

Creating a catalyst for economic development

by Travis Crouch

Gilmer County Chamber of Commerce Chairman

My name is Travis Crouch and I have the honor of serving this year as chairman of the Gilmer Chamber of Commerce. Throughout the year, I have committed to keeping you updated regarding what your Chamber is doing to promote Gilmer County as the best place to visit, live, work and play. In my last article, I described in general terms the function of the Chamber in the community. I listed the three primary focuses of the Chamber as tourism, economic development and member vitality. In this article, I would like to focus on a specific Chamber project in the area of economic development.

The latest initiative by the Chamber is the development of the Catalyst for Prosperity Team. According to the “Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary,” one definition of a catalyst is “an agent that provokes or speeds significant change or action.” This is precisely what we hope to accomplish through the work of this newly formed group. The Catalyst for Prosperity Team is comprised of 18 individuals from our community from both the public and private sectors.

The team make-up was intentionally crafted to include representatives of each sector that contributes to the overall

health of the local business environment with an eye toward new business investment. Both municipalities and the county are represented in the group, as well as the education and various public utilities operating in our area. On the private side, the team includes members from health care, manufacturing, agriculture, construction, real estate, retail and tourism. The team members collectively have an extensive knowledge and love of our wonderful community and a desire to help it realize the great potential it has.

The mission of the group will be to scrutinize every aspect of our local business environment to better understand how we stack up in comparison with other communities in the eyes of business investors. The group will identify three to five areas that are in need of improvement and come up with recommended solutions to address the obstacles to local investment. The hope is that once the obstacles have been identified and addressed, the local community will be more attractive to outside business investors looking for new locations in which to operate.

In addition to identifying and eliminating potential obstacles to investment, the fruit of the team’s work will be a consolidated and comprehensive marketing strategy for promoting our



Travis Crouch

great community. The group will examine our strengths, weaknesses and opportunities. The end result should be a much more targeted and effective marketing plan for attracting new business.

It is also the hope of the Chamber that this team effort from the public and private sectors will foster an increased spirit of cooperation among the various stakeholders in Gilmer County. It is our hope that the process will get everyone on the same page and pulling in the same direction as we move forward. A unified effort at promoting Gilmer County is essential to success in today’s competitive environment.

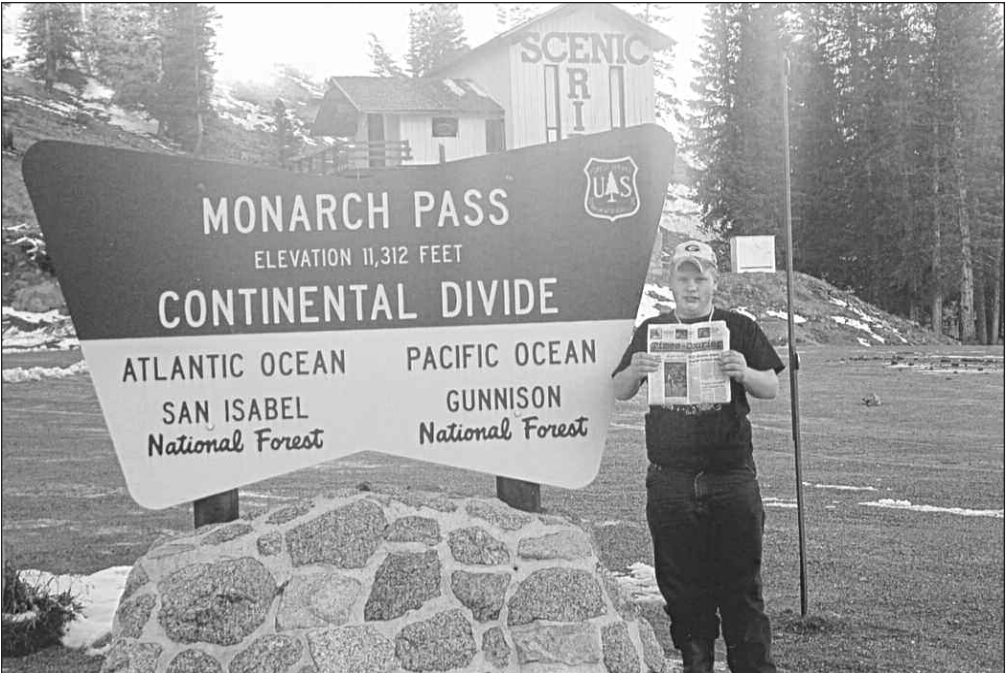
The research and planning phase of the Catalyst for Prosperity Team will take place over the next eight weeks under the direction of the Pendleton Group, a consultant team whose mission is to help communities become more attractive to new business investment. Stay tuned for updates to this exciting initiative as the Team moves forward with its work.

Where have you taken the Times-Courier?



Contributed photo

Bobby Bradford, Commander SCV Camp #89, Ellijay, is pictured with the *Times-Courier* while attending an SCV Commander’s Conference in Foley, Ala. Have someone take a picture of you reading the *Times-Courier* while traveling and send it to april@timescourier.com.



Contributed photo

Luke Chastain at Monarch Pass on the Continental Divide at Gunnison, Colo. Have someone take a picture of you reading the *Times-Courier* while traveling and send it to april@timescourier.com.

Ellijay pit bull quarantined after exposure to rabid raccoon

North Georgia Health District

A female pit bull terrier attacked a raccoon March 2 in Gilmer County and has now tested positive for rabies. The attack occurred on Dalrymple Circle in a neighborhood off Highway 52 West in Ellijay.

The dog was not current on its rabies vaccination; therefore, it is now undergoing a six-month strict quarantine.

There was no human exposure.

Gilmer County Environmental Manager Andrea Martin said their office was notified of the incident by the VCA Appalachian Animal Hospital March 7 and the positive rabies test result was reported by the Georgia Department of Public Health Laboratory March 13.

Health officials urge residents to maintain current rabies vaccinations in their pets, not only for the sake of the pet, but also, to protect themselves and their family members from

rabies.

Residents are also warned to protect themselves against rabies by avoiding contact with all unfamiliar animals, both domestic and wild.

Rabies that goes untreated is fatal almost 100 percent of the time.

For more information about rabies, contact Gilmer County Environmental Health at (706) 635-6050 or log onto the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website at www.cdc.gov.



Contributed photo

Lloyd and Patricia Holden took the *Times-Courier* on a road trip with friends, Ray and Kathy Walker, through 10 states. Have someone take a picture of you reading the *Times-Courier* while traveling and send it to april@timescourier.com.



Contributed photo

The Cody and Casteel families are pictured with the *Times-Courier* while celebrating their anniversary at Gulf Shores, Ala. Have someone take a picture of you reading the *Times-Courier* while traveling and send it to april@timescourier.com.



Contributed photo

Greg and Kelly Altman took the *Times-Courier* to Roatan Beach Mahogany Bay-Honduras on a recent cruise. Have someone take a picture of you reading the *Times-Courier* while traveling and send it to april@timescourier.com.

RIVERSIDE DRUGS @ CONCORD is now a

GOOD NEIGHBOR PHARMACY
The best medicine for your health.™

97 Hefner St., Ste. 200
East Ellijay, GA 30540
Hours: Mon.-Fri.
9 a.m. – 6 p.m.
706-635-5151

CHECK OUT OUR \$1 ITEMS!

OXIMETER - FINGERTIP PULSE
(checks oxygen saturation)

What a Bargain!

\$39.98
Oxygen level may reveal how good your body is doing.

FREE Times-Courier on Wednesdays
FREE Good News Magazine
FREE drink from our Electric Spring

NATURAL REMEDY OF THE WEEK
CALMING & SLEEP-AID SPRAY
(spray under tongue) Easy & Effective!

BETTER SELECTION!
With any purchase of \$10 or more in the store.

Select a FREE Item off our Dollar Wall
(Excludes Prescriptions)

We appreciate our customers and strive to provide friendly, professional service. Stop by for your complimentary Times-Courier newspaper & Happiness Book.

Ask about our Free Gift to you!

Pharmacists:
Dale Lingle • Billy Reeves

Spend spring break at Six Flags

Gilmer County Extension

Six Flags is open March 29 - April 14 for spring break and the Gilmer County 4-H Club is once again selling discount tickets for the 2013 operating season. All tickets are good for any day the entire season.

Day passes to Six Flags are \$37.50 and season passes are \$62. Tickets can be purchased (cash only) at the Gilmer County (UGA) Cooperative Extension office located at 1123 Progress Road in Ellijay Monday - Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., closed from 12 to 1 p.m. for lunch. For more information, call (706) 635-4426. White Water tickets also available (park opens May 18.)