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REGION

City of Lakeland

Georgia's Historic Mural City

The City of Lakeland is celebrating its history through colorful murals depicting life in Milltown nearly 85 years ago. The Milltown Murals are so named because they portray the town's past as it was in 1925, when its name was changed from Milltown to Lakeland because of its proximity to several lakes including, Grand Bay Lake, Lake Irma, and Banks Lake.

Adorning the outer walls of numerous Lakeland buildings are thirty-six lifelike murals that were painted by artist R.H. Waldroup. In recognition of the City's celebration of its past, Governor Sonny Perdue signed a proclamation designating Lakeland as "Georgia's Historic Mural City" on September 16, 2005.

The Milltown Mural project began in 1998 when the first artistic creation was commissioned by Nell Roquemore. The murals are not fictitious, but portray actual people, businesses, and everyday life in Milltown. Each mural includes signage which tells the story of the depiction.

Lakeland hosts the Living Murals Celebration each Spring; however, tours of the Milltown Murals are encouraged year-round.

Through the blending of art and history, Milltown continues to flourish within the City of Lakeland.



MILLTOWN MOTOR COMPANY: In 1925 this building housed a Model T Ford assembly plant that was owned and operated by Ben Hill Crum. Seen here are Lillie Crum, Della Knight Crum, Mr. Crum, Ira Corbitt, and Lucille Tomlinson.



WILCOX BARBER SHOP: Ollie Wilcox is depicted here with his daughters Lucy Mae, Lee, and Ludell. On Saturday afternoons, Ollie brought his daughters to Milltown to sing in the downtown stores.



STAPLETON'S GROCERY: In 1925, Kenny and Fannie Stapleton owned and operated the grocery store. In this mural are Jim Curry and Levin Pafford (standing) and J.D. Patten and Agnes Curry (seated).

local government BEST PRACTICES

One of the primary responsibilities of an elected official is to be a good steward of the citizenry's tax dollars. During his first term as Lakeland Mayor, Bill Darsey has been particularly mindful of the City's finances and has, in fact, saved the taxpayers a great deal of money. Mayor Darsey's best practice has been procuring city equipment and vehicles at auctions throughout the Southeast.

The City of Lakeland has a fleet of ten police vehicles that were all acquired at auctions. All of the vehicles came fully equipped, ready for patrol, and not one of them has over 60,000

miles. The police cruisers ranged in price from \$1,900 to \$4,500. "The City of Lakeland has invested less money in these ten police cars than it would have in one brand new car. They are good cars and will serve the city for a number of years," says Mayor Darsey.

Another one of the Mayor's great auction finds was a sewer truck that is used to blow-out sewer lines and clean manholes. Prior to purchasing the truck, the City was unable to perform this type of sewer work and was forced to pay for the service. Now, with its \$33,000 investment, the City is able to carry-out its own sewer maintenance

when necessary. Had Lakeland purchased a new sewer truck, the cost would have been at least \$120,000.

Other auction acquisitions include a bucket truck for \$15,000, a large trash truck for \$26,000, a road scraper for \$3,000, a pumper fire truck for \$6,000 (with only 16,000 miles), and a 1-ton fire rescue truck for \$7,800. The purchase of used equipment has saved the City of Lakeland thousands of dollars, and continues to do so by providing city crews with the necessary equipment to perform city services rather than paying outside contractors.

"The equipment and vehicles at the auctions are

not worn out pieces of junk," Mayor Darsey points out. He notes that most items at the auction come from large city and county governments that have rotation schedules for all equipment and vehicle fleets. In fact, most of Lakeland's auction purchases can serve the city for several years and then be returned to the auction where they can be sold for at least half of the original purchase price.

A further cost savings to the city since Mayor Darsey took office has been the utilization of inmate labor from the Georgia Department of Corrections. Inmate labor has been used on several projects including the building of a new Public Works shop where much of the city's auction purchases are now housed. The parking lot at this new facility was paved using the city's asphalt paving equipment, also an auction discovery.

Mayor Darsey's auction-savvy skills have saved Lakeland and its residents a lot of money while also properly equipping the city for the services that it provides. These savings are not unique to Lakeland, numerous cities and counties can learn from Mayor Darsey's expertise and he encourages those interested to contact him at Lakeland City Hall, 229-482-3100.

