

# Kosciusko Attala Development Corporation

Economic Development \* Chamber of Commerce \* Main Street \* Tourism

## Special points of interest:

- GG Holmes hired as New Main Street Director
- Chamber, Main Street & Economic Development Advisory Boards set



2015 KADC Chair Jonathan Powers

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## Chairman's Remarks

It's official. I'm grown and actually bordering on old. All the things my parents used to say while I was growing up about snapping your fingers, or blinking your eyes and time being gone (I thought that was fairly dumb at the time) actually are true. 2014 is now the year in review. In most cases that word review is partnered with another word, EVALUATE. When we make our goals for the year and then actually follow through with reaching them, then evaluations are and can be fun. We might get a bonus or a promotion, maybe just a pat on the back, but at least some confirmation of a job well done. The flip side to a year ending so fast is that many goals are still in the "good intentions" phase. Those don't pay so well and tend to make the evaluation process a little more difficult. I mention this because I think self-evaluation is important to each of us. Are we happy with the decisions we made, the effort we gave, the results we generated? Are we happy with the way we treated others, the services we provided, the honesty of the answers I gave?

Are we happy with the plan of action we took, the effect it had on others, the community as a whole?? Honest answers to those questions can determine what kind of 2015 we can expect to have. At KADC, we've begun the journey of self-evaluation. Sometimes when the years pass at such a frantic pace the vision of an organization can become blurry. With the help of the staff and numerous volunteers we are beginning to "clear up" that vision and lay the groundwork for long-term success. In 2015 we hope to present the community with a very clear flow chart of how the KADC works. We are breaking the organization back into some names you may recognize such as Chamber of Commerce, Tourism, Main Street, and Economic Development. We are hopeful that our members can have a clearer definition of who we are so that our usefulness to them can be seen on a daily basis. 2015 will bring changes to membership and billing. The evaluation process uncovered some needs and changes that must be made in this area so be on the lookout next year. Our

evaluation told us that we needed a separate Main Street director for that role to be fully developed and a hire was made. I hope you have seen the numerous opportunities for family fun in our downtown area over the course of the last quarter of the year. We are trying to evaluate each and every function of the KADC and its purpose going forward. Change can be uncomfortable but also necessary and we are committed to making this organization user friendly and accessible to all members. I hope each of you, the members that makeup our organization, continue to provide us with feedback on what we do well and also the areas we fall short. We exist for the purpose of helping people and businesses enjoy living and prospering in this great city. In conclusion, on behalf of the board of directors of the KADC, I say thank you to all the volunteers that gave precious time, money, and effort to our causes in 2014. We wish you a VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS and look forward to serving you with purpose in 2015!!

## Tourism in our Town

The Kosciusko Tourist Promotion Council has been hard at work promoting Kosciusko and events in our area. The Tourist Promotion Council is led by Chairman Kamlesh Patel, Days Inn and EconoLodge. The other board members are Darren Milner, Boswell Media; Ronnie Ables, Renasant Bank; Semone Olive, Kosciusko Separate School District; Ludwig Metzler, Retired. The promotion Council has worked to pro-

mote our area by:

Advertisement in the Mississippi Tourism Magazine

Mailing the Buzz Magazine to tourists

Developing their portion of the collective website.

Other Projects are:

Walt Grayson promotion

Held Volunteer Appreciation with Retired Senior Volunteer Program

Held 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration for Kosciusko Information Center.

Joined with other businesses to promote Kosciusko in the Mississippi Magazine in November/December Issue

Promoted The Christmas Tour of Homes presented by the Historical Society.

## Chamber of Commerce Year in Review

The Chamber of Commerce has had an eventful 2014. Below is a brief overview of the things that happened:

### Annual Events

The Natchez Trace Festival celebrated 45 years. It was also featured on the WLBT Midday Show.



2014 Natchez Trace Festival

The Central MS Fair celebrated 105 years

Elsie McLemore served as Grand Marshall for our Annual Christmas Parade

### Special Events:

Hosted Walt Grayson for two television spots.

Worked with the Kosciusko School System for Teacher Leadership/Communication training.

Served on the MDA Asset Mapping team for Gulfport, MS

Served as Treasurer for the Natchez

Trace Compact. (\$3000.00 saving on membership)

Hosted a welcome reception for Dr. Jim Haffey, President of Holmes Community College.

Held 4 Connections meetings, hosted by different members.

Participated in the National Small Business Saturday Campaign.



Kosciusko School System Resource Center

### New Business:

Held 13 Ribbon Cuttings this year.

### Training/Conferences:

Attended the Backstage Pass with Festival Chair, Owen Oliver

Attended the Mississippi Economic Development Council Winter Conference

Attended the Mississippi Main Street Association Annual Meeting



Attended the Mississippi Economic Development Council Summer Conference

Attended the MDA Asset Mapping Annual meeting

### Awards/Recognition

Named a Certified Main Street Community by the National Trust of Historic Preservation

Natchez Trace Festival became an official Partner in the Year of the Creative Economy: Mississippi Homecoming with the State of Mississippi.



"Selected to Serve" award winner from the MDA's Asset Mapping Division, \$1000.00.

## Chamber of Commerce 2015

This next year is shaping up to be even more eventful and exciting. The COC Advisory Board has been named: Jay Price, Jan Deason, Susan Chamblee, James Phillips, David Hudson, Rachel Hawkins, Piccolar Johnson, Chad Kyle, Lindsay Fitts and Bradley Tyler.

These individuals are dedicated to making our community a

success and have already got plans for the coming year. Not only are they going to continue with the great traditions of the Natchez Trace Festival, Central MS Fair and Christmas Parade they are revisiting some programs that have been useful tools in the past. Some of these are Leadership Attala, Connections and Community Improvement Awards.

Some new projects that are being discussed are new signage programs for Hwy 12 & 35 and Community Perception Surveys. If there are other ideas, these individuals would be happy to hear and consider them for the growth of our community.



Attala County Co-Op



Community Pep Rally

## Economic Development

This year has been a challenging year for Kosciusko and Attala County. With the merger of M&F Bank and Renasant Bank settling in December our Downtown found itself looking at 13 empty buildings. Fear, concern, uneasiness spread throughout our beautiful community. What would we do? Our Historic Downtown is a focal point of our community and we could not let it die. With this in mind, the KADC focused its energy towards the reemergence of our downtown. Meetings were held with MDA, property owners of buildings, Mississippi Main Street Association and the Entrepreneur Center of Mississippi. We had property owners on board and downtown was open for business. Renasant played an important role in our downtown coming back and we are happy to report that we are down to three empty buildings on the square, due to teamwork and cooperation by all parties.



We invited the Mississippi Development Authority Asset Mapping division to Kosciusko to map the assets of our community. From this visit, many ideas were generated to continue to grow our community's quality of life and look. We continue to work on suggested ideas and look forward to things to come in 2015. Some projects that were generated from the Asset Mapping study and completed were:

*Pocket Park*

*Tour of Homes*

We hosted four Coffee Talk sessions, in which we invited our local and state officials to share coffee and thoughts for

growth for our community. These meetings were well attended and discussions grew each and every meeting.

The Economic Development Committee also focused its efforts toward our existing industries. We held monthly visits with our local industries, commercial and retail businesses. From these meetings, we were able to assist our companies with needs that may have been facing them. We hosted our yearly industry visits with Mississippi Development Authority.

Other projects and workshops that were held:

*Partnered with Neshoba and Leake County on Mid MS Job Fair*

*Tennessee Valley Authority and North Mississippi Industrial Development Association, Mississippi Development Authority Project Manager Summit*

*Attended 4 Mississippi Development Authority Seminars*

*Attended Winter and Summer Conference for Mississippi Economic Development Council*

*Served as Vice President for East Central Mississippi Economic Council and hosted:*

*Partners of Economic Development at Neshoba County Fair*

*Mississippi Development Authority at Mississippi Braves Game*

*Hosted Phillips County Arkansas Leadership Group*

*Holmes CC has begun work on facility for their expansion in Attala County*



*Atmos Energy completed \$2.1 million*

*expansion project.*

As we look forward to 2015, our number one focus is our Hospital. The Attala County officials, Hospital Board and administration continue to work diligently on this project with the goal in site. Our second focus will be to continue to work with our existing industries. We see that much of our job creation would be achieved through growing what we already have in our community and building our relations with our industries must be a priority to accomplish this goal. We also will be reinstating Operation Jump-Start. This program was started some three years ago. This program partners with organizations seeking to assist aspiring entrepreneurs. Combining nationally-recognized curriculum; coaching and mentoring; and rich online resources; this program can be the foundation you need in building entrepreneurial communities of opportunity. Other projects of importance are:

*Enhance our government relations from local, state and federal,*

*Continue to look into a regional partnership with 3 adjacent counties.*

*Target industries for Industrial Park*

*Campaign to be an ARC community*

*Strengthen our partnership with local property owners*

*Strengthen our partnership with all site selectors*

We look forward to the New Year with excitement and zeal. We have all been asked to do more with less. But we must all continue to collectively work together to build the economy and create jobs. If we fail to collectively plan it then we are planning to fail. What are our immediate goals for the future of Kosciusko and Attala County? What are our immediate needs? Remember, we are limited not by our abilities, but only by our lack of a common vision. Let's move forward in 2015, Together.

Like us on facebook.....

Kosciusko-Attala Development

Kosciusko Main Street

Natchez Trace Festival — Kosciusko, MS

WE ARE ON THE WEB!

[kosciusko.ms](http://kosciusko.ms)

## K o s c i u s k o M a i n S t r e e t A l i v e a n d W e l l

Hello, my name is G.G. Holmes and I am originally FROM Yazoo City but have lived in Kosciusko so long that this is home. I am married to Ken Holmes and we have a daughter, Molly.

I graduated high school in Yazoo City and at that time my passion was playing basketball and I even played my first year at Stephens College, Columbia, Missouri. My sophomore year I transferred to the University of Southern Mississippi. I still played basketball while pursuing a Marketing degree with a general business minor.

Since moving to Kosciusko in 1981 I have been on a journey of many highs and lows but the good friends I made have been there for the journey.

In 1999, I began my retail career in Kosciusko at Flowers, Etc., a very small store



that I packed to the rafters with gifts and the customers came to check it out. SO

the retail monster was born. After 3 years in a small store, Mr. Marlin Ivey gave me the opportunity to buy Peeler House. The first change I made was the name to JOSEPHINE'S after my mother who was and continues to be my inspiration in my personal and business life.

About the time of my retail career, Main Street started in Kosciusko. Main Street works within the historical district of a town or city to help maintain the cultural integrity of said area. Main Street's vision encompasses renewed and thriving retail and service businesses, arts, entertainment venues

as well as professional and governments offices. Main Street's focus is to be a place where people feel comfortable to live, work and play. The easy way to tell the historic area is to stand at the Courthouse and look 2 blocks pass the courthouse in all 4 directions and you are in the historic district.

Some of the things Main Street first accomplished was replacing the awnings on the Square and adding benches. The newest thing Main Street has done is to create a venue of fun and a place to gather with friends from two burned out buildings-Kosy Pocket Park. Main Street has also just held their second Fall Festival on the Courthouse lawn; this festival showcased local artisans. This event was held in October. In November we held our First Annual Turkey Day. This event was taken from an old tradition of throwing live turkeys from the roof of an old grocery store. Your reward for coming was a turkey or gift certificate from our Main Street retailers. We also had turkey calling and turkey tasting. People are already asking if this event will happen in 2015 and the answer is YES!!

Main Street will work with the Kosciusko School System 2015 hosting activities on the Square such as an event in the pocket park to introduce the KHS baseball team in February; civil war work day on the courthouse lawn and back to school and tailgating day on the square introducing the KHS football team. This past December the KHS band held their Christmas concert on the courthouse lawn and I feel sure this will take place again since it was very well received by the public and made for a Christmas setting with the lights and Christmas decorations.

There are plans to expand on the pocket park before Main Street hosts Garden Mama. Plantings and new structures will be added before the April 11<sup>th</sup> appearance of Garden Mama.

Main Street's 2015 board is set and I am excited to work with great people who graciously give of their time to make Kosciusko a better place to live.

Main Street will have events throughout the year with each event encouraging the public to be a part of the event with the end goal being for public to take pride in their historic district and support the efforts of Main Street by supporting the event.

As I mentioned Main Street does have an active board but we always need volunteers to help with projects that are planned throughout the year. A great way to stay informed is on Kosciusko facebook as well as our website, [Kosciusko.ms](http://Kosciusko.ms).

I am glad to have the opportunity to work as the Main Street manager; it is a fun job. So please accept my invitation to join Main Street and have fun with me.



Pocket Park