

Sales tax funds new \$2.8 million EMS Building dedicated Monday

By Bob Stockton

The most visible benefit of McCormick County's sales tax was dedicated this past Monday morning in front of nearly 100 people.

The county's new \$2.8 million EMS Building has been in the works for more than 20 years, but was only a pipe dream until the sales tax became a reality. Originally planned in 1999, construction began 14 months ago.

The building houses the McCormick Fire Department, Emergency Management Services, 911 dispatch, the coroner's office, a training room and a kitchen. Eight people per shift 24 hours a day will be quartered in the building.

Four double-vehicle bays accommodate three ambulances, two fire trucks (a brush truck and a pumper truck) and a scuba dive team trailer. A renewed detention pond catches storm water from both the county administration building and the new EMS building.

The former EMS building is to be remodeled for another department. "We outgrew the old building a long time ago," said Chris Doolittle, county EMS director.

"This is a dream come true," said Councilman Bernie Hamby, a strong proponent of the project for the past two decades. "It's the biggest project in county history. We cannot thank people enough for supporting the sales tax.

"Nothing I've been a part of during my entire career has been better than this. We'll compile another list of dreams for renewal of the sales tax," Hamby said.

The tax has funded eight county projects selected from a list of 15 by a committee of residents. The tax will expire in 2024, and Hamby and others are hoping to go back to voters for a renewal.

"This building will be here for the next 50 to 75 years," said Council Chair Charles Jennings. "We thank people here today, and former Councilman Byron Thompson and Earl Coleman (deceased, ed.)."

The building was designed by architect Johnson Laschober & Associates and built by J.W. Spratlin & Sons in Lincolnton.



Cutting the ribbon for the new EMS building are (l-r): EMS Director Chris Doolittle; Councilman Bernie Hamby; Sales Tax Committeeman Jimmy Smith; Council Chair Charles Jennings; County Administrator Columbus Stephens; SC Representative Anne Parks, and Councilman Chuck Cook. -StocktonPhoto



Four people instrumental in the new EMS Building for the past 20 years (l-r): Council Chair Charles Jennings; EMS Director Chris Doolittle; Sales Tax Committeeman Jimmy Smith, and SC Representative Anne Parks.

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Dems elect Cherry Brown chair of McCormick Party

By Bob Stockton

Nearly 75 McCormick County Democrats packed two meeting rooms at the Mims Community Center for their county convention last Saturday.

Chairman Alonzo Harrison called the re-energized party to order to elect a convention chair, and County Councilperson Jackie Brown was unanimously elected.

Before she opened the convention, however, Paula Goldman read a list of the party's accomplishments during Harrison's six years of service, and presented him with a retirement gift. Harrison thanked participants for their support during the party's dramatic growth in recent years.

Brown's first order of business was to open the floor for nominations for a new county chair, and Cherry Brown was nominated and elected unanimously. Former County Councilman Byron Thompson was elected first vice chair, Mike Finney second vice chair and Keldric Freeman third vice chair.

After other officers were elected, new Party Chair Cherry Brown introduced candidates running for office: Kent Kelly for the public works commission, and Jackie Brown and Tamala White for county council district five. The primary election is set for June 14 and the regular election in November.

Cherry Brown gave a brief description of her family, education and experience and concluded the meeting with, "We do not have to go low, but we do have to fight back."



Paula Goldman (right) presented outgoing McCormick County Democratic Party Chair Alonzo Harrison with a thank you gift at the party's county convention last Saturday. -StocktonPhoto



These three ladies were featured at the McCormick County Democratic Party's county convention (l-r): Jackie Brown and Tamala White, candidates for county council district five, and Cherry Brown, the new party chair. -StocktonPhoto

Gold from page 1

Our local Habitat for Humanity will provide a truck to donate unsold items (if any!) at noon! The truck will drive conveniently down Main Street, signaling the end of this fun event!

Enhancing this carefree event will be "Biscuits & Blessings" – a free concert by the Praise Tyme Band from Greenwood from 8:30 a.m. till noon. The group will be stationed in the parking lot facing Gold Street, near the McCormick United Methodist Church. This event will also offer breakfast biscuits to purchase! All proceeds will support the Rise Against Hunger Aid Delivery to Ukraine.

Main Street merchants will very likely be offering special sales so plan to drop in our retail shops to check them out! And other organizations are invited to join the fun and offer even more opportunities to the visiting public! Call the same phone number above for more information.

MCHC Farmers Market to receive grant

On March 25, the McCormick Farmers' Market hosted by the McCormick County Historical Commission announced that the market was selected to receive an AgSouth Farm Credit farmers market support grant in the amount of \$500. The McCormick market was one of fifty markets throughout AgSouth's territory in Georgia and South Carolina to receive a portion of \$25,000 in total grant funds. The grant will be used for advertising and promotion of the venue.

Farmers' Market Coordinator Tonia Moore said, "We are very thankful to have been selected to receive AgSouth's Think Outside the Store Farmers Market grant. We think it will go a long way in helping us promote the market and in encouraging our community to think 'outside the store' when planning their meals."

According to AgSouth Farm Credit Marketing Director Christy Smith, "To be eligible to receive a grant, applicants had to provide a detailed marketing plan describing how they would use the grant funds to promote the market. We received many applications with some very creative marketing plans, and it was hard for our selection committee to choose among the many excellent applications we received. The McCormick Farmers' Market was chosen because of its strategic and very specific marketing plan designed to increase public awareness of the market."

She explained that, "Many farmers get their start selling to local markets. Our grant program was designed to support these young farmers by helping to create public awareness of how choosing to shop at your local farmers market benefits not only a community's health, but also its economy, much in the same way our own patronage program benefits not only our members, but the communities we serve. This is the tenth year we have been supporting our local markets, and we're proud to continue that support."

The McCormick Farmers' Market opens May 31, 3 - 7 p.m. at the Dorn Mill Complex, 206 N Main Street, McCormick.

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