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Johnson City Shops, Restaurants Offer Visitors Escape From the Ordinary

JOHNSON CITY, Tenn.— According to the Travel Industry Association of America, shopping is rated as the most popular activity among domestic travelers in the United States. Where can you find a selection of diverse and eclectic shopping experiences, historic charm, unique dining experiences and an abundance of recreational opportunities? Johnson City, Tennessee, located in the heart of East Tennessee, offers visitors these unique attractions in a hometown setting.

“Whether it’s a giant hot dog restaurant, a three story antique store or the city’s historic district, visitors won’t have a hard time finding something to make their visit a memorable one.” said Brenda Whitson, executive director of the Johnson City Convention and Visitors Bureau.

Unique shopping opportunities include:

Antique Shopping

Located in the heart of Johnson City’s downtown Historic District, Main Street Antiques and Mercantile is one of the most popular and eclectic antique stores in the region. The three-story, 28,000-square-foot shop showcases all types of antiques including American, European and Chinese furniture; artifacts and collectibles; Oriental rugs; and home décor from around the world.

“The store is truly amazing—visitors can shop for unique gifts ranging from English wardrobes and European painted furniture to Chinese or American antiques,” said Whitson.

The gift department has a “one-of-a-kind” collection, which includes decorative tableware, Zari pillows, bamboo cutting boards and bowls, umbrella vases, jewelry and carved wood and metal canes.

“The Garden and Patio Department is well known for unbeatable prices and diverse selections,” said Whitson. “They are able to offer reduced rates due to the volume of equipment that is bought and through special market buyouts.”

The three-story antique store also boasts an impressive collection of antique rugs, chosen for distinctive color, design or overall appearance. They offer shoppers a wide variety, from modern or antique Persian rugs, room size or runners, and small throws from Persian locations. Rugs are individually selected for value and exterior characteristics, and due to customer demand new shipments of rugs arrive monthly.

Boones Creek Potters Gallery

Boones Creek Potters Gallery offers shoppers a unique selection of hand-crafted pottery, which is made by award-winning regional and national artisans and never reproduced. Items range from home furnishings, dinnerware, vases and figurines to wooden hand-carvings and metal works of all shapes and sizes. Additionally, customers interested in pottery can buy supplies to make individual items. For more information, call (423) 282-2801.

Downtown Johnson City

Whether you are seeking name brands or priceless antiques, you will find what you are looking for in Johnson City. Stroll through our shopping outlets and antique vendors, as well as Downtown Johnson City, which offers several distinctive shops include everything from art galleries to clothing, furniture and gift stores.

Historic Jonesborough

Following a multi-million dollar restoration in 1969, Tennessee’s oldest town, located about 15 minutes from Johnson City, became the first to be placed on the National Register of Historic Places. Jonesborough uniquely blends historic sites, distinctive architecture, specialty shops and quaint restaurants.

The town offers a variety of shops, including several antique shops and art galleries. At Mulberry Corner Books, visitors will find a large collection of rare and fine books in all genres. The Tennessee Quilts shop offers various sizes of new and antique quilts for sale, as well as supplies and kits that any quilter could need. For those interested in learning how to quilt or for the experienced quilter, the shop also features quilting classes and services for both hand and machine-made quilts.

For the kids, Jonesborough's The Lollipop Shop is the place to go for a few sweet treats. Enjoy the nostalgic setting from yesteryear while looking over the selection of retro toys, pedal cars and other novelties.

"Travelers often come to Johnson City and spend the day shopping and exploring our city, and then spend the next day visiting historic Jonesborough," said Whitson. "It's a great way to see the history of the area and experience our heritage, while at the same time finding that perfect gift or treasure."

In addition to the historic attributes of the town, Jonesborough is also known as the storytelling capital of the world and is home to the annual National Storytelling Festival held in October each year. For more information on historic Jonesborough, visit www.historicjonesborough.com.

Dining Opportunities:

After a long day of shopping, visitors can enjoy a relaxing meal and entertainment at some of the diverse dining experiences the city offers.

"When people visit a new place, they want to try new things and go to restaurants that are unique to the area that they don't have at home," said Whitson. "Johnson City offers a lot of hometown restaurants, but of course for those who want to eat somewhere that's familiar to them, they can do that too."

Whether it's the atmosphere of the restaurant or the food that's served, Johnson City has something for everyone.

Firehouse Restaurant

The Firehouse Restaurant, delivering service with true southern hospitality, serves authentic hickory smoked bar-b-que, topped off with homemade side items and desserts. True to its name, the building, originally built in 1930, served the town as the Walnut Street Fire Hall until 1976. Today, The

Firehouse Restaurant showcases photographs and firefighting memorabilia from the original fire hall, including a 1925 Seagraves Fire Engine in the restaurant's lobby.

Café One 11

For those looking for a little jazz along with neo-Asian cuisine, Café One 11 offers both. Café One 11 also features an extensive wine list. For more information, call (423) 283-4633.

The Peerless Restaurant

John Kalogeros opened the first Peerless Restaurant in Johnson City in 1938, and it has remained family operated since its beginning. The restaurant offers a variety of steaks including filet mignon, prime rib, and New York strip. Visitors not interested in steak can order one of the many items on the restaurant's seafood menu, which includes lobster tail, orange roughy, shrimp and salmon. Other items on the menu include chicken, pasta and sandwiches.

The Peerless recently added a second location in Knoxville, Tenn. For more information, please visit www.thepeerlessinc.com or call (423) 282-2351.

Pal's

Not your typical fast food experience, Pal's is best known for the giant hot dog, hamburger, fries and soft drink covering the roof of each building. Serving oversized portions of fast food, including the Big Pal burger and Frenchie fries, Pals is a Johnson City tradition known for its service by serving "Great Food in a Flash." For menu information, please visit www.palsweb.com.

Jane's Lunch Box

Enjoy down-home cooking every day, specializing in homemade soups, fresh salads, hardy sandwiches that include BLTs and the real Reuben, honey-mustard ham, a no-meat veggiwich, and a superior chicken-salad sandwich on a choice of bread. Or if you prefer a hot lunch, try the meat and three special of the day and top it off with a homemade dessert. For more information, please call (423) 434-2665.

Cootie Brown's

To fulfill their slogan "Real Food," Cootie Brown's serves a variety of favorites, including tamales, Taco-Rito, salads, wings, fire-roasted pizza, burgers, spiral fries and delicious desserts. For more information, please visit www.cootiebrowns.com

Johnson City is located in Northeast Tennessee and is the fourth largest metropolitan city in the state. Set in a region known as America's First Frontier, Johnson City is "Where the Pioneer Spirit Began"—a historically significant and culturally rich community surrounded by an abundance of unspoiled natural beauty. Johnson City has a history, which dates back more than 200 years, and its culture embraces individual creativity and encourages innovation through expression. The area is world-renowned for its modern and traditional Appalachian and bluegrass music, art and cuisine, and outdoor recreation for the whole family throughout all four seasons. For more information on Johnson City, please visit www.visitjohnsoncitytn.com or call (423) 461-8000 or (800) 852-3392.

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