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November 1, 2008

Mistletoe Marketplace

- Shopping showcase is next week

By Raymond Reeves
rareeves@jackson.gannett.com



Members of the Mistletoe Marketplace Steering Committee of the Junior League of Jackson (from left) Allison Abney, Christy Neal, Anne Daly, Vickie Snypes and Ann Dulske talk during a planning meeting.

For many in this country, Christmas season begins the day after Thanksgiving, when shoppers hit the malls and stores.

In Jackson, those looking to start the season get a jump on the rest of the country when Mistletoe Marketplace opens its doors in early November.

Mistletoe Marketplace, a fundraising event for Junior League of Jackson, brings in more than 150 specialty merchants from across the country that turns the Mississippi Trade Mart into shopping central for three days. Additionally, other events are scheduled throughout the time offering other opportunities.

Mistletoe Marketplace will be held Nov. 6-8 at the Mississippi Trade Mart.

Preview gala

Nov. 5, 7-11 p.m.

\$100 per person

• Mistletoe Morning

Nov. 6, 8-11 a.m.

\$50 per person

• Surf Meets the City

Nov. 6, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

\$50 per person

Marketplace Brunch

Nov. 7, 8-11 a.m.

\$40 per person

Sit, Eat and Be Pretty

Nov. 7, 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.

\$50 per person

Mistle Brew and 'Tinis Too!

Nov. 7, 7-10 p.m.

Pizza on the Piazza

"They should be moving in around Oct. 30 - that's when the Trade Mart will let them come in," said Renee Richardson Ebner, president of Junior League of Jackson. "We are going into our 28th year, so we're pretty good at this now."

"There are a couple of brand-new things this year. Our preview gala will be a 'walk the red carpet to preview gala' and will be a really exciting and glamorous way to enter the preview gala for those who are attending. We're also going to have Surf Meets the City, and it's a culinary competition, featuring chef Kevin Rathbun from Atlanta and chef Tim Creehan from Destin and will be done to the highest quality, kind of like a celebrity Iron Chef, battling it out on the stage."

In addition to the two chefs, which have been featured on the regional and national stage numerous times, a Mississippi native comes to Jackson to promote a more serious issue.

"It's called Sit, Eat and Be Pretty and it's a luncheon and fashion show," Ebner said. "Our special guest is going to be Deanna Favre, Brett Favre's wife, and the message is a good message about women's health. The fashion show will be exciting as well; we've never done a fashion show before."

One other event will kick off this year as well. Mistle Brew and 'Tinis Too, considered a "swanky night out" by Ebner. As indicated by the name, beer and martinis will be the highlight of the evening, which will also include food.

However, for many attendees, the highlight of Mistletoe Marketplace is the shopping, and they will be able to see the offerings of merchants from 20 different states at this year's version.

"We have 165 merchants this year, which is the most we've ever had, and 57 new merchants, so we're excited about it," said Anne Daly, who heads up the effort to line up and organize the event's merchants for Junior League.

"Most of our merchants come to us, we don't seek them out. It's just word of mouth; different vendors do different shows all over the United States and they talk about (Mistletoe Marketplace). I know that Kristian Alfonso, who plays Hope Brady on Days of Our Lives, (her store in Massachusetts) contacted us about our show and wanted to be a part of it. I thought that spoke volumes."

With the event's opening right around the corner, crunch time is here for the various volunteers.

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Nov. 8, 9:30-11 a.m. /
noon-1:30 p.m.
\$45 per child (includes cost
of adult)

"Things are going fine; we're right on track and ready for (things) to start taking place," said Vicki Snypes, one of this year's co-chairs. "We've added a new special events pavilion, which will be the venue for all of our special events that are taking place."

Since Mistletoe Marketplace serves as a fundraiser for Junior League of Jackson's various work in the community as well as its signature project, the Mississippi Children's Museum, the connections and reputations that are developed are important.

Santa's Greatest Gifts
Nov. 6, 3-6 p.m.; Nov. 7,
3-6 p.m.; Nov. 8, 10 a.m.-
2 p.m.
\$10 per photo

"I've worked personally with each and every one of these merchants; I know them inside and out now," Daly said. "It's a great job, though. I love it. It's been more than I expected. It's incredible to see what a good name Junior League and Mistletoe has. It's been nice to see that people recognize that what we do does make a difference." o

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Shopping hours
Nov. 6-7, 11 a.m. - 9 p.m.
Nov. 8, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Adults \$10, children 6-12, \$5,
seniors, \$5, three-day pass,
\$20

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