Marking 135 years, mayor looks ahead

Sees Westminster as recreational haven

BY JESSICA SIBLEY
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WESTMINSTER — As his city officials marks its 135th anniversity, Mayor Derek Hodgin's vision for the future is clear.



JESSICA NELMS | STAFF

Westminster Mayor Derek Hodgin helps arrange welcome packs for visitors from Camp Creek Baptist Church during a luncheon at the Westminster Depot Tuesday.

He wants its history and quaintness to be preserved, while maximizing its natural offerings.

"This area is perfect for recreation," he said. "I want to see more families coming to enjoy it. We're next to the mountains and numerous waterfalls, perfect for hiking and camping. Westminster can be a recreational outpost and that's something I'm very proud of."

In addition, he spoke of numerous improvements since his stint as mayor began four years ago.

"The reason I brought my business and family to Westminster follows the same mentality I have as mayor," he said. "The attitude of the residents has changed so drastically, even since I started. People are becoming more and more proud of their town, and it's great to see."

Hodgin refuses to take any real credit for the improvements.

"It's the residents, continuing to come together and help get things done," he added. "As long as that continues to happen, I consider it progress and will keep doing what I can to keep that aspect of things up."

When it comes to city hall and other buildings around town, Hodgin's plan is concrete.

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COMING TOMORROW

A look back at the history of this color Oconee County community.

"We want to keep a quaint town," he said. "That's one of the things that draws people in, but I want to maximize what we already have. There are buildings that are sitting vacant that can be fixed up and used to their full potential."

One of those buildings, for example, is city hall.

"We received some money to fix it up," he added. "While we are still in the conceptual stages, that's another example of improving what we already have."

In addition, Hodgin likes the idea of offering incentives to property and building owners to refurbish what they can as well.

"As long as myself and the residents share a common vision, there is no stopping Westminster," he said. "Happy 135th."

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FOR THE JOURNAL

This is one of the conceptual renderings of the new Westminster City Hall, just one of many projects the mayor and council hope to make a reality.