



CITY OF PASCAGOULA MEDIA RELEASE

Media Contact: Anne Pitre, Public Relations Specialist

228-382-2086

apitre@cityofpascagoula.com

Take a Closer Look at Pascagoula's Arts on the Avenue

PASCAGOULA, Miss. Dec. 23, 2014 - The City of Pascagoula is proud to promote Arts on the Avenue, the Coast's only city-owned and operated arts center! Located at 618 Delmas Avenue, Arts on the Avenue features an art gallery and two classroom spaces.

The center is under the management of Karen Joplin, who has been with the City of Pascagoula for over twenty years. She is an art teacher by trade, having taught at Magnolia Junior High in Moss Point. Karen's education and talent in the arts have led her to execute a variety of projects with the city, from mapping out utility lines, managing GIS, creating the City's first website, and even using CADD to design the scallop-shaped archway on Beach Pier.

The 3,000 square foot facility was once the home to the Pascagoula Senior Center. The concept for Arts on the Avenue was developed around the time that the Senior Center was relocated to Live Oak Avenue in 2010. It has a pottery studio outfitted with seven wheels, two kilns, and everything else necessary for students in the onsite pottery classes to throw or mold their own pottery pieces. Pottery classes are offered on a regular basis and are taught by local artist, Alice Lachaussee. Alice has offered pottery classes since Arts on the Avenue was first established, and hopes that interest in the arts will continue to grow.

"Alice Lachaussee has been offering pottery classes with us since the beginning," Karen said. "We have hosted many types of lessons and camps over the years for people of all ages. We're actively seeking new instructors to come and share their talent with us!"

In addition to the pottery studio, there is a 16 by 25 foot classroom, which is open for instructors to come in and teach classes. This space can comfortably accommodate a variety of arts classes. Any artist who is interested in offering a class is welcome to contact Karen Joplin to make arrangements.

The key feature of Arts on the Avenue is the gallery, which showcases the work of over 80 local artists. There is truly something for everyone to see, including jewelry, pottery, ceramics, photos, paintings, and more! Arts on the Avenue is an ideal place to purchase a gift, as pieces start as low as \$5.

"We have a great variety of original works that people can give as gifts," said Karen Joplin. "Not only can you find a large, original work to be a focal point in décor, but will also find plenty of smaller items at lower price points. The jewelry pieces, note cards, photos, and smaller prints are sure to please."

The best part of shopping at Arts on the Avenue is the absence of a huge gallery markup. Because Arts on the Avenue is owned, operated, maintained, and marketed by the City of Pascagoula, price points can be very competitive. The competitive pricing system benefits both the artists and the customer, as the customer enjoys the savings and the artist can sell more pieces.

“We work with all of the artists who show here in setting prices,” Karen said. “We help them determine what profit margin is fair to sustain their business, while the City bears the cost of the overhead. It has proven to be a learning experience for newer artists, and is another part of why showing pieces at Arts on the Avenue is such a great opportunity for artists.”

Community and Economic Development Director Jen Dearman sees the bigger picture of shopping and taking advantage of all that Arts on the Avenue has to offer – the development and advancement of Pascagoula’s creative economy. Governor Bryant proclaimed 2014 the year of the creative economy in Mississippi, which focuses on the advancement of industries such as publishing, television, film, design, the fine arts, and other cultural and creative industries. In Mississippi, the creative economy provides approximately 60,000 jobs. Although Pascagoula is primarily known for its heavy industry, its creative economy is quite strong. Most, if not all, of its largest employers have workers whose jobs fall into creative categories such as design, communication and public relations, writing, and marketing/advertising.

“Arts on the Avenue is not just an arts center – it is a catalyst for the development of Pascagoula’s creative economy,” she said. “We might be most well-known for industry, but Pascagoula also has a lot to offer in the arts and culture. Arts on the Avenue gives the City a way to be proactive in its contribution to the creative economy of Mississippi and the country.”

For more information on Arts on the Avenue, please call 228.938.6789. You can also get updates on their Facebook page, at www.facebook.com/artsontheavenue.

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