

Let's talk about it.

-Sally Caldwell and Wilder Ferreira

Business is Booming

From your hardware to your bank account, the Freshwater Coast's local businesses have you covered for life - literally. Harris Funeral Homes, the First Bank of Abbeville, Stoll Fireplace, and Pettigrew Hardware are just some of the businesses in our community that serve every need, from a warm cozy fireplace to the death of a loved one.

Stephen Pettigrew is the owner of Pettigrew Hardware and Supply in Calhoun Falls, South Carolina. Pettigrew Hardware celebrates its 50th anniversary this year, and Stephen could not be more proud. Stephen is a native of Calhoun Falls and now lives in Clemson, South Carolina. Although Stephen travels 50 miles to work every day, the distance does not stop him from knowing just about

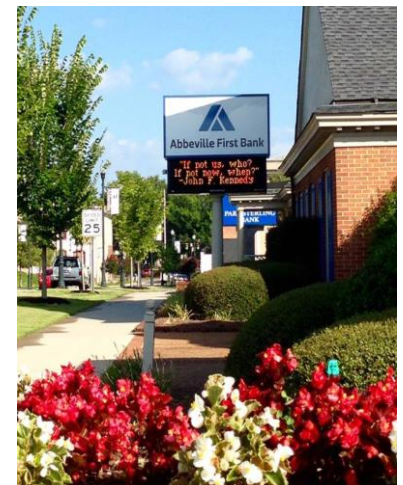


Stephen Pettigrew at home behind the counter at Pettigrew Hardware in Calhoun Falls.

every face that passes through Calhoun Falls. A face seldom passes through the town without a quick "hello, good to see you again" from Stephen. His parents began Pettigrew Hardware and passed it on down to Stephen who now works with his own son. Stephen says that the best part about working in this

store is that "It's not routine," and that he has the best customers. As far as the progress of the store, "We've kind of evolved as situations have changed," Stephen stated. He said that one of his favorite aspects of running the shop is that it is a family association. "You know everybody and feel comfortable around them," Pettigrew said regarding his community and customers.

Such loyalty is appreciated in the small-town business world, especially at The First Bank of Abbeville, a place of warm people, trusted service, and guaranteed satisfaction. Andy Timmerman, the current president, moved to Abbeville from Columbia with his family when he decided to make the transition to a small-town bank. The bank is fully community-based in every aspect, even the name of the bank, which the community voted upon. "We are 100% invested in Abbeville," Andy Timmerman mentioned, "We give back to the community when we can." Personal service is a strong point at Abbeville First Bank. Every call is answered by a real person on the other end of the



Abbeville First Bank sits right outside of the famous square in Abbeville, South Carolina.

phone, ready to meet the needs of customers, people who the workers usually know personally! "Everyone seems to know everybody," said Andy when asked what his favorite part about working in the Abbeville community is. Just as the bank knows everyone, everyone knows Brad Evans, owner of Harris Funeral Homes.



Harris Funeral Home is established in a building that was originally built in 1904.

Evans was born and raised in Abbeville, where he spent his high school summers washing cars at the Harris Funeral Home. Since then, Brad has come a long way in the funeral home business. But as he says, "I wouldn't change a thing about how I've gotten to be where I am today." Brad's faith and lifestyle color his position at the funeral home. The very components of running the business depend on Christianity, integrity, and hard work. "We're all about service," Evans says, "We want to raise the bar in funeral home service." Brad believes in hard work, persistence, and prayer as areas that must be covered in order for Harris Funeral Home to run successfully. This company is all about the people they serve. "I believe being involved with the community is vital," Evans mused.

Part of Harris Funeral Home's objectives in serving the Abbeville community is ensuring that they are doing everything they can to help make Abbeville the best place to live and the most comforting place to celebrate the life of loved one. As Brad said, "Abbeville is a great place." The location is great for Harris Funeral Home and the community is even better. Another company that greatly contributes to the community is Stoll Fireplace Inc. in Abbeville, South Carolina.

This company is run by Gary Yoder, grandson of the founder of Stoll Fireplace. William Stoll began the company in 1969 after he created his own fireplace to put into his new home once he and his family moved to Abbeville from Virginia Beach, Virginia. After creating his first masterpiece, folks began requesting he make theirs, too, and Stoll Fireplace Inc. was born! This business benefits the community through many ways, one of which is by providing jobs for around sixty people in Abbeville County. Gary is proud of his employees, and he understands that Abbeville provides a "good work force." The community and the atmosphere of Abbeville make Stoll Fireplace a great place to work, and also provides Gary and his team with everything they need.

Whether it's technology, improvements, or other things, Abbeville stays up to date, an essential aspect of any successful business. Gary loves running the business



People work hard at Stoll Fireplace, whether they are cutting metal or exacting measurements.

because he loves the creativity put into designing and making the fireplaces. "We stress customization," said Gary. When asked to what he owes his success and the success of the company, Gary says "To God, first of all." The company runs on honesty, the golden rule, friendship, and quality. As Mr. William Stoll once said, "Honesty is not a question, and to correct mistakes is an opportunity to show integrity." They have over 1,000 dealers in the U.S. and Canada. Each dealer goes through training, Part of the reason Stoll Fireplace maintains so many friendships is that they have prayer time every morning at 8:30. This office-wide prayer time often involves praying for prayer requests from dealers all over the United States. This is something that is unique to Stoll Fireplace. Faith-based and faith driven, God provides the success for Stoll Fireplace Inc.

For the people in the Freshwater Coast, community is everything. Small businesses generally thrive because of the surrounding community, but in Abbeville County's case, the community thrives because of the local businesses.