

Searcy City Center to welcome Old Navy

EMMA JONES
digital content editor

Dalrymple Commercial, a real estate service based in Searcy, announced via a Facebook post on Nov. 1 that Old Navy will be coming soon to the Searcy City Center.

The post from Dalrymple thanked Searcy citizens, government officials and members of the Move Searcy Forward committee for helping progress new city projects. The post also spoke in favor of the one-cent tax vote, which was passed on Nov. 9.

"By voting in favor of the extension of the sales tax ... we will be able to continue to bring retail shopping, jobs and quality of life to our awesome city," the post from Dalrymple said. "We are pleased to announce our newest tenant, coming soon, to Searcy City Center. Welcome, Old Navy."

The one-cent temporary sales tax was voted into place in 2014 and is set to expire on June 30, 2022. The vote on Nov. 9 was to determine if the tax would be made permanent or not.

Because the Searcy residents voted in favor of the tax, the City of Searcy will now have more money go toward city infrastructures, police and fire departments. Betsey Bailey, the school and community coordinator for Searcy Public Schools and member of the Move Searcy Forward committee, said she believes the tax becoming permanent is an important step for the future of Searcy.

"I believe that [because the tax was passed], companies like Old Navy see that Searcy is progressing or moving forward, then they will be more inclined to develop here," Bailey said. "The one-cent is crucial for economic development as businesses want to know that they are setting up in a location that is going to be fruitful for them and that the city is going to bring more people in through new families settling in the area or through tourism."

Harding admissions counselor Jane Chandler said several friends sent her the post from Dalrymple because they knew how excited she would be about the news.



Graphic by DALRYMPLE COMMERCIAL
Old Navy and restaurants too, which show we are moving in a good direction."

As of press time, no official date has been released as to when construction will begin on the retail store.



People gather around the Beats & Eats Thanksgiving table in downtown Searcy on Nov. 7.



A square dance team teaches people how to square dance in downtown Searcy on Nov. 7.

Thankfulness Beats and Eats celebrates members of the community

SOPHIE ROSSITTO
community editor

A local organization brought music, food and family activities to downtown Searcy on Sunday, Nov. 7, to express thankfulness for city workers and community members.

Beats & Eats hosted its annual Thankfulness event from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. The organization introduced new activities this year such as square dancing and train rides for kids, Beats & Eats coordinator Heather Kemper said.

At the event, workers set up banners on which people could sign their names and write thank you notes to various Searcy departments and organizations. Beats & Eats coordinator Marka Bennett said her group planned to give the banners to each organization after the event.

The Beats & Eats committee also brought back their extensive Thanksgiving table, consisting of 25 to 30 tables lined up along Arch Avenue, Bennett said. Four food trucks opened at 11 a.m. to provide meal options for people. Bennett said the

event emphasized the spirit of living in a small community.

"We can sit down next to our neighbors or people we don't know and get acquainted with new people, sitting there together having a Thanksgiving meal," Bennett said.

Kemper said that for the first time, the Beats & Eats committee held its Thanksgiving event on a Sunday to avoid scheduling conflicts with fall sports and other events. The group also moved the start time from the evening to the morning so people could enjoy warmer temperatures.

Bennett said that this year, Thankfulness Beats & Eats occurred on the same day as Holiday Open House, an annual event in which many local stores open their businesses and hold special Christmas sales. Bennett said her committee made lists of participating businesses to hand out to people at Beats & Eats.

"One of our goals in Beats & Eats is to support local entrepreneurs and shops," Bennett said.

Kensett First Baptist Church kicked off Thankfulness Beats & Eats with a full

worship service in Citizen's Park, Bennett said. The church's praise team, The Pursuit, performed worship songs until noon, and a bluegrass band provided music from 12:30-2 p.m.

Bennett said that on the square, a family fun zone offered pumpkin-themed activities for children, and a square dance team from Rose Bud, Arkansas, came to teach and perform square dancing from noon to 2 p.m.

Aaron Overstreet and his wife, Jamie, brought their two young children to Thankfulness Beats & Eats. They said the atmosphere at the event was friendly and lively.

"It's fun, it's family oriented," Aaron Overstreet said.

Bennett said the Beats & Eats committee started in 2017 and now consists of about 25 volunteers. Kemper said the organization formed with the goal of turning Searcy into a place people would be proud to live in.

"And so Beats & Eats, we think, has helped promote and kind of emphasize some of the good qualities of our community," Kemper said.

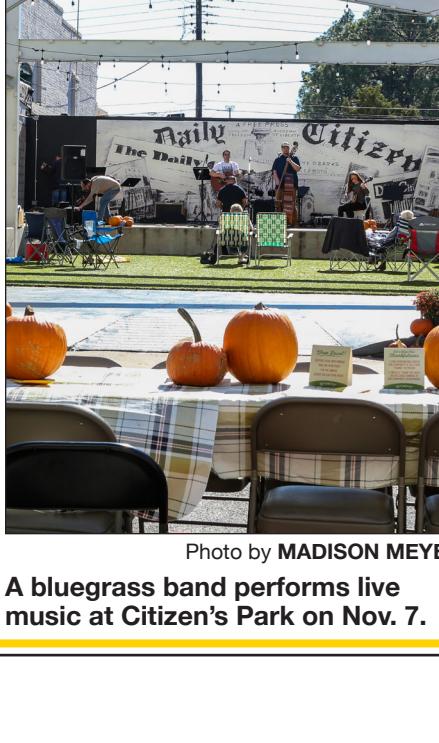


Photo by MADISON MEYER
A bluegrass band performs live music at Citizen's Park on Nov. 7.

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