Six Mile: modern 'Maybury'

Tiny town sits in middle of an area marked for growth

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New businesses have been springing up along Main Street in downtown Six Mile over the past year, a sign of strength in hard economic times and the appeal of its small town charm.

"I think as a town we're probably holding our own for being so small," said Laura Waddell, owner of The Cafe, also known as The Cafe on Main Street, in downtown Six Mile.

Waddell, who bought the cafe about two years ago and who has been at the restaurant on and off for almost 10 years, said the sour economy has affected everyone, describing how the downtown had more businesses before the recession.

But she said businesses are starting to come back, and business at The Cafe is picking up too.

Six Mile Mayor John Wade said the downtown is the length of about three city blocks along Main Street, an area that has added four or five businesses within the last year.

"It seems to be quite lively," Wade said.

He said Spanky's Backyard BBQ, a thrift store, Rippy Realty, a tanning and hair salon, and a small grocery store have all come on to the scene in downtown Six Mile in about the last year.

The Dollar General came in a couple years ago as well, which Wade said was a big addition.

Vickie Mosley, a cashier at Amazing Savings, a discount grocery store downtown, said the store opened in November and said that according to customers the store was a needed and welcomed addition.

Next door, Keith Green has opened another new spot in downtown Six Mile – K's Variety Store.

Green, owner of the thrift and consignment store, said they opened about three weeks ago and said business has been "more than we expected."

Green said he lost his job in December with a company where he'd worked for 20 years and said he told his wife they should take the chance and open the store.

"You're only eight or nine miles from any direction — Seneca, Pickens, Clemson, Liberty — and you're right here at home in Six Mile where it's not the hustle and bustle," he said.

Green said the city does a great job, ensuring things are clean and neat, and said the taxes are reasonable to encourage business and bring people in to start new ventures.

For him, the downtown area could use more eateries and a big supermarket.

"If you get one supermarket out here, you're going to see the expansion of several buildings," Green said, describing how he thinks downtown Six Mile will grow in the future.

Wade agreed, saying he would like to see another sandwich shop downtown as well as a bigger grocery store that could have a pharmacy in it.

He said there are a few empty storefronts or buildings downtown, including an old house he would like to see turned into a restaurant.

Other things on the horizon could come from some presentations the town has gotten from an architecture firm about possible changes downtown, including a fountain as an entrance into downtown where the highway comes up from Liberty, Wade said.

He said the work would probably cost about $300,000 to $400,000 and said they would try to get grants, although grants would require a match from the town.

Wade said Six Mile has already done some work on sidewalks and said officials have requested stimulus money for the remainder of the work, including widening and extending some sidewalks.

"The Six Mile area, and I'm talking about a five-mile radius, is really going to grow over the next 10 or 15 years," Wade said, describing a study that showed Six Mile's proximity to the area lakes and the availability of property to be developed as reasons for possible future growth.

Bill Edmondson, owner of Spanky's Backyard BBQ on Main Street, which has been downtown for about a year, said the area gets traffic going to and from lake communities like The Reserve.

"I think it's going to be good," he said of the downtown's future. "Once the economy turns and we get the building and stuff going in The Reserve, once it starts up again, I think the area will really grow."

Edmondson said there are buildings across the street from his barbecue restaurant that are for rent and said he thinks the area needs a doctor's office, and maybe a dentist.

He said that having a viable downtown is important.

"You need something to draw people to the town," Edmondson said. "In order to draw, you have to have some starting point, and that would be businesses."

Waddell said she is working with another woman to start an event next year along the lines of a Six Mile's Got Talent.

She said the show hasn't been named yet but would be a show next summer where people can showcase different talents.

Waddell said she likes downtown Six Mile and hopes the area stays the way it is. She said people don't want live music or a big grocery store downtown.

"We're still like a Mayberry kind of because you can walk from the hardware store down to the little grocery store and you don't have to ever worry about crime or being robbed and everybody knows your name," Waddell said. "It's almost like we're a backdrop to the 1940s. We like it that way."

While she says she could be in a busier location and probably make more money, it's her love for Six Mile that keeps her where she is.

"This is my home," Waddell said.

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holding its own



JOHN C. STEVENSON / Staff

Keith Green and his wife opened K's Variety Store and consignment shop in downtown Six Mile less than a month ago.



Staff file

Before Spanky's BBQ arrival last year, Six Mile hadn't had a new restaurant open in nearly two decades, town officials said.