

Business Pulse

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The new TriGreen location will cure the space constraints as there will be room for the biggest, tallest and largest of tractors. When operational, the new TriGreen facility won't be great for just John Deere customers. It will also be a boost to the workforce. The current location has seven employees and Adam says that number will likely double when the new store opens. TriGreen has 20 locations in Tennessee, Alabama and Mississippi. The local phone number is 668-1784.

J'S RESTAURANT AGING NICELY

It all began 35 years ago this week when Jean Claude Petit began a tiny restaurant at Three Star Mall with three employees. The date was May 7, 1983. Jean Claude has passed on, but his son, Junior Petit, is carrying on his legacy as J's Restaurant continues to thrive. The restaurant is celebrating 35 years with fabulous food specials this week. "As a mom-and-pop restaurant, as opposed to a chain, we always have to find ways to stay ahead of the competition," said Junior, who was just 8 when his dad became owner of J's. "We like to be cheaper when it comes to price, but the main thing we always strive for is to have the best quality food and to provide the most quantity. It's really hard to



Heavy equipment operators are working to get 700,000 square feet pad ready at Mt. View Industrial Park in Morrison. The work will allow an industry to start construction immediately if this site is selected for development.

leave here hungry." Junior points out that the famous J's hamburger steak, complete with baked potato and salad bar, was \$4.99 back in 1983. In 35 years, the price has increased to just \$8.65 today, a mild increase compared to other prices. A racing fan, Junior says the price of a ticket to Talladega was \$15 back in 1983. He says a ticket now costs \$95. The restaurant landscape has experienced its share of changes since J's first opened. Back in the early 1980s, as hard as it may be to believe, McMinnville didn't have a Mexican restaurant. Taco Island on Sparta Street is believed to be the first to delve into the Mexican food genre before Fiesta Ranchero No. 1 at Plaza Shopping Center

opened. There were big players like Shoney's and Bonanza back in 1983, but there weren't food trucks scattered around town, nor the number of fast-food restaurants. Junior says catfish is unmistakably his No. 1 menu item, followed closely behind by the monster-sized baked potatoes, which are always a hit. The strawberry shortcake, which was intended to be only a seasonal item, is now on the menu full-time because of its popularity. Junior says J's is the longest tenured store at the mall outside of JC Penney and Kroger, both original anchors. "We've been on this same corner since 1994," said Junior. "I've seen a lot of

stores come and go here at the mall. At one time there were five places which sold food. Kmart was the biggest loss when it closed." Junior and his wife are proud parents to a new son, appropriately named Jean Claude Petit III. Junior says should he decide to go into the food service industry, the J's legacy could be passed down to a third generation. The phone number for J's is 473-5125.

NEW HOTEL INCHES CLOSER

A new hotel in McMinnville continues to inch closer to reality as a Tennessee businessman works toward opening a Hampton Inn on Sparta Street at the site of the old River Park Hospital. Sketches have been provided for the proposed hotel, which is expected to have 74 rooms. Estimates have placed the project as being a \$14 million development. The plan appears to have the green light with one hurdle still to clear. That hurdle is the property must be accepted into a tax abatement program in order for the deal to become finalized. I won't bore you with all the exact details of the tax abatement program, but I will provide a generalized description. The program would freeze property taxes on the land at their current levels for a certain amount of time, say 10 years. It provides a huge financial savings to the developer.

I will use the 8.26 acres under consideration on Sparta Street as an example. The property is currently empty and valued at \$413,000, according to the Property Assessor's Office. At that assessment, county taxes are currently \$3,248. City taxes are \$3,396 for a total of \$6,644. That's more than I want to pay in property tax, but it's not off the charts. Let's say a 74-room hotel is in fact construction at that site for an appraised value of \$14 million. County taxes would leap to \$110,100, while city taxes would climb to \$117,000. That's a total of \$227,100. The difference in property tax is \$220,456 a year. In just five years, the difference would be more than \$1 million so it's easy to see why freezing taxes at the pre-development level is desirable. Perhaps we'll hear something definitive about this hotel in the coming months.

PREPARING FOR MORE INDUSTRY

Our local Industrial Development Board is brimming with projects in hopes of bringing new industry, and more jobs, to Warren County. The most noticeable project, taking place right now at Mt. View Industrial Park past Morrison Industries, is moving earth for a 700,000-square-foot pad. When the pad is leveled and compacted, the site will be ready for immediate

construction. This is important because an industry doesn't want red tape and delays when it selects a location. It wants to go, go, go. When I stopped by the site Friday afternoon, there were several pieces of very large machinery working on the surface. That machinery doesn't come cheap and Industrial Development Board director Don Alexander says it is right at a \$500,000 project. It's being funded by a 90-10 matching grant with the IDB paying 10 percent of the money. In a separate project, the Industrial Development Board is working to purchase 223 acres of land in Morrison near the Coffee County line. This is a huge undertaking and one that's being done with the long-range plans of Warren County in mind. The site has been targeted because it's only about 10 miles from Interstate 24, it's level, has rail access, and it would have minimum impact on residential neighborhoods. "We can't get any closer to the interstate than that," said IDB member Jeff Golden. Added IDB member Joe Hamby, "We need this. We need more land." The Industrial Development Board does have two current sites for potential industry, but this would be a motherlode of sorts. Don says in addition to being positioned between the Nissan plant in Rutherford County and the Volkswagen plant in Chattanooga, Warren County will soon be in the work radius of a soon-to-be built Toyota/ Mazda plant in Huntsville, Ala. "The Industrial Development Board is considering plans for future industrial prospects to maintain employment possibilities for generations to come," said Don. "We see so much potential to provide a future industrial site that will provide the opportunity for better schools, community and managed growth."

THAT'S ALL FOLKS

The summer approaches. Do you know where your kayak is? Call 473-2191 with your business tips.



The Industrial Development Board continues to work with a Tennessee businessman who wants to construct a Hampton Inn at the old River Park Hospital site on Sparta Street.

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SCHEDULE:

Date & Time	Activity	Speaker
Sun. May 6		
11:00 AM	Worship	Bro. Ellis Scruggs, Jr., 40 Ave Church of Christ: Nashville
12:30 PM	"Old Fashion Basket Dinner"	
2:00 PM	Singing & Reports	
2:30 PM	Worship	Bro. Ellis Scruggs, Jr., 40 Ave Church of Christ: Nashville
Sun. Evening . . . Services under the direction of Morrison Church of Christ		
7:30 PM	Bro. Chris Perry	
Mon. May 7 . . . Services under the direction of Jackson St. Church of Christ		
7:00 PM	Bro. Ronnie Wells	Tullahoma, TN
Tue. May 8 . . . Services under the direction of Rockliff Church of Christ		
7:00 PM	Bro. Clarence DeLoach	Cookeville, TN
Wed. May 9 . . . Services under the direction of Browntown Church of Christ		
7:00 PM	Bro. Eugene Wilkerson	Browntown, TN
Thu. May 10 . . . Services under the direction of Hebron Church of Christ		
7:00 PM	Bro. Derrick Stiles	McMinnville, TN
Fri. May 11 . . . Services under the direction of Northside Church of Christ		
7:00 PM	Bro. Burnes Lyons	Smithville, TN

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