

Business Pulse

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CONSTRUCTION DOWNTOWN

It's not often you see construction in what I consider the traditional downtown district of Main Street.

We've seen construction in the general downtown area in recent years, most notably with Hardee's. There's also been a car dealership building added to Morford Street on the edge of the historic district.

If you want to talk about construction in the heart of downtown, you'd have to go all the way back to the Chamber of Commerce building on Court Square, which was finished 15 years ago.

But as for Main Street itself, from Chancery Street to Sparta Street, I can't recall any new construction. Until now.

Ground has been broken on East Main Street across from First National Bank and next to Poppie's Boutique for a mixed retail and residential development.

According to Bobby Kirby, one of the property owners, the building should be complete by late summer or early fall. There will be two condos on the second floor and those condos have already been sold.

On the ground floor there will be two retail storefronts. Bobby says it's possible to combine the two stores into



It's exciting times as ground has been broken and new construction is on the verge of taking place on East Main Street across from First National Bank.

one space for a large tenant.

"I don't have anything definite but there's been some good interest in it," said Bobby when asked about possible retailers. "It's helped that we can have it ready by fall."

This is a great step for downtown McMinnville and a wondrous time for the economy in general as activity is high.

Perhaps -- and this is one giant perhaps -- this construction will encourage something to be done with the old Fraley's building which has been sitting empty for 14 very long years.

There's been over \$5 million injected into Main Street revitalization during those 14 years, but the old Fraley's building has been like a rock of dilapidated consistency.

My prediction is the old Fraley's building will still be vacant 14 years from now in 2032.

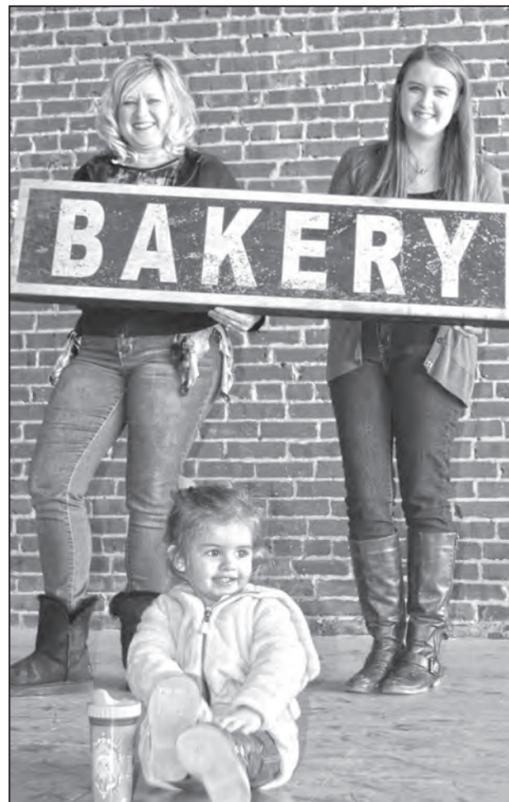
BEN LOMAND GETS \$1.1M GRANT

If you've wondered what it feels like to receive a \$1.1 million grant, just ask Ben Lomand Connect.

Our beloved telecommunications provider was

awarded the impressive grant Tuesday as part of \$9.8 million in broadband accessibility funds announced by the state. Ben Lomand will match the grant with \$1.1 million of its own money.

The funds will be used to extend broadband infrastructure to 441 combined locations. The locations are in the Pochontas community of Coffee County and Sunset Ridge community of Cumberland County. While these areas aren't in Warren County, Ben Lomand public relations supervisor Karen Wilson points out it's still a benefit for local residents.



Get ready for a downtown bakery. Sally Roberson, left, and Kayla Woodard are opening The Vanilla Bean Baking Company at 224 East Main Street. Two-year-old Autumn Woodard is giddy about the new bakery too.

"When we grow and improve our technology as a region, it helps Warren County," said Karen. "The more fiber we get out there, the more it makes our company stronger. And when Ben Lomand is stronger, it's good for Warren County. As we work to get more fiber in place, we can make progress toward even better technology."

Faster internet speeds are a great benefit to businesses and residents. As a personal testimonial, I like my online access to be faster rather than slower, more nimble rather than clunky.

Fiber deployment is one of the key infrastructure advances state officials are working to upgrade to enhance community and economic development.

"These grants will help our local telecom companies to continue fulfilling the high-speed broadband gaps in rural coverage areas," said Levoy Knowles, executive director of the Tennessee Telecommunications Association. "TTA has worked with the governor's office to make rural broadband a top priority. These grants are a solid way to advance that priority."

Ben Lomand general manager and CEO Lisa Cope added, "Gov. Haslam created this grant program with the intention of facilitating broadband deployment in the unserved areas of Tennessee. We have discussed with residents in these areas their needs and firmly believe the desires of the state of Tennessee and the communities will be met and exceeded with our fiber deployment."

Ben Lomand has over 20,000 internet customers with over 8,000 and growing connected with fiber. Ben Lomand Connect also offers other services including video, security, hosted IP solutions and managed IT services.

LET ME EAT CAKE

Sally Roberson and Kayla Woodard have figured out how to make me happy. All it takes is to bake me a cake. As a sidenote, buying me a pizza also works.

Sally and Kayla are the owners of The Vanilla Bean Baking Company, which is coming to 224 East Main Street.

To show their baking

skills, they made a vanilla cake with vanilla butter cream icing and brought it to the *Standard* office on Wednesday.

The cake was topped with an edible printout which told the story of Vanilla Bean Baking Company in newspaper format. It was cute, but more importantly it was delicious.

Sally tells me they have big plans for Main Street with a complete, nine-week renovation planned for their building.

"We want it to be like a mini Starbucks with a patio in the back that faces the Farmers Market," said Sally. "People can sit back and enjoy a pastry and enjoy spending time with friends."

I took a tour of the building on Friday and didn't realize it was so big, 2,000 square feet. Sally said the building has never been used as a restaurant so bathroom and plumbing upgrades are a necessity, along with a large kitchen.

In the dining room, there will be several tables along with sofas and recliners for a relaxing atmosphere. Menu items will include cakes, cookies, muffins and pastries. There will also be a full line of coffee items like espressos and lattes.

The Vanilla Bean Baking Company will be a great addition to downtown. There will be plenty of parking in the Farmers Market area and a back entrance for convenience. It's also next to the landscaped breezeway which connects Main Street to the Farmers Market area.

Sally and Kayla both have baking and coffee shop experience. Sally has managed a Starbucks before and Kayla has worked at a bakery in Murfreesboro.

The best part is you don't have to wait until the opening of the Main Street store to give the bakery a try. Sally says they already have several Valentine's Day orders and have been baking out of their home for months.

You can follow them on Facebook at Vanilla Bean Baking Co or give them a call at (713) 208-0623.

"The publicity we got when bricks fell off the front of our building got us 60 new followers," said Sally.

THAT'S ALL FOLKS

Email tips to editor@southernstandard.com.

Business licenses

Dec. 8, 2017 to Feb. 6, 2018

NAME	PRODUCT/SERVICE	ADDRESS	OWNER
Aqua Clean Pressure Wash	Pressure washing	2809 Old Well Rd.	Wanda Mason
Better Buy Thrift	Thrift store	10449 Smithville Hwy.	Barry J. Reed
Caleb Printing Designs	Signs, embroidery, trophies	2457 Beacon Light Rd.	Caleb Lugo
Campbell Luxury Painting	Painting	227 Vinewood Rd.	Tiffany M. Campbell
E&E Fiber	Telecommunications	775 Dr. Jennings Rd.	Will Emanis
Fun Home	Direct mail, online sales	111 Edgefield St.	Chad Ramsey
Good Ol' Sloppy Top	Food trailer	343 Gwen Pelham Ln.	Danielle Pelham
Greenleaf Landscaping	Landscaping services	220 Slaughter Bend Rd.	Cara L. Adams
Guard Dog Defense	Weapons training, consulting	130 Summer Circle	Travis Brown
Harrison Hale Construction	New home construction	449 Faith Rae Blvd.	Harrison Hale
Holt Equipment Rentals	Uhaul rentals	415 Beersheba St.	Mark Holt
James Detailing	Auto detailing	410 Beersheba St.	James E. Officer
James Oldham Photography	Photography and videos	323 K. Prater Rd.	James Oldham
Jesse James Motors	Used car sales	569 Hale Ln.	James Hines
K&K Construction	Construction	270 Lokey Ln.	Kelly D. Lokey
Labrada Food Service	Food truck	94 Cumberland Dr.	Hector Labrada
Martin Builders	Construction	4255 Ivy Bluff Trail	Joshua Martin
Megan at Salon Suites	Cosmetology	1126 Sparta St.	Megan E. Kennedy
Midsouth Auctions	Auctions, appraisals	1260 WC Park Rd.	Jamison Crouch
Mt. View Apparel	Online sales	105 Westview St.	Tina K. Gillies
Phelps Pharm Gift Shop	Gift shop and crafts	1857 Chestnut Grove Rd.	Susan Bell Phelps
Pioneer Play Pit	Game room, fun center	1410 Sparta St.	Daniel Martin
Red's Tree Service	Cutting trees	131 Elmwood Dr.	Charlie E. Keener
Richards Marine Sales	Selling used boats	433 Woodland Creek	Bob Richards
Sam's Lawncare	Lawn mowing, bush trimming	2519 Swan Mill Rd.	Samuel Bain
Shay Shay Hair	Hair	214 Chambers St.	Shawana M. Bay
Smart Thinking Investment	Buy, sell, trade realty	671 Wilson Rd.	Ben Steele
Snyper Hunting Products	Hunting, outdoor products	9057 Manchester Hwy.	James Jones
Still Small Junk Remover	Removing junk from property	5298 Beersheba Hwy.	David Ferrell
Tennessee Rideshare	Ride share using phone app	303 Anderson St.	Dena Graham
The Greek Station	Greek food truck	1410 Sparta St.	Mark Dinwiddie
Third Gen Automotive	Antique auto parts	2600 Old Nashville Hwy.	Michael Driskell
Tree City Metals	Sale of metal roof products	92 Volunteer Dr.	Douglas C. Pope

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