

Celebrating Downtown

The City of Paris will host a celebration of the new Downtown Park and kiosks on Saturday, June 25 from 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. at the park site. The event will open with a dedication, recognition and ribbon cutting ceremony. Plans also include live music, historical characters, free gifts for attendees and sidewalk sales.

The Downtown Park, located on the southwest side of the court square across from the post office, was created with a Department of Transportation Tennessee Enhancement Grant. The funds were received by the state from the Federal Highway Administration. The park features a gazebo, which replicates the architecture of the Henry County Court House. It also includes a large fountain, picnic tables, a green space and a series of bronze sidewalk plaques with historic facts about the area, according to Kathy Ray, event chairperson.

Historical characters will roam the downtown area, chatting with visitors during the event. Suzanne Looney Richter will portray one of the Mitchum sisters while Ray Harding will portray Governor Porter. County Historian and County Commissioner David Webb is slated to play E.W. Grove.

As a special thank you, TLM Engineers has purchased commemorative pins, which will be given to the first 100 attendees. TLM designed and built the new park. Other event activities that day include sidewalk sales and Downtown Specials from the eateries in the area. The Downtown Paris Association will sell drinks on the Court House lawn.

The three new kiosks around the square also are part of the celebration. The kiosks will serve as a directory, much like a mall directory, with a visitor-friendly map and listing of downtown stores and services. There also is room for downtown event promotional material in the kiosks, according to Ray.

“The kiosks were purchased with a grant provided by the State of Tennessee Economic and Community Development and USDA Rural Development for the Tennessee Downtowns program,” explained Ray. “Paris was one of only 10 municipalities chosen to participate in Tennessee Downtowns, an 18-month state educational pilot program in which local city officials and downtown leaders attended sessions focused on downtown organization, promotion, design and economic restructuring,” she said.

“From shopping to cultural tourism to retiree recruitment to a special event locale, downtown is important to Paris and Henry County,” said Ray, “This community takes pride in preserving and upgrading this historic treasure. We invite everyone to come celebrate with us and enjoy our community’s newest, exciting outdoor space.”

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