

SPRINGFIELD

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An adventure to take your breath away

BY FRANK ARMENDARIZ
Outdoors Writer

An old friend saved a quote from a book he once read. Touched by the words that reminded him of his first whitewater trip, he had them written in an old style script on parchment paper. Nicely framed, they hang on his living room wall and go something like this. ...

“... It will take your breath away, first calmly drifting but then you hear it and then see it. You pour over the edge of the calm water, a rush of spray hits your face, as you feel the raft dipping and rocking in the waves. Balancing, leaning and maneuvering, working with the current you pass the torrent. And suddenly you realize, the most exciting and terrifying moment in your life has just happened and then you go back for more.”

As with my buddy, that pretty well describes the introduction to whitewater rafting my wife and I had. Encouraged by some friends we all booked with a professional outfitter as a party of six for two days of rafting that included a lunch. The guided trip was convenient included all the gear and we always felt safe while on the river. The trip was flawless from start to finish.

Our party of six were part of a larger group but were together in our own raft with a fun guide. The professional, well trained guides just instilled confidence with their display of skill in the rapids and team work at lunch, which was fresh and delicious. We helped paddle the raft in the class III+ rapids that were exciting, big and bouncy. All in a beautiful mountain setting and well



Evan Wills of River Trail Guides making it look “matter of fact” in the notorious Brown’s Hole. FRANK ARMENDARIZ/OUTDOORS WRITER

worth the relatively modest price and then some.

To our good fortune we have the McKenzie River, one of our state’s top destinations for whitewater boaters right here in Lane County.

The McKenzie Valley itself is rich with year-round recreational opportunities but the warm weather that comes every summer shifts the attention of many to the river. I will tell you, that we have some of the

top raft businesses with some of the best safety records in the state right here in Lane County and they are now in daily operation. Catering to whitewater enthusiasts from all over from all over.

The opportunities are plentiful and for a first family raft trip I always recommend a licensed guide or outfitter. There are many that

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Passion builds for downtown redevelopment

BY VICTORIA STEPHENS
Staff Writer

SPRINGFIELD — It is no secret that downtown Springfield is growing, with new businesses moving in on a regular basis. It is upscaling and quickly becoming

a popular destination. Beautification projects include planters, murals, a series of new streetlights and a pilot food truck project in front of Springfield City Hall. The city council has also approved decorated crosswalks on both the north and

south sides of Main Street at 4th Street in the future.

A diverse group of key players are behind this trend, according to Michael Eyster, chair of the Economic Development Committee for the Springfield Chamber of Commerce.

The city, Springfield Chamber of Commerce and organizations such as the Springfield Renaissance Development Corporation have played significant roles, he said.

“The city has for well over a decade committed itself to policies that would encourage and promote business development downtown,” he said.

The real driving force behind the renovations and resurgence in downtown, according to Eyster, has been a handful of private developers and entrepreneurs. These include Gabriel Hamel and Daniel Basaraba, who own and have renovated the Fry and Rankin Building, which housed the former Jim’s Landing bar. Now it is home to Simply Cycle, a transplant from Eugene, and high-end steakhouse George + Violet’s as well as a number of fully remodeled apartments upstairs.



Main Street Developers David Loveall and his wife Nita outside the strip of properties they own and renovated on the 300 block of Main Street in Downtown Springfield. VICTORIA STEPHENS/THE CHRONICLE



Officials and business owners are working together to bring new life to downtown Springfield. Last week, the Main Street Market opened at 330 Main Street, filling a fresh produce void in the city center. JEN BLUE/THE CHRONICLE

The most prolific developer of the downtown area is David Loveall of Masaka Properties LLC, with his

Los Angeles-based partner Robert Miller. Loveall and Miller had been friends for about 40 years and “we both

found ourselves semi-retired and needing something to

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