



MEDIA RELEASE

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Mayor Jacobs' Small Business Series Features Mast General Store

KNOXVILLE, Tenn.— Knox County Mayor Glenn Jacobs interviewed Natalea Cummings, the general manager of Mast General Store, as part of his small business series.

Each week, the Mayor conducts interviews with small business owners, offering them the opportunity to talk about what they do; highlight their work; and share any future plans. A new vignette runs each Wednesday on the county and Mayor's social media platforms. This month, the series focuses on anchor businesses across the county.

"There may be somewhere else that has old fashioned candy, there may be somewhere that has cool jellies and jams, outdoor products – all that. But all under one roof? That would be hard to find," Cummings said.

The Mast General Store, located at 402 S. Gay St., has been a retail landmark in downtown Knoxville since 2006. It occupies the same space where other general stores once operated, beginning in 1898 after the "Million Dollar Fire" the previous year destroyed the entire street block.

The store sells everything from clothing to housewares to food. But customer experience is what Cummings says brings people back through the doors.

"The biggest thing for us is the experience for the guest – we pride ourselves on a great guest experience," she said. "We get comments all the time that the staff is so happy to be at work and they're fun. They may not buy anything but if you can come somewhere and feel normal, have a cool conversation with somebody – that means a lot to some people."

The Mayor and Cummings also touched on the history of the building and business, a possible supernatural visitor, and the downtown renaissance that's happened during the past decade.

"We're very, very thankful. When Mast first came here it was us, the brewery, and the movie theater and we would close at 6 p.m. every day and the employees would go home," Cummings said. "And so now that we have that, we're able to extend our hours. We might see the same family probably five or 10 times a weekend because they love it in here."

To hear more of what was said, check out the [video](#).

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