

The Remedy for average coffee shops

Remedy Coffee House at 125 W. Jackson Ave. is by all accounts your ordinary coffee shop serving your favorite cup of joe.

In addition to coffee, tea and smoothies, Remedy provides its guests with comfy couches, books, board games and free Wi-Fi.

There is an upstairs loft for small meetings and study groups.

"It's just a coffee shop for the neighborhood. We want to be good neighbors," owner Sean Alsobrooks, 30, said.

But Remedy is much more.

On Sundays, the rear of the Old City building is host to Knoxville Life Church, a non-traditional ministry started by Alsobrooks and his wife, Sara, who moved to Knoxville from Southern California in early 2007.

"We felt like God was leading us to start a church," Alsobrooks said.

The couple looked at Ann Arbor, Mich., Seattle and Portland before settling in Knoxville, a city neither had ever been to before.

"We came here and we knew. We felt a peace about it. It's a big change, but we love it," he said.

Remedy was an idea that came to the couple as a way to give back to the community.

Located near custom tailor John H. Daniel and soon-to-be-open JFG Flats, the 3,200-square-foot shop serves 100 percent organic and direct-trade certified coffee and sells baked goods from nearby Mer-Mer's Bakery at 617 N Gay St.

It donates 100 percent of after-tax proceeds to local charities like KARM, Habitat for Humanity, Tribe One and Beardsley Farm.

"A lot of churches sit empty during a lot of the week," Alsobrooks said. "We wanted a space that was useful to the community."

David Teten, who was a Starbucks employee trainer for four years, was hired to manage the shop, which opened six weeks ago.

"Each week is better than the last. It's definitely sustainable. It's growing," Alsobrooks said.

Before coffee and church became such a big part of Alsobrooks' life in Knoxville, there was his day job, which he still does but at night.

Alsobrooks designs and maintains Web sites through his company Third & Grand, which he founded in 1999 in Southern California during the Internet boom.

Initially studying to be a teacher, Alsobrooks "got a book" and began experimenting on the Web.

Alsobrooks had even started the California Cactus Co., where he planned to sell cactuses over the Internet.

"It was a weird idea looking back," he said.

But before he knew it, people started paying him for his site designs, which can cost \$4,000-\$5,000.

Alsobrooks contracts with folks from around the country and averages about three to four Web sites a month. Locally, he has done sites for City People, Tribe One, Unarmed Merchants and, of course, Remedy.

He incorporates his talents in the graphics he creates and uses at Knoxville Life Church.

"We're very visual. It's been a good match," he said.

Remedy, www.remedycOFFEE.com, is open 8 a.m.-10 p.m. Monday-Thursday, 8 a.m.-11 p.m. Friday and Saturday and closed on Sunday.

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Tech park gets federal funds

\$750,000 will help develop Blount center

BY ROGER HARRIS
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A federal funding bill approved by a Senate committee Thursday includes \$750,000 for the Pellissippi Research Centre, a research and development park under construction in Blount County.

U.S. Sens. Bob Corker and Lamar Alexander announced the funding Thursday as part of the financial services appropriations

bill for fiscal 2010. The funding will help with the development of a technology park that will "enable private sector development of new products and services based on scientific research" at Oak Ridge National Laboratory and the University of Tennessee, according to a statement from the Republican senators.

"This money will be used to complement what we're already doing in the first phase of development," said Bryan Daniels, executive vice president of the Blount Partnership Economic Develop-

ment Board.

The first phase includes construction of the main boulevard, realignment of Clayton Road and building the infrastructure that goes with that — everything from communications to storm water and water and sewer lines.

Work is on schedule to open the technology section of the project in December, Daniels said.

Daniels said the \$750,000, if authorized by Congress, would be the fourth round of federal funding approved for the project.

Located at Pellissippi Parkway

and Old Knoxville Highway in Alcoa, the 450-acre park is a joint venture of the cities of Alcoa and Maryville and Blount and Knox counties, and each has pledged \$5 million toward development of the park. In addition to the R&D component, the park includes retail, residential and office space.

Blount County-based Molecular Pathology Laboratory Network Inc. was named as the anchor tenant for the tech park in October 2006.

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BRIGHT SPOT

Truck firm helps relief effort

Local Peterbilt dealership donates three vehicles to Disaster Discover Solutions

BY KRISTEN LETSINGER
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Tractor-trailers typically haul freight across the country, but some are used to help put lives back together after a disaster — with some assisting in saving lives.

John Arscott, president of Peterbilt of Knoxville, Inc., has donated three tractor-trailers and an indoor parking facility, which will house the three trucks and provide room for six offices, to help the efforts of First Response Team of America, a nonprofit disaster relief company.

The Knoxville-based emergency response company is the brainchild of Chairman and CEO Tad Agoglia. In 2007, Agoglia was working in his contracting company, Disaster Discovery Solutions, and traveling to disaster areas one or two months after a storm to clean up debris. From this experience he developed a theory that communities might need help clearing roads so emergency personnel could get through after a natural disaster.

In May 2007, after a tornado in Greensburg, Kan., Agoglia decided to test his theory.

"So from that experience I realized there was a need for equipment to open up roads, but I also realized from being a first-hand first responder that there was more equipment needed," Agoglia said. "Power was needed. Communication was needed. Pumping water was needed. Water rescue was needed. People with experience on how to deal with disaster were needed."

"I decided at that point to take Disaster Discovery Solutions, take all of its equipment, all of its employees and all of its profits that it had made over the many years to create the First Response Team," Agoglia continued. "And now we've responded to 25 storms. Two years later, some of the biggest hit in the United States. And it's working. And we're really helping thousands of people a year."

Arscott is a supporter of Agoglia's work and decided he needed to help.

"He (Agoglia) is just an incredible individual that is giving so much of himself to the community," Arscott said. "I can see directly he's got a need. We have the trucks; it just made sense."

The three trucks supplied by Peterbilt, located at 200 Prosperity Drive, are customized to the needs of the First Response Team of America.

One will have a crane with a large claw to clear roads, Agoglia said. A generator will be

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SAUL YOUNG/NEWS SENTINEL

Tad Agoglia, left, of Disaster Discover Solutions, and John Arscott, president of The Peter Store, Knoxville's dealership for Peterbilt, are pictured with one of the three trucks being donated to Disaster Discover Solutions.

7-Eleven rallies its clients over card fees

BY CANDICE CHOI
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Riding a wave of public outrage over credit card practices, 7-Eleven Inc. wants to show that merchants are victims of the industry too.

The convenience store chain announced a petition this week to give small businesses more power to negotiate the fees they must pay whenever a customer uses a credit or debit card. 7-Eleven said more than 6,000 of its franchisees plan to collect 1 million customer signatures to deliver to Congress this fall.

George Clift, who owns a 7-Eleven in McKinney, Texas, said he's keeping the petition on his store counter and asking customers to sign whenever they pay with plastic.

"We just want to let our cus-

tomers help us, (to) see if Congress can get involved," said Clift.

Clift said he pays about \$28,000 in credit card fees each year, which he notes is "a huge number for a small businessman."

Still, Visa and MasterCard warn that if such fees were lowered, banks would need to make up any lost revenue with higher credit and debit card fees.

The petition from 7-Eleven comes after sweeping reforms to credit card practices were signed into law by President Barack Obama in May. The law gives consumers new protections on interest rate hikes and cost disclosures, but does not include rules on fees paid by merchants.

It's this seeming discrepancy that 7-Eleven wants addressed.

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Groups want to shelve bottled water

BY EMILY FREDRIX
Associated Press

Consumers know less about the water they pay for in bottles than what they can drink almost for free from the tap because the two are regulated differently, researchers and congressional investigators say in new reports.

Both the Government Accountability Office and the Environmental Working Group, a research and advocacy organization, recommend in reports being released Wednesday that bottled water be labeled with the same level of information municipal water providers must disclose.

The researchers plan to urge Americans to make bottled water "a distant second choice" to filtered tap water during their testimony before a congressional subcommittee Wednesday morning.

Bottled water — an industry worth about \$16 billion in sales last year — has been suffering lately as colleges, communities and some governments take measures to limit or ban its consumption. As employers, they are motivated by cost savings and environmental concern because the bottles create unnecessary waste and can be hard to recycle.

Bottled water sales were growing by double-digit percentages for years and were helping buoy the U.S. beverage industry overall. But they were flat last year, according to trade publication Beverage Digest. Beverage Digest editor John Sicher said some consumers are turning on the tap during the recession simply because it's cheaper.

From 1997 to 2007, the amount of

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