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City sees economy perking up

By Deborah Buckhalter

Chattahoochee City Manager Lee Garner sees the sparkle of economic resurgence in his town, as it gets ready to celebrate Independence Day.

Chattahoochee City Manager Lee Garner sees the sparkle of economic resurgence in his town, as it gets ready to celebrate Independence Day.

One new business opened six weeks ago, another one is expected to begin a little later this summer, and an old eyesore is being cleared away.

The old Sportsman's Lodge motel on U.S. Highway 90, or Washington Street in town, was condemned by the city about six years ago. Since then, it has continued to deteriorate.

Businessman Abdul Atel bought the property some time ago, and is having the building razed. The city is assisting him in hauling away the debris, and is taking some of the broken concrete to use in drainage projects and for other uses.

Garner said Atel is also allowing private citizens to take what they need.

Chattahoochee may wind up renting the space, so it can offer more parking to RVs and other large vehicles that visit.

Garner said the opportunity represents another chance to shore up the town's effort to expand tourism.

And soon, a new business will be operating along the banks of the Apalachicola River, an enterprise that could very well draw vehicles to that site for overnight stays.

Garner said it will take the owner some time to open his planned Apalachicola Maritime Museum and a connected bait and tackle store. State permits are still pending, with some construction work to be done after that.

However, Garner expects the owner's canoe and kayak rental operation to be in full swing by mid-summer, once permits and other loose ends are tied up.

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