnett Place area has served as a key destination for those looking to spend their time, and money, on all things retail and entertainment.

As time has progressed, competition for consumer dollars and corporate investment has grown in Gwinnett and the metro area. Gwinnett

Place is now part of a much larger pool of contenders vying for consumer attention.

Greater Gwinnett Place remains a vibrant place to shop, work and play. The area enjoys one of metro Atlanta's most unique mixes of entertainment options with the presence of the Wild Bill's dance and concert venue as well as a wide variety of traditional and international dining locations. Retailers are now finding the area to be a business and community

environment unlike any other in the region because of the efforts of the Gwinnett Place Community Improvement District (CID).

A CID is a self-taxing area that allows commercial property owners to invest proactively in planning, studies and infrastructure improvements that address challenges the area is experiencing. The Gwinnett Place CID generally covers most of the areas between Steve Reynolds Boulevard on

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Tax Commissioner

New Website for Unclaimed Refunds

Gwinnett County Tax Commissioner Katherine Sherrington's website provides taxpayers with an option to find information that will help determine if they may be due a refund.

The option, called "Unclaimed Refunds," can be found at the Tax Commissioner's website, www.GwinnettTaxCommissioner.com. The site provides a current listing of outstanding unclaimed refunds and overpayments. Anyone who finds his or her name on the list should e-mail Lisa St. Clair in the Gwinnett County Tax Commissioner's Office, lisa.stclair@gwinnettcountry.com.

Gwinnett Place CID

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the south, Shackleford Road on the east, all the Gwinnett Place Mall area to the north and Old Norcross Road on the west.

Area businesses have joined the CID and elected a board of directors to oversee the effort. The board sets a special millage rate to generate funds necessary to help revitalize the community. In the case of Gwinnett Place, projects are aimed at drawing the area together and making it easier to access.

"We're increasing traffic mobility to have easier and more convenient access to the multitude of retail venues in the area," said Joe Allen, the CID's executive director. "We're enhancing the sidewalk options to encourage people to park and walk from store to store. We're making it safe and secure for everyone to come shop and fulfill their retail wishes."

"In short, we are developing a main street for the county's central business district," he added. "This district will continue as the region's premier destination point."

Long-term CID goals include additional bridges over I-85, landscaping for the Pleasant Hill Road and Steve Reynolds Boulevard ramps, greater access options and effective way-finding/signage features. Plans also call for installing street lamps, benches and landscaping to accompany new sidewalks along Pleasant Hill Road and Satellite Boulevard. Pocket parks, gateway elements and other recreation areas are planned along busier travel areas.

The district currently accounts for 191 commercial properties, 160 owners and a total property value exceeding \$500 million. And other business investment is responding to the CID's initiatives.

A key new property on the scene is the Reynolds Crossing shopping center at the intersection of Steve Reynolds Boulevard and Old Norcross Road.

Reynolds Crossing is anchored by a large Kroger, a video store, banks, restaurants and as many as 20 other outlets.

In the area of revitalization, the father-son team of Benjamin Rincon, Senior and Junior, transformed the former Venture Mall on Venture Drive into the new Santa Fe Mall. The revived center includes a theater, clothing stores, restaurants, nightclub and many specialty stores and services.

Benjamin Rincon, Sr. said the CID's landscape enhancement efforts and other improvements have made the Pleasant Hill area more attractive to those seeking to grow their businesses.

SUWANEEN DDA SEEKS PROPOSALS FOR HISTORIC PIERCE'S CORNER

The Downtown Development Authority (DDA) of Suwanee has issued a request for proposals for development of the 0.37-acre Pierce's Corner property in historic Old Town.

The DDA purchased the property on Main and Scales streets last April. It now is seeking developers who are interested in leasing or purchasing the property, rehabilitating the 6,000-square-foot Pierce's Corner building, and constructing a new mixed-use building as outlined in a conceptual plan created by Atlanta-based design firm Urban Collage.

"This offering," says Jane Keegan, Suwanee's DDA manager, "represents the first development project to be undertaken by Suwanee's DDA. We hope to generate a lot of interest in this unique opportunity in a growing, upscale market."

The conceptual plan for the property at 597 Main Street proposes two possible options for the new building to be constructed along Scales Road, a one-story or two-story building with 4,500-10,000 square feet. This mixed-use building and the rehabilitated Pierce's Corner would have retail space on the ground floor and office and/or residential space above.

Ideally, Keegan says, the development would offer a mix of unique, locally owned, sophisticated retail, restaurant, and entertainment businesses that would generate activity throughout the day and evening. Among the possible businesses that would be featured are a studio cinema, upscale restaurant, wine shop and bar, chocolate shop, unique bookstore, Italian market, artisan gifts, or Ticketmaster outlet, to name just a few.

The DDA envisions that the project will emphasize pedestrian design and other elements noted in the Old Town Overlay District, which provide for a traditional relationship between buildings and public spaces.

The deadline for proposals is June 30. For additional information, contact Jane Keegan at 770/945-8996 or jkeegan@suwanee.com.



Congressman Linder Endorses Bert Nasuti Re-Election to Gwinnett County Commission

Congressman John Linder released the following statement regarding his endorsement of Bert Nasuti for re-election to the Gwinnett County Commission.

"I am proud to endorse my great friend Bert Nasuti for his reelection to the Gwinnett County Commission, District 2. Bert has done an exceptional job thus far representing Gwinnett County and I will do everything I can to help with his reelection. I know Bert will continue to represent his constituents with distinction in his next term."

-Congressman John Linder

Historic Norcross Seitz Photography Exhibit at Northern Star Coffee House

Nestled in Historic Norcross is a new type of coffee shop. **Northern Lights Coffee House** offers the community great coffee in the morning and wine in the evenings - and a place to enjoy conversation and art.

Seitz Photography is the main attraction during the months of May and June with an exhibition of their work, which includes people in all walks of life. Included in this display are pieces which capture the beauty of creation around us. Stop by Northern Lights to view the work of Seitz Photography and enjoy a relaxing moment while there!

Seitz Photography at Northern Lights Coffee House
Shop: 45 South Peachtree Street, Norcross, GA
30071. www.seitzphotography.com; www.northernstarcoffeehouse.com

