

Return To Mayberry

Downtown Moneta Takes Us Back.

America has lost part of its culture. New neighborhoods are constantly developed and there is always room for another apartment complex or strip mall. However, all of these developments seem to be missing something. They have abandoned the small-town feel where homes are part of the community and are centered around a park, courtyard or gathering place. In exchange for larger TV rooms, they have left off the sidewalks and front porches where neighbors used to walk, talk and get to know each other. And they have elected to separate neighborhoods from shopping areas and the rest of the community so people don't hang around the barbershop or ice cream shop to discuss local happenings. This has lead to places where strangers live side by side and you waste hours each day commuting around town to go to the gym, the bank, the doctor and just pick up everyday items.

Is there any hope to return to the way of life where neighbors sat out on their front porches and enjoyed the sunset, or met in the park to watch their children play? Now people are realizing that the saying, "Sometimes you have to go backward to move forward," does hold true. If we could integrate today's modern conveniences into the kind of

community that was immortalized by Andy Griffith's Mayberry, we could create something truly incredible.

That's what the development team of Downtown Moneta hopes to accomplish. They are not the first to try to revive the old-fashioned community, but they are the first to envision it here at Smith Mountain Lake. "After reviewing Burkdale in North Carolina and Celebration in Florida, we had the idea that the lake would benefit from a community with that type of architecture and design," commented George Aznavorian, one member of the development team.

The team has been investigating this concept for about at year. George explains, "We started by looking at property. When we found a site, we began planning it with an experienced engineering firm. Downtown Moneta will be completely different from other SML communities."

Using 1930s and 40s brick design style, Downtown Moneta will be located near the Moneta Library and will incorporate a high-end furniture store, a bank, pharmacy, medical suites, several restaurants, a fitness facility, and a number of small shops for businesses. "We want to add businesses and services that are not already available

here. We plan to bring in National companies and businesses that residents have to drive to Roanoke or Lynchburg to find," said George. "The development includes a courtyard with a civic draw. It will be a place for special events much like there were back then. The community will be able to gather for music, festivals, and neighborhood parties."

Along with the retail side of the development, the team is planning about 80 traditional-style homes with front porches and sidewalks.

Jody Lyons highlights some of the benefits, "Downtown Moneta is exactly three miles from Halesford Bridge on the Bedford side of the lake. The location is perfect because it is at the major crossroad of 122 and 608. We really hope this will be a great addition to the Bedford community and revive the town of Moneta." George adds, "A lot of the charm of Moneta was lost when the bypass went through. We want to bring that community back."

The development team will be starting phase one next year and hopes for completion of the entire development in 8 to 10 years. For more information, or to get involved, call 540-537-4932.