

Project to boost Fountain Inn economy

Against a backdrop of aging Fountain Inn buildings, the city broke ground Monday on a new Commerce Park and Historical Center that it hopes will spur a rebirth of economic development.

With the old Woodside Mill in the background and the back of a row of brick Main Street buildings opening up onto Depot Street, the planned \$2 million development will incorporate the old with the new – a history museum and farmers market with a tourism center and new Chamber of Commerce building – in a development that will rise next to a set of train tracks where the former depot once stood.

City leaders said the project fits with the city's master plan to attract foot traffic to downtown Fountain Inn's sidewalks. Saying it would add “new life” and a realization of more than 10 years of dreams, Fountain Inn Mayor Gary Long called the project exciting for the growth of the city.

Included in the first phase of the development is a 3,500 square-foot open air farmer's market pavilion with 20 stalls and public restrooms that is slated to open in October or early November, said Eddie Case, city administrator.

It could be used to host the city's ice skating rink during its Spirit of Christmas Past festival as well as events throughout the year, he said.

A 5,200 square-foot building divided into office space for the Fountain Inn Chamber of Commerce and the Fountain Inn History Museum would open in April 2010, Case said.

“We decided that this site would provide the best opportunity to bring to downtown some foot traffic that we desperately needed,” Case said.

(Nathaniel Cary – Staff Writer – Greenville News – June 16, 2009)