

## **BAXTER DEPOT FINALLY A REALITY**

<http://www.ajlambert.com>



Baxter Mayor Jeff Wilhite, center, greets the crowds as Friends of Depot member Sue Neal, left, and Jeanie Lee, president of the FOD, listen Friday morning for the grand opening of the Baxter Depot/Welcome Center. Ty Kernea | Herald-Citizen

Numerous city, county and other officials gathered Friday morning for the ribbon cutting of the Baxter Depot/Welcome Center. They are, in front from left, Dale Welch, Monterey alderman; Charlotte Burks, State Senator; Kim Blaylock, Putnam County Executive; Sharon Watts and Connie Gentry, Friends of the Depot members; Mayor



Jeff Wilhite, committee member; Jeanie Lee, Sue Neal and Faye Shanks, Friends of the Depot members; Kay Mctasney, grant writer; Richard Godsey, Monterey mayor; Wayne Nabors, county clerk; Jim Smith, Chamber Ambassador; and Freddie Nelson, Putnam County trustee; and in back, Mike Sliger, Chamber Ambassador; Ottis Phillips, Chamber Ambassador; James

Massengille, Glenn Jones, FOD member; Eddie Watts, FOD; Ken Hall, Monterey cultural administrator; Ryan Williams, state representative; Wayne Lowe and Willie Allison, aldermen; Marti Wagner, FOD; Bob Wagner (hidden); Robin Hawn, FOD; Angela Regitko, Tim Sharp, chaplain/Baxter Police reserve; Jim Shipley, Cookeville city manager; and Stacey Austin (not pictured). Photo by Ty Kernea | Herald-Citizen

**BAXTER** — After years of hard work to secure funding — along with numerous construction delays — the Baxter Depot/Welcome Center is finally a reality.

Excitement filled the air Friday morning as county and city officials, along with members of the Friends of the Depot committee and many others, all gathered at the Depot to celebrate the grand opening.

“It was a wonderful day,” Jeanie Lee, president of the Baxter Friends of the Depot, said. “It was packed!”

Other members of the committee include Mayor Jeff Wilhite, vice president; Connie Gentry, secretary; Sue Neal, treasurer; Fay Shanks, historian; Glenn Jones, county archivist; Sandy Birdwell, Carl Halfacre, Jim and Carol Johnson, June Lewis, and Bob and Marti Wagner.

Lee worked hard in organizing different events to go with the celebration. Those events included a trolley car and a small children's train and tours of the facility.

"Cornerstone students got to be a part of the celebrations by riding the trolley car, brought in by Jabez Boating Craft Rentals, back to school," Lee said. "We had a wonderful turnout — from Chamber members to elected officials and many more."



(Bill Wiggins of Monterey admires the artifacts in the Baxter depot Friday as the grand opening celebrations were held. Ty Kernea | Herald-Citizen)

Committee members worked hard into the night the previous night to get the facility ready for the grand unveiling.

This is a project that has been in the works since 2005 when the idea was first presented. A groundbreaking ceremony was held in July.

A TDOT enhancement grant totaling \$362,992 was awarded to the city in 2009. It was the third time the city applied for it. Delays in construction stemmed from paperwork and procedure issues.

The building is split into three sections: a history museum, a welcome center and a conference room.

"We kept our focus and were determined to complete this," Lee said. "It's been at least eight years in the making."

Encouragement and networking from neighboring communities — such as Monterey and Cookeville — really helped them get to this point.

"It's been exciting to see this come to fruition," she said. "It's more than a building. We celebrated who we are. When we help each other, it makes the whole county look good."

As construction was nearing completion, the committee members came up with rules and regulations, which were recently approved — with a few changes — by the Baxter board of mayor and aldermen.

There are two conference rooms, one on the west side of the depot and another in the center. Availability is on a first-come, first-serve basis with priority given to the City of Baxter and the Friends of the Depot events.

Those rules and regulations include:

- Applicants must be 21 years of age or older,
- Rental must be for legally permissible use,
- Events that would or might involve the use of sexually explicit, profane or other publicly unacceptable material are prohibited,
- Gambling, smoking and burning of any kind are also prohibited,
- Animals are allowed only with permission of the mayor,
- Event organizer is responsible for the proper use of the room and the cost of repairing damage to the facility, equipment, fixtures or furniture that is caused by their parties attending the event. In the event of

damage to the room or its furnishings, the replacement costs of repairs will be invoiced.

- Room set up, take down and clean up are the responsibility of the user. The conference room must be left in the condition it was prior to the event. If not, an additional charge of one hour will be billed to the user,
- User is to ensure the facility is locked at the end of use,
- Nothing is to be attached to the ceiling or fixtures. Use of nails, screws, tape or staples on the wall is prohibited,
- All trash is to be removed from the facility following the event,
- All items are to be removed from the refrigerator upon the close of the event,
- Rental fees are to be paid in full prior to the event,
- Reservations are not considered confirmed until payment is received in full,
- Areas adjacent to the conference rooms are to be kept in a clean and orderly fashion,
- Users are not permitted to block access to the building,
- Alcoholic beverages are permitted for special events,
- Weapons are prohibited.

The conference room amenities include six rectangular tables, 60 chairs, a kitchen sink and the use of a refrigerator.

The rate schedule is as follows:

#### Room A

Monday through Friday between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. — \$100

Saturday between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. — \$125

#### Rooms A and B

Monday through Saturday between 4 and 8 p.m. — \$150

Saturday only — \$150

Sunday from noon to 4 p.m. — \$150

Sunday from 4-8 p.m. — \$200

Monday through Sunday after 8 p.m. — \$25 per hour.

Reservations may be made between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. at the office of Stacey Austin, city recorder, at 200 Main St. Call her at 931-858-4111 ext. 1 for more information.

\*Read more about Baxter, Putnam Co., TN in the history section at: <http://www.ajlambert.com>



Historic Baxter Christmas ornaments and key chains are now on sale at the Baxter Visitor's Center and Bank of Putnam County in Baxter. The \$10 ornament depicts the Pfeiffer Hall Administration Building from Baxter Seminary and Upperman High School while the \$5 keychain depicts the Baxter Visitor's Center. Pictured with the ornaments are, from left June Lewis, Baxter Visitor's