



Happy Easter The Extra

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U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
LAURENS, SC
PERMIT NO. 148
ZIP CODE 29360

No. 84
12 Pages

SATURDAY, APRIL 20, 2019 • A PUBLICATION OF THE LAURENS COUNTY ADVERTISER



File photo by Judith Brown

WINE TASTING — Restaurants and businesses in downtown Laurens will be open for business when Main Street Laurens hosts its 11th annual Sip & Stroll Friday evening, April 26. Tickets are available at www.ezevent.com or at Main Street Laurens downtown office.

Main Street's Sip & Stroll offers local wines, downtown fun

By Judith Brown
Staff Writer

The City of Laurens sponsored its city clean up event this past weekend, and its primary purpose was to get the city ready for next weekend's annual Sip & Stroll, the first Finally Friday! of the season.

The annual event will be held as always at the Historic Downtown Square in Laurens. Sponsored by Main Street Laurens and Cornerstone Investment, the Sip & Stroll is scheduled to run from 5:30-9 p.m. Friday evening, April 26.

"This is the 11th year, and it is one of the most popular events we do every year," said Jonathan Irick, director of Main Street Laurens. "Last year we had several hundred people, and many of them were from out of town."

A couple of changes this year include using only local wineries, with 13 differ-

ent wines from three Upstate producers. They include City Scape Winery from Greenville, Enoree River Wines from Newberry County and this year, introducing Rock Quarry Wine from the town of Enoree.

"When they buy a ticket, customers will get their wrist band, wine glasses and a lanyard with a punch card from us at the white tent on the north side of the Courthouse Square," Irick said. "We will give them a list of all wines or non-alcoholic options from each participating business. They get a taste in each place, and then can come back to the tent and purchase wine bottles to take back with them."

Main Street is introducing the new lanyard and punch card this year so that customers can get more samples of the wines they prefer.

"The punch card is to help control how much we are serving because we have to

pay for all of that, but it also gives customers the chance to test reds or whites or whatever they like," Irick said. "We have 13 samples and each taste is two ounces, so 26 ounces is a fair bit of wine. This was a way to regulate it a little."

The Sip & Stroll kicks off the Main Street Laurens' Finally Friday! series. The Laurens Crusiers will be parked downtown, music will be performed by Wide Open DJ and restaurants and food trucks on the square will be serving food.

Tickets are \$20 and can be purchased ahead of time until 5 p.m. Thursday, April 25 at Vault Salon and Spa, Holmes Photography & Square Roots store and the Main Street Laurens Office, all of which are located on the Historic Downtown Square.

Online they can be purchased at www.ezevent.com, and search Laurens, S.C. Tickets increase to \$25 the day of the event.

Jones, McDaniel Q&A entering District 14 special election

By John Clayton

Editor

Republican Stewart Jones and Democrat Garrett McDaniel are vying to represent State House District 14 in a special election for the vacant seat Tuesday.

Polls will open at 7 a.m. throughout the district, which covers parts of Laurens and Greenwood counties, and close at 7 p.m. The resignation of Mike Pitts, who cited health concerns, necessitated the special election. The winner will serve the bulk of Pitts' two-year term.

The Advertiser reached out to both candidates and asked them questions about key issues in the state. Here are their answers:

Q: In your opinion what is the biggest single issue facing District 14 residents at the state level?

Jones: The biggest issue facing District 14 at the state level are roads, education, and jobs. Our roads have been in disrepair for years, we need substantial and long term change to our infrastructure. We owe it to the residents of District 14 to make sure there are jobs here, and that they are given an education in which they are prepared for those jobs. We have had the resources to achieve these goals, however, Columbia continues to raise taxes without passing legislation that actionably addresses these issues.

McDaniel: The lack of local government funding from the state is crippling rural communities like Laurens and Greenwood. Rural counties are often forced to raise taxes or reduce services to meet the demands of state mandates. Counties need dependable and consistent revenue sources to support the efficient and effective delivery of services that residents and businesses demand for a positive quality of life and economic prosperity. This formerly stable revenue source has not only been reduced in dollars in recent years, but the formula that determines the distribution of the dollars is also being challenged. Laurens County's budget has been reduced by \$1 million each year over the past decade.

Q: The most recent corruption scandal in the State House led to several guilty pleas from three legislators and charges filed against several others. What, if anything, do you believe should be done to update the state's ethics laws? Would you support tougher ethics legislation and penalties for violators?



Stewart Jones



Garrett McDaniel

(Continued on page 7)

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