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Local economy gets boost from marina, condos

Fenton: sales tax up ahead of opening



Workers at the Braxton Condominiums remove a table out from under the 3rd floor after the concrete has dried. MATT ANDERSON/THE TIMES

By Randy Moomaw
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Although Harpeth Shoals Marina opens this summer and the Braxton Condominiums won't open for another year, both projects are having a positive impact on the Ashland City economy.

Sales tax revenues have seen a boost from the local construction, according to James Fenton, director of community and economic development for Cheatham

County.

He cites an increase in \$70,000 this January over last year and an increase in \$43,000 for February. Fenton says he's also seen construction workers at a number of local eating establishments. "I saw five or six at the Subway near Food Lion just the other day," Fenton said. "Plus I've noticed that many of the workers who live out of town stop by Wal-Mart on their way home. This is all good and helps to increase revenue dollars for the county."

Leslie Finley, director of marketing and public relations for Harpeth Shoals Marina, says that in addition to shopping in the area, the workers get to enjoy our parks and use our walking trails. Steve Shoup, Regional Sales Manager for Atlantic-Meeko in Oklahoma, says that he likes his crews to stay close to the sites they are working.

"This gives them a better connection to the community and feel for the project," Shoup said. Shoup says that the crew arrived just before Christmas to begin work on the marina. They have been staying at the Deerfield Inn on Highway 12.

Although one manager at the Deerfield Inn is appreciative, he said he is disappointed that he has have not received more business.

"They have two buildings going up," Surindra Paul said. "We were told we would be full, and that has not been the case."

Shoup points out his workers are enjoying many of the local services that are available. "Our guys buy gas and groceries locally and purchase other essentials here as well," Shoup said. "Plus, we bring in their families to visit, which fills extra rooms and brings in business for restaurants in the area."

For Shoup, Riverview Restaurant is a favorite, where he often goes for lunch and to take people out who are visiting the area.

"They have great catfish," Shoup said. "They really make you feel welcome there."

Joe Matlock of TW Frierson Construction says that right now he has between 76-100 workers on site but says that will increase to about 150 in 1.5 months and will peak at about 250 once they start on the interiors of the condominiums.

Based on current activity, this increase in the number of construction workers will mean more dollars for area fast food restaurants.

"My guys have 30 minutes for lunch, so they go to maybe McDonald's or Hardees and bring their lunch back here," Matlock said. "Sometimes they go to Taco Bell or Stratton's."

Matlock also conducts a monthly safety meeting for 15-20 at either Riverview or Don Pancho's. He says that he sometimes orders Domino's Pizza for the guys.

Matlock feels it's also important to employ as many Cheatham County workers as possible. He says that he has members of his crew that live in Pleasant View and the Joelton area.

"I've lived in Cheatham County for nearly 38 years now, and my wife is from here," Matlock said. "It's an honor to be building here in my hometown."