

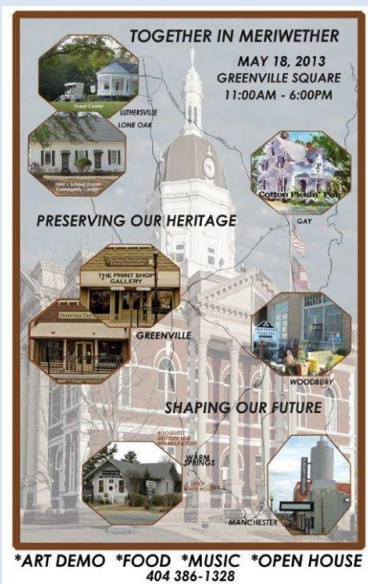


Meriwether Messages
Week Ending May 17, 2013

Post Your Messages Here - It's Always Free!!



1. Welcome new Chamber Member: Mando Corporation. Our entire county is so proud to have Mando as our newest and potentially largest employers and our Meriwether County Chamber of Commerce has enthusiastically welcomed them. Located in Meriwether Park in a 450,000 square foot facility, Mando has been actively recruiting maintenance workers; machine operators, technicians and office staff as they continue to gear up for full production. Their current product line, and the work they will be doing initially in Georgia, is the production of braking systems; suspension systems and steering systems. Over 60% of their production is for GM vehicles, but they also produce for KIA and Hyundai. Mr. Terry Birdsong is their Human Resources Manager and is working with the Georgia Department of Labor; the Workforce Investment Board; QuickStart; the Meriwether County Chamber of Commerce; the Meriwether County Development Authority and the West Georgia Technical College to connect to the potential labor pool in the area. Mando has also been active participant in our newly launched Partners-in-Education program and has played a key role in recruiting some of our local high school seniors from both Manchester and Greenville High Schools as potential employees. The company is committed to the area and has placed a high priority on hiring Meriwether County residents. As of this month, their head count is 103 employees and has a projected employment of 500 by 2017. In you are interested in employment, please contact the Department of Labor at 706-845-4000. For more information about Mando Corporation visit their web site at <http://www.mando.com>



2. "Greenville Better Hometown and The Print Shop Gallery are sponsoring the May 18 Kickoff of "Together in Meriwether – Preserving our Heritage – Shaping our Future" on Court Square in Greenville from 11 -6. The goal of the campaign is to promote Meriwether County as a great place to visit because of its uniqueness in having 7 incorporated cities and an abundance of historic and natural resources all over the county. Mountain 94.5 will be broadcasting live for 3 hours. There will be music, food and much more. Historic buildings will be open for tours, including the Courthouse, the Historic Old Jail, Greenville Methodist Church, Hill Brothers Mercantile Store, Jack Allen Law Office, and the new City Hall building. Artists from The Print Shop Gallery will be demonstrating and selling their art. Watch Jim Sibley transform solid pieces of wood into works of art, former MHS art teacher Marilyn Austin sculpt in clay, and Catherine Williamson and Annette Wade create in oils and acrylics. Taste local wine made at Warm Springs Winery. Menlia Trammel from Luthersville will be signing her latest children's book 'Team up for Turtles.' Meriwether Historical Society will be showing a video of our historic cities, buildings and rural cities, prepared by Jack Couch of Greenville. Greenville Better Hometown

will have video and information on the future “Rails to Trails” bike and pedestrian route through the county. The event is open to the public with no charge for promoting your community or business. Twenty-eight displayers and vendors have signed up and there is room for more. Any vendor or artist from Meriwether who lost sales due to the Saturday rainout at Cotton Pickin' Fair is invited to set up at no charge on May 18. Call or e-mail Linda Wilburn to reserve your spot. 404-386-1328, lgwilburn@bellsouth.net

3. Tourism was worth \$51.2 billion to the Peach State in 2012, according to the Georgia Department of Economic Development. This 51.2 billion represents a marked 4.6% increase over 2011. **Meriwether County Tourism** generates approximately **15.7 million each year** and is recognized as our largest industry.



4. Please see attached registration form for the upcoming **Business & Employer Summit scheduled for May 22nd in Newnan**. Please share with employers and other interested parties. For more information contact: April Pruitt - 404-859-8845; or email april.pruitt@gdol.ga.gov

5. Governor signs Rep. Buckner's legislation into law

Gov. Nathan Deal signs into law the Rural Tourism Protection Act, HB 189, which Rep. Debbie Buckner introduced to require the Department of Natural Resources to notify local governments in advance of when parks are being closed in their communities. Pictured are (L-R) Rep. Buckner, Warm Springs Mayor Shelia Lee, Gov. Deal, Todd Edwards of the Association of County Commissioners of Georgia and Paul Radford of the Georgia Municipal Association.



Gov. Deal also signed HB 338, which includes language from HB 297, also introduced by Rep. Buckner, to designate the native azalea as the state wild flower.

6. State revenues increase 13.2 percent in April

Georgia's net tax collections for the month of April 2013 totaled \$1.73 billion for an increase of \$201 million, or 13.2 percent, compared to April 2012. Through the first nine months of fiscal year 2013, state revenues are up by 6.1 percent over last year.

Individual income tax collections increased by \$210 million last month, while revenue from corporate income taxes were up by \$50.5 million and sales and use tax collections were down by \$65.5 million.

7. Other major legislation signed into law by Governor Deal includes:

HB 142, which will impose a \$75 limit on gifts, meals and entertainment from lobbyists to lawmakers, with some exceptions for committees and caucuses, and eliminate the registration fee for lobbyists.

HB 254, which will allow an electronic copy to be accepted by police as proof of valid auto insurance coverage.

HB 318, which as amended will create the "Invest Georgia" venture capital fund to encourage entrepreneurs to keep their start-up businesses in the state.

HB 372, which will change the grade point average requirement for a technical college student's HOPE Grant eligibility from 3.0 back to the 2.0 level that was in force two years ago.

SB 24, which authorizes the Department of Community Health to assess a Medicaid provider fee on hospitals for the purpose of attracting federal matching funds for Medicaid.

SB 160, which will do away with the annual requirement to prove one's citizenship for business license renewals, prohibit the use of foreign passports as valid forms of identification and expand the list of public benefits that are denied to undocumented immigrants.



8. The HG Riggins Scholarship Awards

On Monday, April 29, Mrs. Doris Riggins granddaughter, Cherylyn Mills Gierszewski, presented the HG Riggins Scholarships to four FRA students at the Awards Banquet at the Woodbury Baptist Church. Ms. Doris Riggins established the H.G. Riggins Scholarship in memory of her late husband Grady Riggins. Mr. Riggins believed that this community should have a college preparatory school that would provide a quality education and prepare students for the rigors of life including college, work, and family. Seeking support from the community,

he, along with 12 other founders, established Flint River Academy in 1967 on the principles of developing the mind, body, and spirit. Mrs. Doris Riggins and the late Grady Riggins, continue the legacy of providing educational opportunities to academically qualified students. The 2013-2014 recipients of the H.G. Riggins Scholarships goes to Ethan Abbott of Thomaston, John Taylor of Shiloh, Regan Wall of Griffin, and Hannah Evans of Woodbury.

9. Congratulations to Barbara Smenner and the Village Art Gallery....after suffering significant smoke and water damage after the fire at the Manchester Mill, Barbara Smenner's Village Art Gallery has re-opened. More than 100 guests attended the re-opening reception and enjoyed an afternoon viewing displays by artists from Columbus, LaGrange, Manchester, Newnan and Thomaston. Barbara noted, "the reception was wonderful and exciting, we received many favorable comments about the studio". The study offers art instruction in oils for beginners, intermediates and advanced students. Barbara is also President of the Meriwether County Artist Guild and if you are interested in joining, please call 706-846-5085. Why not send Barbara an email congratulating her on getting her studio operational and reminding all of us what a treasure the studio is to our community. barbarts1@gmail.com



Shown in center of photo are Joan Caldwell, President Manchester Development Authority and Barbara Smenner, Owner -Village Art Studio



10. The Meriwether County Department of Public Safety along with Warm Springs Trading Company and Jones Body Shop will be hosting "Meriwether County Public Safety Appreciation Day" on May 18, 2013 at Lake Meriwether in Woodbury. This will be a fun and exciting day for all involved in Meriwether County Public Safety to kick back and enjoy some time with family, friends, and co-workers. The following agencies have been invited to participate on this day. **Meriwether County DPS, Meriwether County Sheriff's Office, Georgia State Patrol-Manchester, DNR, Greenville PD, Luthersville PD, Woodbury PD, Warm Springs PD, Manchester PD, Manchester FD, and Roosevelt PD.** As you can see, this is quite a large list of agencies that work hard every day to protect Meriwether County (**approximately 300 people**). Please consider how your business, agency, or department can contribute to make this a day of relaxation, fun, and enjoyment for the Public Safety providers in Meriwether County. The organizing group wants to have plenty of food, drinks, and door prizes for everyone. There will also be having kids activities, horse shoes, soft ball, and other activities for everyone.

Thank you so much for your consideration with this project. If you have any questions please feel free to call Jason Ritter, Director of Public Safety at 706-977-0964 or email j.ritter@meriwethercountyga.gov or Wanda Crowder at 706-846-9606.



11. **Summer Youth Programs:** Are you seeing an **abundance of youth that need something to do?** Are maybe you are an employer that has **MASS AMOUNTS OF WORK but limited staff.** Are maybe, **just maybe,** you would like to see youth receive additional training on professionalism, work ethic, independent living, college planning, job search techniques, volunteerism and more – **THEN LOOK NO FURTHER – WE ARE HERE TO HELP!**

We are currently recruiting for our **FREE** Youth Program (YES I SAID IT, **FREE YOUTH PROGRAM**) as well as getting geared up for our **PAID** Work Experience (YES I SAID THAT TOO, **PAID WORK EXPERIENCE**). Anyone interested in referring youth ages 15 – 21 to Paxen Learning Corporation for the In-School Program (Free Career Development, Tutoring, Mentoring, and More), Out-of-School Component (Free GED Classes & Testing), or would like information regarding eligibility should contact our office at 770-229-3558 or 770-658-0853 or visit our website at www.paxen.com. We currently provide service to the following counties: Coweta, Meriwether, and Spalding.

Also, we are seeking employers who would like to be a part of the work experience. This is an opportunity to regain some of your tax dollars by allowing youth to work in your facility while WE PAY THEM! It is also an opportunity to mentor and inspire a generation of youth.



12. Each year since 1963, the President has issued a proclamation calling for the celebration of Small Business Week. This year, which marks the 50th anniversary, **National Small Business Week will be June 17-21,** 2013. To learn more go to www.sba.gov/nsbw.com.

May 20- 24, 2013 has been designated Georgia Small Business Week by Governor Deal, where he "urges all Georgians to acknowledge and celebrate the achievements made by small businesses, both locally and nationally."

“Over the past year, I have observed an increasing optimism among Georgia’s small business. Many that survived “The Great Recession” find themselves stronger and in a better competitive position because of the lessons learned,” said Terri Denison, District Director. **“Small Business Week is the perfect opportunity to highlight the spirit of entrepreneurship and achievements in the small business community.”. So let's salute the many small businesses throughout Meriwether County!!!!** Thank you for your entrepreneurial spirit and hard work to help drive the economy of our community.




Meriwether County Chamber of Commerce

P.O. Box 9
Warm Springs, GA 31830

(706) 655-2558 Office
(706) 975-0622 Cell

MeriwetherCountyChamber.org

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