

Passport to Downtown Seneca set for Saturday

BY ERIC SPROTT
THE JOURNAL

SENECA — Business owners in downtown Seneca aren't necessarily reinventing the wheel with what they have planned for Saturday, but they're most certainly hoping a fun event will have a lasting impact, and with it, an economic boost moving forward.

Business owners have come together to host the inaugural "Passport to Downtown Seneca" event from noon until 5 p.m. Attendees can pick up their "passport" at M. Tannery and Sons on Ram Cat Alley, and it'll be stamped at every participating business they visit throughout the day.

After returning their passports to M. Tannery and Sons, participants with a yet-to-be-determined amount of stamps will then be entered into a drawing to win an iPad donated by the Oconee Economic Alliance. With all that said, it's the hope of the business owners that word about the many businesses in the downtown area will spread, and their customer bases will grow.

"The reason we came up with the event is we thought it's a great opportunity," said Mary Tannery, owner of M. Tannery and Sons.

"Everyone tends to know Ram Cat Alley, but a lot of

people don't know we have other wonderful businesses outside of Ram Cat and Main Street.

"This will help push people to other locations to discover our beautiful little downtown and discover some of our hidden gems."

Tannery added the winner of the iPad will be announced on June 22 at Jazz on the Alley, while any participant Saturday who provides their name and email address will be entered to win gift cards from participating businesses.

"I'm getting a good feel about it," said Tannery, who said another event is in the works for the fall. "We've had a lot of people following it on social media, and I think it's going to be fun."

"We have a lot of lovely little places that people just don't know about."

Richard Blackwell, the executive director of the Oconee Economic Alliance, said the organization was happy to donate the iPad for Saturday's event in the name of helping promote local businesses.

"The Oconee Economic Alliance, through the 'Destination Oconee' program, wanted to play a small role in helping encourage people to explore all that downtown Seneca has to offer," he said. "'Destination Oconee' strives to promote and capitalize on what is occurring in all the beautiful downtowns throughout our community."

"The more citizens and visitors understand about our downtown districts, then they will visit, tell a friend about the experience, hopefully spend some dollars locally and all this makes a lasting economic impact for our market."

Participating businesses for Saturday include Arts off the Alley, the Ballenger House, the Blue Ridge Arts Center, Brews on the Alley, Green Springs, the Healthy Olive, the Lowry House Inn, M. Tannery and Sons, Paint-Play Studio, the Purple Sunflower, Ram Cat Social House, the Red Door, Shope's Boat-house, the Spot and Ye Olde Sandwich Shoppe.

esprott@upstatetoday.com | (864) 973-6681