

g.g. holmes: right at home in kosciusko

by sandra massey buckley | photo by brooke leopard

For years, G.G. Holmes has united in a mission to showcase the Mississippi jewel that is Kosciusko. “As Main Street director, my primary objective is keeping the historic district a viable mix of retail, housing, and service industries,” says Holmes, who has held the position since November 2015.

A native of Yazoo City, she has called Kosciusko home for the past 30 years. Early on, she owned a retail establishment, which is what initially connected her with the Main Street Association, and from there, her involvement kept growing.

“I have always been involved in Main Street, first coming from the retail side and then serving on the board,” she says. “In my role as director, I am able to see both sides; after all, it takes everyone in the community working together to keep the ball rolling.”

As a city, state, and national economic development organization, Main Street operates on the four-cornerstone platform: promotion, design, membership, and economic vitality. “On a local level, Main Street is here to enhance the historic district where people feel comfortable to shop, visit, and dine,” she explains. “The historic district is the pulse of Kosciusko and easily tells the story of our proud past. Everything has a story, and Kosciusko is great at telling an interesting story.

With a population of 7,000, the close-knit community works hand in hand to preserve its history and rich culture. The pace here may be slower, but Holmes shares that its school system is consistently ranked among the highest and the city offers many things to do, lovely neighborhoods, and affordable housing.

Kosciusko is not only a charming place to live, but also to visit. From its picturesque town square and stately courthouse to the historic bed and breakfast establishments, walking and riding tours of historic homes, and an old cemetery boasting ornate tombstones and statues—it has much to offer visitors. And many know Kosciusko as the birthplace of Oprah Winfrey, which is also a draw.

Located in the center of the state and not off of a major thoroughfare, the town depends greatly on tourism, and much of that comes from the Natchez Trace Parkway. The Parkway is located just two miles from the downtown historic district, and it draws motorists, bicyclists, and motor-



With the guidance of G. G. Holmes, Kosy Pocket Park rose from the ashes of two burned-down buildings in the historic district. The park has become a feature that enhances the small city of Kosciusko, bringing the locals together and providing a place to house Bible studies and events.

cyclists. “We love those travelers who are leisurely riding the Natchez Trace and stop at our visitor’s center and learn that they can ride the ‘Old Trace’ to our historic downtown district,” says Holmes.

Kosciusko hosts a variety of annual events, such as the Natchez Trace Festival, the Autumn Arts Festival, and the Turkey Day Tossing (an event recreated from the 1800s). “Main Street is always looking for new projects,” says Holmes. In fact, several new events launched within the last year. Last September, A Step Back in Time was held, where 17 residents portrayed a mix of Kosciusko’s prominent forefathers and “brought back the nostalgia of its glorious past.” Last December was the first Community Tree Lighting celebration, featuring a 20-foot live Christmas tree. “The night of the tree lighting, everyone was encouraged to bring an ornament to place on the tree. What a magical moment it was when the lights came on!” Earlier this year, the city’s first Mardi Gras parade was held. “I am not sure we ‘hill people’ know exactly how it is done in the Big Easy, but we had a blast and the crowd really got into catching beads and candy.” The next new event on the calendar is the 4th of July parade. “Kosciusko may be small, but we make up for our size with our welcoming personality, and I guarantee you will leave having made a new friend.”

Holmes is right at home in Kosciusko. “If I would describe my dream job, this would be it and with the same great people to work with,” she adds. “All in all, life is good.” M

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