

Downtown Businesses Ready for Deep Roots

By Catherine Dean

For most downtown merchants, the week of the Deep Roots Festival brings with it a lot of preparation tinged with excitement for what many tout as their busiest day of the year.

“We have been thinning out the inventory in the store, so people can easily view the merchandise,” said Karen Barrett, owner of Eclectic located at 132 North Wayne Street. “We have a lot of fun items that will make great Christmas gifts. It is by far our best day of the year.”

Eclectic is full of unique jewelry, home décor and specialty gift items. Barrett will have extra staff working and will open at 10 am but closing time will depend on the size of the crowds-possibly 6 pm but Barrett is prepared to extend the hours if needed.

For Donna Collins, owner of The Market Collective at 124 North Wayne Street, the festival is a time to stock old favorites and interesting new gift items.

“I have people-especially parents of college students-who come back each year to buy specific items they can only get here,” said Collins. “I make sure I have those items, but I also want to offer new pieces as well.”

Collins and her staff have worked diligently this week to make clear walking paths throughout the Collective to allow for ease of movement and enjoyable viewing.

“When I go into a store I want to be able to walk comfortably through it and view the merchandise at the same time. I want to provide my customers with that same experience,” she said.

Smoothie King District Manager Justin Bell is expecting a steady crowd throughout the day. He has spent this past week making sure the specialty juice bar is fully stocked with fruit, supplements, and other ingredients used in the nutritious beverages.

“This is our second year in this location (119 North Wayne Street) and we hope to have a busy day,” said Bell. The store will keep its regular hours of 7am-9pm.

Kirk, of Kirk’s Jerk Kitchen, located at 128 North Wayne Street, said he plans to have a grill set up outside to lure people with tantalizing smells to his Jamaican Restaurant.

Linda McClendon is a designer and clerk at Brands Upscale Resale (132 South Wayne Street) who has been working hard creating new fashions to sell the day of the festival.

“I am a seamstress and part of the duo The Tacky Twins,” she said. “We have made quite a lot of outfits that we hope festival attendees will find irresistible.”

On Saturday, Brands will also have someone at the store that will offer screen printing t-shirts all day. Extended hours of operation are planned from 10am-6pm.

Heidi Martin and her staff at Miles of Styles (134 South Wayne Street) have spent this prior week making sure their inventory is out and ready to entice lovers of all things vintage.

“We sell authentic new, gently used and worn vintage clothing, jewelry, handbags and shoes that I ship in from Oregon,” said Martin. “We are the only retailer of true vintage pieces in Milledgeville.”

Martin also sells all natural and locally made body scrubs, lotions and body butters. Additionally, she carries wall art, paintings, stained glass and photography-also locally sourced.

She adds, “We are having a Deep Roots sale of 25% off storewide and will be opened on Saturday from 10am-9:30pm. I am very excited and know we will have a fantastic day of record sales.”