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“Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.”
I John 4:7-8

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Plans continue for development of former Durant train depot

**By Sharron Cauthen
Durant Preservation Comm.**
The Durant Depot project reached a much awaited milestone with the recent announcement of authority to advertise for bids from Mississippi Department of Transportation.

The City of Durant will receive bids for the historic Durant depot north building renovation no later than 5:00 p.m. local time on March 21 at the city hall, 253 W. Mulberry Street in Durant.

There will be a non-mandatory pre-bid conference scheduled for 2 p.m. at Durant City Hall on March 2.

The Durant Historic Preservation Commission started this project when the commission was organized in late 2011. Fund raising began in 2012, and renovation grants were awarded by Mississippi Department of Archives, Mississippi Development Authority, and Mississippi Department of Transportation. The Durant City Board has supported the planning efforts which have been directed by Belinda Stewart Architects of Eupora, MS.

Three mayors, Tasha Davis, Robert Johnson, and Johnny Pritchard have led in the effort to fund the depot renovation, along with members of the city board since 2009, the year that Durant purchased the depot from CN Railway. The historic structure was designated a Mississippi Landmark in 2010 and was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in January 2016.

These credentials were stepping stones in the long process of qualifying for grants and meeting the extensive requirements of grant providers. Du-

rant Historic Preservation Commission expresses gratitude to the many donors who sent gifts and subscribed to the Durant Depot Memorial Brick Walk, which will be a tribute to family members and organizations connected to Durant and Holmes County and Illinois Central Railroad history.

The NR nomination form describes the building. “The Durant Illinois Central Railroad Depot, standing on Highway 12 in the central business district of Durant, was constructed in 1909 to replace a two-story frame building. The depot consists of a passenger building on the north end and warehouse building on the south end connected by a breezeway. The main line track runs east of the depot, which was the center of an active rail yard with a maintenance shop, round house, and a complex of loading sheds for the agricultural produce that was shipped in abundance from this depot during the busy years of the railroad. The 1960s saw the removal of the machine shop and round house east of the main line, but the station was in active use by CN Railway (through 2009).”

Bill Gatlin, architectural historian with Mississippi Department of Archives and History, supervised preparation of the nomination documents.

Residents of Durant and Holmes County recall many ways that Illinois Central Railroad and the Durant Depot improved life for local families. At one time there were about 200 families in Durant who depended on ICRR for paychecks and other benefits such as travel passes and even assistance in emergencies. The railroad provided a vital connection to the outside

world in many ways. Farmers shipped cotton and vegetables, strawberries and water melons.

The Durant Ice Plant loaded ice into freight car bunkers to refrigerate produce from counties to the south. Families used inexpensive rail tickets for short trips to Jackson or the Coast or longer travel to see relatives throughout the country. Soldiers in World War II boarded trains to Camp Shelby and returned home by rail after years of service. Families displaced by the mechanization of farming went north by rail to find new homes and new employment.

Improved highways and increased production of cars and trucks in the 1960s and 1970s reduced passenger traffic and slowed the growth of freight business.

In 1981 the ICRR abandoned the line from Durant to Kosciusko. AmTrak passenger trains were moved to the Delta Route in September 1995. In 2009 CN Railway sold the Memphis to Canton line to Grenada Railway. In 2011 the segment between Grenada and Canton was put out of service. In 2015 Grenada Railway ownership was purchased by North Central Mississippi Regional Rail Authority and leased for a term of 15 years to Illinois Company Railroad, a subsidiary of Iowa Pacific Holdings.

Recently the new operators have reopened the line through Durant for rail car storage. Area economic developers hope that freight business will return soon to the entire line from Canton through Durant to Memphis.

Renovations at the Durant Depot North Building will retain the historic red tile roof with a process of removal, rebuilding,



This old postcard view of Durant Depot shows the building with all offices in use and baggage wagons on the brick walk along the main line track. AmTrak trains stopped in Durant until late in 1995. Architects and contractors will use old photos to understand how the building looked back in the busy days of passenger traffic and long freight trains. (Photo by Sharron Cauthen)



A bay window section of the Durant ICRR Depot waiting room fronts on Highway 12, which is Mulberry Street, in the heart of the Durant commercial district. Renovation plans detail a restoration of the original woodwork and plastered walls in this main compartment of the North Building. The original ticket windows will be retained as partitions between refurbished office spaces and a mini-kitchen will be built next to the central meeting room.

(Photo by Sharron Cauthen)

and reinstalling the tiles. The interior will be repaired and refurbished so that the waiting room will be suitable for an ed-

ucational space such as the Durant Children’s Center. A central office will be converted into a multi-purpose meeting room.

As a public service facility, the Durant Depot will be prepared as a location for family and community activities.

County 4-H’ers reign in four legged champions, on to Dixie National

**By Betsy Padgett
Holmes Co. Ext./4-H Agent**
Holmes County 4-H’ers dominated the Beef and Goat shows at last week’s Delta District Show in Greenwood.

The three day show was comprised of youth judging contests, showmanship for each species and market and breeding animal classes. County youth spent their time winning contests and exhibiting champion animals.

On Monday, the Junior Livestock Beef Team placed first in the Beef team contest; the junior hog team, 3rd. The beef team

was comprised of John Hudson Word, Colton and Livi Howell. The swine team was manned by Lilly Word, Hanna Hood and Drue Johnson. Senior 4-H’ers also judged – Rayne Tate, John Thomas Murtagh, Tyler Diffey, Tyler Branch, Sidney Sinclair, Pearce Edwards and Bug Powell.

Beef Cattle, Goats and Lambs showed on Tuesday. In the classes that our kids showed beef cattle and goats they were practically unbeatable. In Market Goat Showmanship, Jordan Brooks won his age division

with Chloe Word coming in second. John Hudson Word placed 4th in 10-11 year old division. Kylee won the 16-18 year old division with Tyler Branch taking second. Then in the Commercial Doe Goat competition, Tyler Branch took Champion of both the Mediumweight division and Light Heavyweight division with Jordan’s doe taking second in the Light Heavyweight class. Kylee won the Heavyweight division and her doe was named Grand Champion Commercial Doe of the show. Tyler’s (Continued on page 2.)



Pictured above at left is Jordan Brooks after winning the 8-9 year old Goat showmanship class at the Delta District Livestock Show in Greenwood. Jordan placed 2nd in his Commercial Doe class with this doe. Jordan is the son of Hillary Griffin of Lexington. At right, Tyler Branch is pictured with his Reserve Grand Champion Commercial Doe from the Delta District Livestock Show in Greenwood. Tyler, also, showed another Champion Doe in this competition and placed 2nd in showmanship. (Photos by Betsy Padgett)










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Holmes County 7-Day Forecast for February 9 - 15 as reported on THE WEATHER CHANNEL

						
Thursday Sunny 54/35 Precip. Chance 0%	Friday Sunny 68/55 Precip. Chance 0%	Saturday Cloudy 76/62 Precip. Chance 20%	Sunday AM Clouds/PM Sun 76/52 Precip. Chance 20%	Monday AM Clouds/PM Sun 62/47 Precip. Chance 20%	Tuesday Cloudy 64/48 Precip. Chance 20%	Wednesday Few Showers 61/43 Precip. Chance 40%

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