

# Rest easy, Hampton Inn getting closer

By this time next week, we'll be slathered in the balm of Bonnaroo, enjoying a peaceful existence in front of a concert stage listening to guitar solos and drinking pink lemonade. That's the life.

Until that time, I'm all business and today's installment of Business Pulse is packed full of information for the entire family. It's buzzer-to-buzzer excitement.

To use a horse racing term, the project to build a new Hampton Inn in McMinnville is heading down the home stretch.

The Industrial Development Board has called a public meeting for this Thursday, June 7 at 1:15 p.m. to explain the tax relief program which has been offered to Hunt Properties, the company looking to invest \$14 million in the hotel/ retail center.

The hotel will have 74 rooms with an expectant average room charge of \$109 per night. It will be located at 1560 Sparta Street, the site of the old hospital.

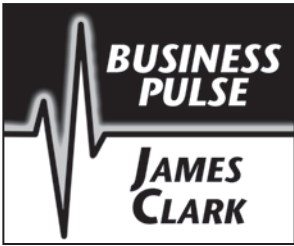
The property tax relief program must first be presented in the form of a public meeting. Then it must be approved by city and county governments. Then the project is cleared for takeoff with Industrial Development Board director Don Alexander saying he hopes hotel construction can begin this fall.

"The great thing about a project like this is it will generate more economic activity," said Don, who said more people staying here overnight will help retail stores, restaurants and gas stations.

The reason this tax abatement program has to jump through so many hoops is because it will provide an estimated \$2 million in property tax relief over its 20-year duration.

But based on hotel tax revenue that goes to the city and county, the Hampton Inn will actually generate more in hotel tax than it saves in property tax, provided the hotel operates at an 80 percent occupancy rate.

For me, approving the tax relief is a no-brainer. Some folks may complain that it's not fair and no one is giving them tax relief. To



that I say build a \$14 million hotel and I will support tax relief for you too.

The project also includes 20,000 square feet of retail space and a 2,000-square-foot conference center, which seems like an asset which could come in handy.

If you have questions about any of this, that's what the public meeting is for this Thursday. The meeting will be held at the Chamber of Commerce building and is scheduled to take place upstairs in the conference room. Don has a nice presentation prepared that's about 15 minutes long that has answers to many questions.

### LOCALS BUILD NASHVILLE CONDOS

Speaking of development projects, I want to take a minute to commend Jewel Hale and Bobby Kirby of Investments Partners for their successful condominium project in Nashville called Eighth South.

The upscale development includes 52 condos, which have all been sold. Jewel told me Friday, the condos went for \$350 a square foot and had units as small as 600 square feet on up. Prices ranged from over \$200,000 per condo for the smallest unit up to more than \$400,000 for the large sizes, Jewel said.

When I made the comment that I don't think I would want to live in 600 square feet, Jewel agreed. But he said, "These millennials who are single and just out of college, that's all they want. They want a bedroom, bathroom, and little living room and kitchen combination. With restaurants on the first floor, they don't have to leave the complex."

The first-floor restaurant offerings include a Holler & Dash, which is a Cracker Barrel spinoff company with seven locations. There's also Pizza Fire, Posh Nails, and one loca-



**Lisa Morton, a bus driver and trainer with Durham School Services, wants to make everyone aware of a job fair for bus drivers this Monday, June 4, from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the bus shed at 126 Middle School Drive. A \$1,000 sign-on bonus is available.**

tion that's still available, although Jewel says negotiations are close to being finalized with another restaurant for the last spot.

Our very own First National Bank provided the financing.

This project is impressive and worthy of three cheers from Business Pulse. It's also relevant because Jewel and Bobby are in the midst of a similar project here on Main Street McMinnville, although on a much smaller scale.

For those who have noticed the construction on Main Street, there will be two condos on the second floor and the possibility of one or two retail stores on the ground floor. It will be lovely and a tremendous asset to our downtown area. Current estimates have the project getting finished this fall, possibly in October.

### THE WHEELS ON THE BUS

The state is in the midst of historically low unemployment, yet there are still jobs, jobs everywhere. If you'd like to pursue a career as a school bus driver, a job fair is set for this Monday, June 4. Hours are 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the bus shed at 126 Middle School Drive.

To sweeten the pot, Durham School Services is offering a \$1,000 sign-on bonus and up to 50 hours of paid training so you can get your certification. Durham is in charge of handling the 54 bus routes for the Warren County School System.

Durham School Services general manager Tonya Rader says she is looking to hire at least 15 new drivers during the job fair. She says applicants must be 25 years old and pass a drug screen, background check, and physical.

Durham bus driver and trainer Lisa Morton says the job is great for mothers who have kids just starting school and for retirees who



**Local residents Jewel Hale and Bobby Kirby have finished construction on Eighth South, a 52-unit condominium and retail development in Nashville. Jewel says all 52 condos have been sold and all but one of the retail spaces on the first floor have been leased. The two are doing a similar development, on a much smaller scale, in McMinnville on Main Street.**

want to fill their day with some activity. She says the typical route takes two hours in the morning and afternoon and drivers are guaranteed 20 hours per week.

"When I started, I didn't think I could drive such a large vehicle, but it's something you get used to after training," said Lisa. She said the buses are 40 feet long, by 8 feet wide, by 11 feet tall.

As for the \$1,000 sign-on bonus, don't expect to get that Monday. The bonus will be paid in full, but in increments, to those who complete their training. This is to prevent people from taking the money and running.

For more information, show up Monday or call 473-8013.

### GRAND OPENING TO BE A GAS

If you want free food, free drinks, and a fabulous time, stop by Morrison Shell this Wednesday for the grand opening of Quick Shop and Which Wich.

Both stores have been up and running for a couple months and owner Bhumik Patel says it's time to cut



**BHUMIK PATEL**

the red ribbon and make it official with a grand opening celebration.

Bhumik says there will be free samples of Krispy Krunchy chicken, and free beer tasting too, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. at 7824 Manchester Highway. Gift cards will also be given away.

Having stopped by Morrison Shell myself, I can say Bhumik has built a first-rate facility and made a huge investment in our community. If you haven't already seen it for yourself, take advantage of the grand opening to check it out. The ribbon cutting is set for 11 a.m.

### SMOKE & BRICKS ROLLS INTO TOWN

If you love the great taste of Smoke & Bricks, but don't like to drive to the restaurant in Walling to get it, prepare for the best of both worlds.

Smoke & Bricks opened a food truck on Friday and will maintain regular hours in McMinnville every day except for Sunday.

"Everything has sold well, especially the BBQ nachos," said owner Cotey Tanner after navigating through his first lunch rush inside the food truck Friday afternoon. "We'll offer most everything we have in the restaurant except for the pizza. It's kind of hard to do brick oven pizza out of a food truck."

The menu includes pork tacos, brisket tacos, chicken tacos, pork sliders, a pork sandwich, and more. Cotey says there will be occasional specials like BBQ skewers with vegetables and other items on a stick.

If you're looking for the food truck, Cotey says he wants it to be easy to find.

Continued on **6C**



**There will be a grand opening celebration this Wednesday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. at the new Which Wich and Quick Shop in Morrison.**



**The Smoke & Bricks Food Truck opened for the first time Friday in the parking lot of Tree City Wine & Spirits. Owner Cotey Tanner, pictured, will be operating the food truck with partner Jeremy McMinn.**



**Vintique has moved to East Main Street in the building on the right. It's next to a downtown development under construction that will have two condos on the second floor and retail space on the first floor.**