

Durant hosts National Night Out, August 1

Photos by Sharron Cauthen

By Sharron Cauthen

On August 1 the city of Durant and Durant Excel By 5 welcomed a large crowd to downtown Durant for the annual National Night Out and Back To School Party. Over 60 volunteers and city workers provided a big celebration for the start of a new school year. Over 400 backpacks and numerous tote bags containing free school supplies were distributed to students from preschool through grade 12.

A program of education reminders was presented by Holmes County Consolidated School District Superintendent James Henderson and Durant Elementary School Principal Eddie Allen. Durant Mayor Henry Robinson, Jr. expressed appreciation to all who partici-

pated. Durant Excel By 5 prepared backpacks for preschool through grade one.

Booths by service providers were especially helpful this year, emphasizing education, literacy, health care, and community safety. Lead partners are Families First, Tessa Tyes and Patsy Macon, Mallory Community Health Care, Winnie Noel and Latonya Hardy, Durant Head Start, MSU Extension Service, local day care directors, Durant Library, Durant Elementary School, Williams Sullivan Middle School, Durant Mayor's Youth Council, Durant Mayor's Health Council, and city and county officials. Durant Police Department provided security for the event, supported by Durant Fire Department and

Durant Maintenance Department.

Durant Excel By 5 Chairman Geraldine Sturgis welcomed a great group of vendors who joined our lead partners, plus volunteers who worked on setup, activities and cleanup. Excel By 5 State Director Dr. Eileen Beazley was in attendance and she was joined by Angela Towers, Family Engagement and Transition Coordinator with the Early Childhood Office, Mississippi Department of Education. Other vendors were Genesis Day Care, Jackson State University Holmes County Alumni, Nollie Jenkins Youth Group, Holmes County Raiders Football, Cheryl Winters School Supplies, Life Help Service, Magnolia Health Care and others.



Durant Excel By 5 set up two tents for the distribution of bright red back packs for preschool through first grade at the annual Back To School Party in Durant last week. Volunteers gave out early learners free school supplies along with Thomas the Train Engine coloring books.



At Durant National Night Out and Back To School Party on August 1, a long line of children and family members waited to register for back packs filled with free school supplies. Education reminders, health care materials and community safety were the main themes for this event, sponsored by city of Durant and Durant Excel By 5.



Holmes County Raiders Youth Football sponsors came to Durant National Night out to enlist support for their team and their ongoing work with Holmes County young people. This young lady was practicing cheers and recruiting prospects for the cheerleading team.



On Thursday, August 1, Durant Mayor Henry Robinson, Jr., at left, welcomed visitors to Durant National Night Out and Back To School Party, including (from left), Robert Warrick representing Grenada Railroad, Louise Winters, Holmes County Consolidated School District board member, Angela Towers, Family Engagement and Transition Coordinator with Mississippi Department of Education, Eddie Allen, principal of Durant Elementary School, and Dr. James Henderson, superintendent of Holmes County Consolidated School District.



Families First representatives brought educational materials to Durant National Night Out and Back To School Party on August 1. Pictured at left are: Tessa Tyes, seated left, Durant Resource and Referral Center Site Manager, and Patsy Macon, Regional Coordinator with Families First, from Greenwood.



Holmes County Supervisor James Young took a break from his cooking duties at the hamburger station at Durant National Night Out on August 1. Young and his team donated and cooked hamburgers and hotdogs in cooperation with the city of Durant, providing a good meal and a major incentive for families to come downtown and enjoy a great start to the new school year.