



To the City Council

As the enchanting horses in the “Around Town, Carousels Around” public art program were unveiled, they symbolized not only our unique and priceless Dentzel Carousel but also many of the special places where they now reside.

At Dumont Plaza, “Lady” presides over the restoration of the Grand Opera House of Mississippi and the Marks/Rothenberg building as they are transformed into the Riley Education and Performing Arts Center. As part of this \$26 million construction project, design work is nearly



Mayor John Robert Smith with “Lady” in Dumont Plaza

completed, and construction will begin in the spring of 2003 on the city’s Arts District Parking Garage. Plans for the 427-car garage have been carefully developed for maximum efficiency, while offering a façade that complements the historic architecture of downtown.

The parking garage will include a modest amount of retail or commercial space, and it incorporates the



Arts District Parking Garage



“Traveler”

and the People of Meridian



old Bell South Building that will be available for adaptive re-use. All of this increased investment and activity has whetted the appetites of developers interested in restoring the landmark Threefoot Building and making it once again a thriving commercial space.

No other horse better captures the spirit of downtown than “Front Street Phoenix,” so named to celebrate the resurgence of the beautiful Front Street buildings and the return of residential life to the downtown core. Around the corner, the Rosenbaum Building condominiums add another dimension to residential living, and the thoughtful restoration of the old Southeastern Printing building by Bank Plus shows dramatically the value and beauty of our downtown structures.

“Fantasy Filly,” who welcomes visitors to Bonita Lakes, points the way to a dream that will be fulfilled—development of the Mississippi Arts and Entertainment center on a 175- acre, pristine

piece of land. While the sluggish national economy unfortunately resulted in our loss of the Cooper Communities project, the arts and entertainment center on the Bonita side and other potential residential developments on the Long Creek side keep the Bonita Lakes area a place that is not only enjoyed for its beauty and serenity but that is also one of our strongest assets in economic development.

As this annual report documents, these and many other community projects, most notably the city and county joint venture in developing a new industrial park, are moving us along a course of increased growth and prosperity. We are utilizing our unique places and special treasures so they are much more than reflections of our history but are valuable resources for the future.


Mayor John Robert Smith

City Council Members

Meridian City Council members from left: Jesse Palmer, Ward 4; George Thomas, Ward 1; Barbara Henson, Ward 3; Council President Mary Perry, Ward 2; and Bobby Smith, Ward 5. The City Council is standing with “Midas Mare” in front of City Hall.

